

**SOCIAL SKILLS AND SELF-EFFICACY AS CORRELATES OF MENTAL HEALTH
AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY DUTSIN-MA,
KATSINA STATE**

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Abstract

This study examined social skills and self-efficacy as correlate of mental health among undergraduate students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. The study has 4 objectives, 1 research question and 3 hypotheses. It adopted descriptive survey of research type. The population of the study comprised of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education. Simple random technique was used to select two departments each from the two Faculties. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 240 respondents. Three instruments were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Pearson Moment Correlation Statistics and the reliability coefficient of 0.68, 0.70 and 0.70 were obtained. Data collected were analyzed using frequency and percentage, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistic and t-test all at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of this study revealed that there was a moderate status of Mental Health. There exists a significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health; there was a significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health. There exists a significant difference in the Mental Health of Undergraduates Students of based on gender. Recommendations among others were made; the universities' management in collaboration with educational psychologists and counselors should adopt and implement Social Skills Training program for the students. Undergraduates should develop a high sense of social skills and self-efficacy that would enable them to adjust and cope with any form of university demands in order to sustain mental health related issues.

Keywords: Social Skills, Self-efficacy, Undergraduate Students, Mental Health

Introduction

The mental health status of students could determine their ability to perform well in their academic pursuits and other endeavors in life. If the students' mental health status is high, they may be able to interact well with people around them and their environment. Students may feel happy, sad, lonely, and hopeless or even consider suicide due to some life circumstances that can pose a threat to them. Therefore, how students react to these life challenges determines whether their mental health status would be high or low. According to Canadian Institute for Health Information (2009) there are four indicators of mental health status which are well-being, health conditions, human function and death and non-medical determinants of health which are health behaviors, living and working conditions, personal resources and environmental resources. When students feel positive about all these indicators of mental health status, they may be said to be mentally healthy. In this study, mental health status can be defined as a state of social, psychological and emotional well-being in which a

person is able to show love and affection to other persons around them, think well and enjoy good interpersonal relationship. An individual's ability to manage stress and engage in a worthwhile task(s) in one's environment makes a healthy person. It can be inferred further that mentally healthy people have what it takes to adjust with heinous circumstances and also effective in problem-solving.

Social skills treatments include a broad range of competencies that enable individuals to engage and communicate effectively with others. Social skills are learnable actions that are seen as signs of social proficiency (Bala & Monika, 2022). Social skills are a set of learned behaviours which gives the individual, the ability to exercise an influential relationship with other members of the society and abstain from reactions that are considered unreasonable in a society (Rahman, 2023). We learn how to solve social situations by predicting and understanding other people's behaviours. Appropriate social skills provide the individual with an important foundation that leads to good social relationships with peers and academic success. Scholars have argued that inappropriate social skills during childhood are associated with a number of negative consequences in the development of paradigms of social behaviour, such as aggressive behaviour, social withdrawal, extreme shyness, problems with social, emotional, and behavioural adaptation, and social inefficiency.

Social skills are important factor that supports people in establishing good interactions with the people around them. People who have good social skills mean that they have a good ability to create a warm relationship and build trust with others. In addition, he also has strong affection and empathy. Nurhidayat (2022) states that someone with good social skills can establish effective communication both verbally and nonverbally according to the situation and conditions faced. Furthermore, people with high social skills can express their thoughts clearly and are open in expressing feelings or problems that are being faced and finding adaptive ways to solve problems and have high mental health status. They are also responsible for everything they do, have a lot of consideration before taking action, and can express refusal and disapproval. Research conducted by Nair, Ravindranath and Thomas (2019) found that social skills positively affect adolescents' mental health. It was also found that the five aspects of social skills were positively related to all aspects of mental health.

One of the aspects of forming mental health is one's skill in building positive relationships with others, characterized by mutual trust, empathy, understanding, and acceptance of one another. A person needs good social skills to establish this positive relationship. Students who possess strong social skills are more likely to experience positive social interactions, a sense of belonging, and higher levels of social skills (Wentzel, 2020). Making friends easily can enhance students' overall mental and contribute to their successful adaptation to university life.

