



Research Article

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Predatory Factors on Depression among Adolescents: Evidence from Nigeria

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Abstract

Depression is one of the most common life-threatening disorders among adolescents. Nowadays, cases of suicidal thoughts and attempts have become rampant among adolescents as a result of depression and some underlying factors. It is on this premise that this study examined some predatory factors on depression among adolescents. There are several predicting factors but this study dwelled on three such factors which are academic performance, family, and peer pressure. A Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The study population includes lecturers of six selected private universities in the Osun state of Nigeria and was randomly selected. The six selected universities were located in different geographical areas of the state. The instrument used for data collection was self-developed and has a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Four null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result of the study shows that a significant relationship exists between the independent variables (academic performance, family, and peer pressure-related factors) and the dependent variable (depression symptoms). Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended among others that all tertiary institutions should have functioning counseling centers that are well equipped with professional counseling psychologists who could assist students through guidance services to enhance their academic performances as well handle peer pressures.

Keywords: Depression; Adolescents; Academic performance; Family; Peer pressure

1. Introduction

The frequency of recorded cases of depression in the recent times is alarming and has become an issue of global concern (Eurídes et al. 2023; Wells, Jeon, and Aronson 2023). Depression may now be a more recognized serious challenge as over 300 million people are said to be affected across the globe (Hao 2022; Yrondi et al. 2021; B. Gao, Song, and Guo 2023). Generally, the word depression connotes a state of not being happy about a particular situation and by this meaning; depression is a bit deceptive as someone undergoing depression may not verbally express it (Macneil et al. 2022; Hilal et al. 2023; Venborg, Osler, and Sara 2023). Depression is one of the leading causes of suicide which should not be taken for granted; timely intervention could avert all unpleasant effect of depression (Belli et al. 2023; Zhang et al. 2023).

Prior to 21st century, the issue of depression was majorly found among the adults. Current concern now is that depression is prevalent in both adolescents and youths as well (Yrondi et al. 2021; Macneil et al. 2022). A number of factors has been identified as stimuli for depression among youths. For instance, (Aredes and Silva 2021; Gregory et al. 2018; Rodrigues et al. 2021; Asaley et al. 2020; Okere et al. 2019; Adedoyin Isola, Frank, and Kehinde Leke 2015) identified poor academic performance, (Ottman et al. 2022; Keenan et al. 2010; Wuthrich et al. 2021) noted that peer pressure is a core factor that fuels depression. Other factors as identified by (Freeman et al. 2022; Ismail et al. 2022; Rapp et al. 2021) includes family factor. Inadequate knowledge of risk factors in depression may result in inappropriate care for victims of depression, hence, people with depression may face considerable barriers to quality education because of the lack of knowledge of their mental status among lecturers. Given the knowledge gap in existing literature on the causes of depression among adolescent in Nigeria, impact of peer pressure, family factor, academic performance, there is the need to empirically examine the risk factors of depression, among adolescents in Nigeria. Extant literature suggests that having adequate knowledge of the risk factors will help in mitigating depression (Lodha et al. 2022; Lee, Hee, and Jue 2020; Glowacz and Schmits 2017). Increasing knowledge among lecturers, especially counsellors, and provision of support to address this issue are crucial to improving the overall wellbeing of adolescents (Hua and Wang 2023; Huun 2018; Dennis 2010; Aredes and Silva 2021). to the best of the authors knowledge, this is one of first studies to examine the risk factors in depression among adolescents in Nigeria focusing on the role of peer pressure, family factor and academic performance. Unlike most of the existing studies that examined the nature of the relationship among the constructs from students' perspective, we focus our attention on the caregiver, in this case, the literature (Oehler et al. 2021; Richardson and Brahmabhatt 2021) argues that caregivers are better to help victims out of difficult situation than the victim himself. This study explored the relationship between academic performance, family factor, peer pressure and adolescents' depression as perceived by lecturers in some selected private universities in Osun state of Nigeria. In order to achieve this, the four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The hypotheses are:

1. There is no significant relationship between academic performance and adolescents' depression symptoms as perceived by Lecturers in Osun state.
2. There is no significant relationship between family related predatory factor and adolescents' depression symptoms as perceived by Lecturers in Osun state.
3. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and adolescents' depression symptoms as perceived by Lecturers in Osun State.
4. There is no significant relationship among academic performance, family factor and peer pressure and adolescents' depression symptoms as perceived Lecturers in Osun state.