In addition to social skills, self-efficacy is also a supporting factor for mental health. Self-efficacy is related to the optimism that a person has to overcome various challenges. People who have high self-efficacy will actually feel challenged with more difficult tasks. Vice versa, people with low self-efficacy tend to avoid difficult tasks and are prone to experiencing psychological problems (Utami, 2016). People with high self-efficacy are more likely also to have good mental health, the ability to regulate stress, high self-esteem, better physical health, and better adaptability, (Bisschop, Knegsman & Beekman, 2014).

Maujean and Davis (2013) showed that people who have high self-efficacy will be able to maintain positive feelings. Good self-efficacy is positively correlated with life satisfaction and has lower negative feelings. Someone with high self-efficacy believes that they can take action to adjust to the things happening around them, while someone who has low self-efficacy believes that they cannot get things done and tend to give up easily. Therefore, self-efficacy also helps improve one's mental

health.

Misero and Hawadi (2022) reiterated that people with good mental health could feel pleasure, manage stress, solve problems effectively, and be committed to achieving good academic grades. Good self-efficacy is an important factor in this case because, with good self-efficacy, a person has good self-confidence in various situations, challenges or difficulties faced. Someone who has good self-efficacy and high mental health means that he has confidence in his abilities, can accept his shortcomings and strengths, and has a purpose in life for the future. This matches a statement by Putri and Rustika (2017), which showed that adolescents with consistency in their belief in their abilities have the opportunity to achieve success in their goals, which can lead to mental health.

Based on the descriptive analysis, it was found that the self-efficacy of male students was higher than female students. This coincides with Zimmerman and Anita (2014) who explained that, there are differences in the development of abilities and competencies between men and women. Males try to boast about their abilities, and women often underestimate them. In addition, the role of parents in giving stereotypes about differences in abilities between men and women, where parents assume that women have lower abilities than men, can make women have lower confidence in their abilities. So, self-confidence (self-efficacy) in women is lower than in men.

Statement of the Problem

University life is most of the time perceived as overwhelming and stressful time, in four aspects of student's adjustments in university life such as for social, academic, institutional attachment and personal-emotional adjustment. The first-year students for instance experience a lot of social difficulties such as moving away from their primary support systems-parents and intellectual challenges including more demanding course work or heavy work load. In addition, to the above-mentioned factors university life can be filled with emotional stressors such as loneliness, home sickness, grief, confusion and uncertainty all related to break from their primary attachment figures-parents and or other loved ones (Ayele, 2018).

In addition, many students often for the first time leave their homes and distance themselves from their support networks. The extent to which the increase in poor mental health specifically within students in higher education highlights a need to understand what they might cause the problem of mental health related. Therefore, this study found it necessary the need to investigate Social Skills and Self-efficacy as Correlate of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine Social Skills and Self-efficacy as Correlate of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. Specifically, the study seeks to examine:

1. the status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State
2. the significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State
3. the significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State
4. the significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State on the basis of gender.

Research Questions

The following research question were raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What is the status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State?
2. What is the significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State?
3. What is the significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State?
4. What is the significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State on the basis of gender?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study.

H01: There is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

H02: There is no significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

H03: There is no significant difference in the Mental Health between male and female Undergraduate Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender

Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey of research design. This type of study seeks to establish what relationship exists between two or more variables. Usually, such studies indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables. The population of the study comprised of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, Federal University of Dutsin-Ma. Simple random technique was used to select two departments (Economics and Sociology) in the Faculty of Social Sciences. While in the Faculty of Education two departments were equally selected (Science Education and Special Education). Purposive random sampling technique was used to select 60 (100 level) undergraduate students in each of the four Departments in the both two Faculties of Social Sciences and Education. Hence, the sample of this study makes 240 respondents. Three researcher designed questionnaires were used for the data collection in this study. These included; Social Skills Scale (SSS), Self-efficacy Scale (SES) and Mental Health Scale (MHS). The instruments were validated by two expert that specialized in test, measurement and evaluation in University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria to determine both face and content validity. Also, to determine reliability of the instrument split-half method was used and equally subjected to Pearson Moment Correlation Statistics and the reliability coefficients 0.68, 0.70 and 0.70 were obtained respectively. Each of the two scales has 10 items with 4 points scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), to Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4). The research questions were answered using frequency and percentage. The research hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistic and t-test all at 0.05 level of significance

Results

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State?