This study is anchored on ecological model by bronfenbrenner (1979) because adolescents' development outcomes are influenced by a complex interaction between the adolescents' characteristics and their immediate environments. The theory provides a useful and relevant framework for this study because the influence of school work and performance, home climate and peer pressure could be considered in the development of depression. Bronfenbrenner and Morris

(1998) opined that any psychological condition must be considered in light of complex matrix of individual characteristics, experiences and social-contextual influences. The individual characteristic and capabilities is reflected in academic performance while interpersonal influence includes: home environment and peer pressure. All these factors could influence the development of depression among adolescents

Extant literature has attempted to discuss the risk factors of depression. For instance, (Rapp et al. 2021) noted that parental criticism is a catalyst for depression in the West, and observed that to optimize treatment benefits, issues of family factor should be carefully addressed. The family is the first point of contact for any child and a place where the child is enmeshed into the way of life based on the values of his family and the Society at large. A family helps building healthy life style and relationship through creating conducive home front where there is free flow of communication, harmony between father and mother, expression of love felt by the child or children. A well-functioning family is most likely to have positive impact through home training, building positive relationship with parents and siblings and ensuring this, shapes the child into both adolescence and adulthood. This positive influence would further help the child grow well emotionally. It is believed that adolescence period is characterized with conflicts between the adolescent and his parents. It is because the adolescent seeks for more freedom and acting out "I am of age syndrome" on the other hand parents sees him/her as a child. Adolescents from healthy family may get all needed support to do well in life particularly in their academic and career pursuit in addition to psychosocial and mental wellness. (Lin, Hsieh, and Lin 2013) opined that family economic status plays significant role as a risk factor in depression among Taiwan single factor children. (Journal et al. 2019) noted that cordiality between patient and family is key to full recovery from depression in Singapore. (Lim 2022) employed multivariate logistic regression model to analysis cross sectional data from the US, sourced from 2016 to 2017, and noted that an inverse relationship exists between family neighbourhood and parent resilience for victims of depression. For China, (Hua and Wang 2023) employed a bivariate correlation analysis and bootstrapping mediation analysis to examine the impact of family support on recovery of victims of depression. The study noted that family support has negative impact on recovery, though it exhibits positive impact on memory performance. (Freeman et al. 2022) calibrated the impact of family history on recovery to the discourse, and noted that no strong association exist between family history and depression. (R. Gao et al. 2023) explored the underlying mechanism between Chinese adults, self-assessments of family social status in childhood and depression, and noted that family factor has no impact on depression in China. (Ismail et al. 2022) noted that family factor increases the risk of depression among Type 2 diabetes in Qatar (see also (Ong et al. 2022)). (Murugan et al. 2022) calibrated the impact of technology to the link between family factor and depression, and noted that while digital technology helps in reducing loneliness and depression.

On the nexus between academic performance and depression (Aredes and Silva 2021) noted that a functional relationship exist between academic failure and depression among nursing students based on Chi-Square estimation techniques and bivariate analysis of data sourced from April 2018 to January 2020 in Brazil. (Monzonis-carda et al. 2021) noted the existence of inverse relationship between academic grades and depression in Spain. The results of the Principal Component Analysis employed (Begdache et al. 2019) shows that for 558 students from different US colleges, evidence exist to support the existence of positive relationship between academic performance and depression. This was in line with the earlier position of (Gregory et al. 2018). The results from the structural equation model (SEM) employed by (Felipe et al. 2022) shows that academic efficacy negatively predicts depression among university students in Peru during COVID-19. Unlike (Gregory et al. 2018; Felipe et al. 2022) that show negative and positive relationship between depression and academic performance, (Liu et al. 2022) noted that a neutral relationship exist between the duo among Chinese youths during COVID-19. (Jiang et al. 2021) noted that the relationship between academic stress and depression is mediated by school burnout in China. (Lurie et al. 2022) opined that the link between depression and academic performance based on the China Family Panel Study is best influenced by the mediating role of instrumental activities daily living among community-dwelling older adults,

and memory performance indicators (see also (Rodrigues et al. 2021)). (Lee, Hee, and Jue 2020) noted existence of correlation between academic performance and depression in Korea.

Peer pressure is the direct or indirect influence on people by their equals. It is the influence from members of one's peer group. It is the way an individual is encouraged to follow the ways of his or her peers and to the effects of change in behaviour or life-style. It is human to seek acceptance among one's peer groups and also to consult their opinions on certain issues of concern as well. Peers seem to have more connections with one another as they advance in age and mature. An individual naturally also wants to identify with a group for the purpose of socialization, information and to stay connected. Peer pressure is not bad always as one can benefit positively from a group of peers that is goal oriented. On the effect of peer pressure on depression, (Ottman et al. 2022) noted that stakeholders' perspective of symptoms, supports and structural factors are key shaping the impact of peer pressure on depression in adolescents in Nigeria. For the Korean youths, (Kim et al. 2022) noted that emotional pressure and anxiety resulting from peer pressure induces depression. (Prevatt, Lowder, and Desmarais 2018) noted that peer pressure is useful in mitigating depression in urban cities of the US based on ANOVA estimates. (Ju and Lee 2018) opined that self-esteem is a key factor in addressing depression among adolescence in South Korea. (Shen 2020) noted that lower achievers in academics are catalyst for depression among adolescence in China. (Wuthrich et al. 2021) observed that to reduce distress among Australian students in their final class, attention should be paid to gender, test anxiety, self-efficacy and peer connectedness. (Gim 2022) advanced literature by calibrating cyberbullying, peer truancy and parenting style as factors that triggers depression among Spanish adolescence. The study employed several count data regression models to analysis a nationally representative survey of Spanish students. The study of (Gim 2022) was similar to that of (Xie and Cui 2022) who noted that environmental and psychological distress exerts serial mediating effect on the association between peer victimization and academic performance in China. The study opined that school-based comprehensive intervention program designed for migrant and non-migrant children are key to fighting depression among adolescence in China. (Glowacz and Schmits 2017) noted that the extent of peer pressure influence on depression is a function of exposure to drug (cannabis).

2. Materials and Methods

This study adopted the correlational research design in order to find the relationship between the independent variables (academic performance, family factor and peer pressure) and the dependent variable (adolescent depression symptoms). Data for the study were derived from questionnaire administered 101 Lecturers (66 males and 35 females) in six private Universities were randomly selected. The target population was the academic staff members (lecturers). A total number of 1200 lecturers exists in the selected universities. The six universities are Bowen University, Iwo, Redeemers University, Ede, Oduduwa University, Ipetu, Fountain University, Osogbo and Joseph Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji and Adeleke University Ede, Osun State. All these universities are located in different geographical areas within Osun state and they were randomly drawn to participate in the study. One hundred and one lecturers responded to all the items.

The instrument was self-developed based on available related literature. The questionnaires were designed and administered electronically using Google form (<https://forms.gle/7Lj1UCk9fw1t7tnJ9>). The instrument has four sections and has a five point likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was pilot tested using a test re-test to ascertain reliability. The Reliability score observed was 0.82. Prior to the development of the questionnaire, the objective of the study was made known to the respondents, and the researchers clearly stated that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that the data obtained were purely for academic research, which is expected to generate policy implications. The respondent thereafter declared their consent to participate and complete the test via google form.

Four null hypotheses were formulated based on the objectives of the study. These four hypotheses

were tested and analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). PPMC is used to determine relationship between two or more variables. To ascertain the normality of the data generating test, we followed (Inegbedion et al. 2020; Adedoyin I Lawal et al. 2022; Adedoyin Isola Lawal et al. 2022) employed descriptive statistical analysis with a focus on the skewness and Kurtosis coefficients. This was followed by employing the Pearson’s correlation coefficients to correlate the variables of interest. We established a significance level of 0.05 for testing our hypotheses. We then employed a regression model to analyse the correlated variables. Finally, we employed structural equation model (SEM), and the maximum likelihood estimation techniques to conduct a confirmative factor analysis (CFA). These models help in assessing the goodness of fit (Carranza Esteban et al 2022). A CFI and TLI indexes between 0.90 and 0.95 is acceptable fit, while value above 0.95 implies adequate fit.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive statistics

In Table 1 we present the results of the descriptive statistics of the variables employed. From the results of both the Kurtosis and Skewness, it can be deduced that the distribution is normally distributed.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Depression	48.188	4.928	0.932	1.092
Family related factor	26.594	2.967	-0.071	-0.499
Academic performance	15.831	1.726	-0.034	0.301
Peer pressure	21.594	4.928	0.271	-0.192

3.2 Correlation between depression and independent variables

In Table 2, we present the results of the correlations (Pearson’s coefficients) between depression and each of the dependent variables. The results suggest that a direct and significant relationship exist between each of peer pressure, family related factors, academic performance and depression among adolescents in the studied economy.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

	Depression	Family related factor	Academic performance	Peer pressure
Depression	1			
Family related factor	0.863**	1		
Academic performance	0.067*	0.598**	1	
Peer pressure	0.145*	0.081*	0.845**	1

Note: *, ** and *** denotes 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

3.3 Predictive analysis of Depression

We performed multiple regression analysis to examine the extent of the contributions of the variance of the variable – depression, and presents our results in Table 3. The table shows the unstandardized regression coefficients (B), standard error of the estimate represented by (SE), the standardized regression coefficients (β), and the predictor statistics (t) and (p). From the results, it can be deduced that the β coefficients revealed that academic performance (-0.12), family related factors (0.23) and

peer pressure (-0.18) significantly predict depression (criterion variable) ($R_2 = 0.17$, $F = 18.21$, $\rho < 0.001$). the t-value of the predictor variable beta regression coefficients was found to be highly significant ($\rho < 0.01$).