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Status of Mental Health among Respondents

Variable	Scores range	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
Mental Health	1-25	34	14	High
	26-40	129	54	Moderate
	41-56	77	32	Low

Table 1 revealed that out of 240 (100%) respondents, 34 (14%) has high status of Mental Health 129 (54%) has moderate status of Mental Health and 77 (32%) has low status of Mental Health. This implies that there was a moderate status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

Testing of Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

Table 2: PPMC table showing the relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Social Skills	240	26.94	13.58	238	.202	.000	Rejected
Mental Health	240	17.35	14.85				

P>0.05

Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value is (.202) greater than the p-value (.000) at 0.05 level of significance and 238 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State is rejected. This indicates that there was significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

H02: There is no significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

Table 3: PPMC table showing the relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Self-efficacy	240	29.67	14.39	238	.201	.000	rejected
Mental Health	240	17.35	16.81				

P>0.05

Table 3 revealed that the calculated r-value is (.201) greater than the p-value (.000) at 0.05 level of significance and 238 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of

Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State is rejected. This indicates that there was significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

H03: There is no significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender.

Table 4: t-Table Summary showing the gender difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender

Variable	Gender Group	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Critical t-value	Decision
Mental Health	Male	83	10.35	11.15	278	0.04	1.96	Rejected
	Female	157	20.46	17.14				

$P < 0.05$

Table 4 revealed that the calculated t-value is (2.04) is less than the Critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 238 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender is rejected. This implies that there was a significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender.

Summary of Finding

The finding of this study was summarized as follows;

1. There was a moderate status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.
2. There exists a significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.
3. There was significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.
4. There exists a significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender.

Discussions of Finding

The finding revealed that there was a moderate status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. The finding of this study does not agree with World Health Organisation (WHO, 2018) who found that globally, the prevalence of mental health disorders in children and adolescents is between 10% and 20%, The development of mental health problems in adolescence is strongly related with situations and experiences that a child or adolescent goes through in their social circles, primarily those involving family and school (Boyle, Georgiades, Duncan, Wang & Comeau, 2019).

The result of hypothesis one revealed there was a significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. The finding of this study is in line with Nurhidayat (2022) who found that someone with good social skills can establish effective communication both verbally and nonverbally according to the situation and conditions faced. Furthermore, people with high social skills can express their thoughts clearly and are open in expressing feelings or problems that are being faced and finding adaptive ways to solve

problems and have high mental health status.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there exist a significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State. The finding of this study agrees with Bisschop, Knegsman, and Beekman (2014) who found that people with high self-efficacy are more likely also to have good mental health, the ability to regulate stress, high self-esteem, better physical health, and better adaptability. But contrary to the above finding, Utami (2016) who found that people who have high self-efficacy will actually feel challenged with more difficult tasks. Vice versa, people with low self-efficacy tend to avoid difficult tasks and are prone to experiencing psychological problems. Also, Putri and Rustika (2017) who found that adolescents with consistency in their belief in their abilities have the opportunity to achieve success in their goals, which can lead to mental health.

The result of hypothesis three revealed there exist a significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State based on gender. This implies that female undergraduate students do experience low status of mental health compare to their male counterpart. The finding of this study agrees with Dogra (2016) who found that that girls were found to be more adversely affected by mental health than boys in the tertiary institutions.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the followings conclusions were reached; there was a moderate status of Mental Health among Undergraduates Students. There exists a significant relationship between Social Skills and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students. There was significant relationship between Self-efficacy and Mental Health among Undergraduates Students. It means that the moderate level of both social skills and self-efficacy predict the moderate status of mental health among the students. There exists a significant difference in the Mental Health among Undergraduates Students of based on gender. This implies that female undergraduate students do experience mental health related problems than their male counterpart.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. The universities' management in collaboration with educational psychologists and counselors should adopt and implement Social Skills Training program among the students. This will ensure that students gain skills to help them deal with mental health related challenges and be able to focus on their studies.
2. Undergraduates should develop a high sense of social skills and self-efficacy that would enable them to adjust and cope with any form of university demands in order to sustain mental health related issues.
3. Universities management should provide a conducive environment that will enhance students' mental health status by providing more infrastructures like lecture theatres and hostels for the students.
4. School counselors and educational psychologist should therefore employ interventions that enhance self-efficacy and teach students social skills to enable them cope more effectively with their academic and social environments.

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