Table 3: Predictive analysis of depression among adolescence in Nigeria

Predictors	Depression				
	B	SE	β	T	P
Constant	2.61	0.34		8.73	0.000
Family related factor	0.05	0.07	0.23	0.74	0.004
Academic performance	-0.12	0.03	-0.12	-2.85	0.002
Peer pressure	-0.26	0.04	-0.18	-4.06	0.001

Figure 1 present the result of the CFC. The figure depicts existence of positive correlation among academic performance, family factor and peer pressure. The figure also shows that the interaction among these variables negatively impact on depression among adolescents in the studied economy. The model shows optimal Goodness-of-fit indicies for the predictive model at $X^2 = 8.489$, degree of freedom = 6, $\rho = 0.169$, the Comparative Fit (CFI) = 0.992, the Tucker-Lewis (TLI) = 0.981, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.29, the confidence interval 90% = 0.00 – 0.069, and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.021

4. Discussion

HO1: There is no significant relationship between academic performance and depression symptoms among adolescents as perceived by lecturers.

The outcome of the above Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics revealed that significant relationship exists between academic performance and depression symptoms among adolescents as perceived by lecturers in the selected private universities in Osun state of Nigeria. The calculated p value of 0.002 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance at a correlation index where r value is 0.598. This showed that the relationship between the two variables was directly proportional implying that the higher the academic performance, the higher the depression symptoms among the adolescents. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

HO2: There is no significant between family factor and depression symptoms among adolescents as perceived by lecturers in Osun state.

The outcome of the above Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics revealed that significant relationship exists between family and depression symptoms among adolescents as perceived by lecturers in the selected private universities in Osun state of Nigeria. Since the calculated p value of 0.001 is lower than 0.05 level of significance, the two variables is directly proportional implying that the higher the family factor, the higher the depression symptoms among the adolescents and vice versa. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

HO3: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and depression symptoms among adolescents as perceived by lecturers.

The result of Table three revealed that significant relationship exists between peer pressure and depression symptoms among adolescents as perceived by lecturers. The calculated p value of 0.010 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance at a correlation index where r value is 0.845. This showed that the relationship between the two variables is directly proportional implying the higher the peer pressure related factor, the higher the depression symptoms among adolescents and vice versa. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

HO4: There is no significant relationship between the independent variables (academic performance, family factor and peer pressure) and dependent variable (depression symptoms) among adolescents as perceived by lecturers. The result on Table four revealed that significant relationship

exists between the independent variables (academic performance, family factor and peer pressure) and dependent variable (depression symptoms) as perceived by lecturers. The calculated p value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance at a correlation index where r value is 0.974. The result showed that the relationship between the two variables is directly proportional implying that the higher the independent variables (academic performance, family factor and peer pressure), the higher the dependent variable (depression symptoms) among the adolescents. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

5. Conclusions

This study concluded that predatory factors (academic performance, family factor and peer influence) have influence on the depression symptoms among adolescents. The study suggest that these factors should looked into in order to aviod depression among adolescents.

6. Limitations and Future Studies

On the basis of the outcome of this study, the researchers put forward the following recommendations that reduce predatory factors influencing adolescents' depression symptoms.

1. All educational institutions should have functional guidance and counselling centers headed by counselling psychologists where adolescents' depression symptoms could be tackled before such challenges would escalate.
2. School based counselling centers must be well equipped to meet the emerging needs of the adolescents as well enhancing their academic performance.
3. Counselling Psychologists should keep with the beret of the moment and updating the knowledge and skills for effectiveness. They should intensify efforts at organizing programs to address trending issues on campus.
4. Parents should ensure the home fronts are conducive for proper up bring of their children. They are to give rapt attention to all aspects of the adolescent child development. Parents are also to seek the assistance of counselling and developmental psychologists where there is disharmony at home
5. Peer pressure such as drug addiction indulgence and introduction to other social vices should be well monitored by the parents, lecturers and counselling professionals.
6. The Ministry of Education should commit more funds and expertise in ameliorating the depression symptoms of adolescents in our universities as a result of the various predatory factors.

7. Ethical Approval

The author sought and got approval from the Institutions' Research Ethical Board to conduct the study. However, no laboratory experiment was conducted.

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