

Psychological Challenges and School Adjustments of Undergraduates with Physical Disabilities in Rivers State Owned Universities

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examined the psychological challenges and school adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities which are Rivers State University, Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni. The paper adopted a correlational research design and was guided by three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses. The aim of the paper was to determine the relationship between psychological challenges and school adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. The population comprised of twenty-five (25) undergraduates with physical or mobility impairment. Hence, the population and the sample size are the same, the sampling technique adopted was the census sampling technique or block sampling technique. The instrument of data collection was a self-developed questionnaire which was validated by three experts in Special Education, Psychology as well as Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was obtained using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and a co-efficient of 0.85 obtained. The research questions were answered and hypotheses tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The results on the test on hypotheses revealed that there is significant negative relationship between anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. The paper recommended among others that the university administration should give more time to undergraduates with physical disabilities to complete and turn in assignments and examination because of the strain their disability puts on them.*

KEYWORDS: disability, undergraduates with disabilities, psychological challenges, scholastic adjustments, right-based theory of disability.

INTRODUCTION

Humans are born without being responsible for their looks, complexion, genes, whether they are born with an impairment or not. Impairment in humans may be referred to as damage in the body part or parts of an individual, which results in a disability or lack of function of that impaired part of the body. There are different types of disabilities caused by different types of impairments. For

purposes of special education, the Federal Ministry of Education¹ classified disabilities into visual impairment (blind and the partially sighted); hearing impairment (deaf and the partially hearing); physical and health impairment; intellectual disability (mild, moderate, severe and profound); emotional and behavioural disorders (hyperactive, hypoactive / the socially maladjusted); speech and language impairment; learning disabilities (psychological or neurological phobia or challenges); multiple disabilities; gifted and talented; and albinos.

Physical or mobility impairments are impairments that affect the limbs which are the legs, hands or spine such that movement or gripping is different from the normal. There are different types of physical disabilities, which may be congenitally caused or acquired adventitiously. Physical impairment is usually visible and noticeable to others and is evident when the individual tries to perform normal movement or gripping functions. It attracts pity or charity from some, as well as stigmatization, discrimination and marginalization from others. Persons with physical disabilities could be seen using wheelchairs, crutches, long sticks, walking frame, tricycles, splints, artificial limbs, special foot, neck collars to support themselves while moving.

Nigeria currently operates the 9-3-4 system of education, which is the formal educational structure comprising of Basic education (Primary and Junior Secondary – 9 years), Senior Secondary (3 years) and Tertiary education (4 years). These levels of education provide for the education of all Nigerian citizens – able bodied and those with disabilities or special needs alike. The Federal government through the National Policy on Education provides that it runs an ‘inclusive education’, which implies that it insists all children must be educated within the same environment without discrimination. It however, still provides for the creation of special schools for children with varied special needs or disabilities at the primary and secondary levels to cater for the needs of children with disabilities.

At the tertiary level, interested students pass through rigorous and competitive selection processes, as well as fulfill specific requirements before being admitted into such institutions. The environment of such institutions does not also take into consideration the accessibility and accommodation needs of students with physical disabilities. In Rivers State, there are no special schools for students with disabilities at the tertiary levels which follows that students with physical disabilities have to compete with their able-bodied contemporaries for admission into tertiary institutions of their choice within the State. They have to contend with adjusting to the environment and to the learning conditions provided which have little or no considerations for students with various disabilities. It can therefore be right to state that tertiary institutions in the State were built and are managed without plans for students with disabilities in mind.

As at 2007, persons with disabilities in Nigeria was estimated at ten percent of the total population²; that estimate should be higher at this point because of the increased acts of man’s inhumanity to man occurring in several parts of the country. Persons with disabilities are generally

¹ (FRN, 2004)

² (Barron & Amerena, 2007)

assumed to constitute some of the poorest, most marginalized and socially excluded groups in the society. They face discrimination, stigmatization, deprivation, marginalization and prejudice because of their disability and are sometimes subjected to negative psychological feelings such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression³.

Persons with disabilities who have had the privilege of completing their post-Primary (secondary) education also share such desire of going to tertiary institutions to improve their chances of eking of a living for themselves. The reason behind this is based on the fact that people with disabilities too have invaluable roles to play in national development, and to be able to do this effectively and meaningfully, their education needs have to be given proper attention⁴. Furthermore, the modern trend of education globally is ensuring that everyone is given an opportunity for education most especially the focus is on addressing the educational plights of students with one form of disability or the other so as to give them a better life.

One of the most difficult burdens to bear for a person with a physical disability is not merely the disability itself, but the stereotypes and the negative attitudes society attributes to disability, as Therefore, issues of coping with and adjusting to disability cannot be validly considered without examining psychological problems. How handicapping a disability is, depends to a large extent on the characteristics of the person's environment⁵.

There are two universities owned and managed by the Rivers State Government. They are the Rivers State University, Nkpolu - Oroworukwo and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni. Rivers State University is one of the foremost universities in Rivers State and located at Nkpolu - Oroworokwu, Port Harcourt. It was first founded in 1972 as Rivers State College of Science and Technology, and later changed to a university in 1980 as the Rivers State University of Science and Technology and later renamed the Rivers State University. While Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni was first established as a College of Education in 1971 and later changed to a university in 2009. Both universities are purpose built for able bodied students. This can be deduced from the nature and design of the buildings which were constructed with stairs and stair cases, compact toilets and hostels et cetera.

However, in recent times, some buildings in both the universities have been modified with the construction of ramps at the entrances and nothing more. Apart from the inaccessible faculty buildings and hostels, there is an inaccessible transportation, library and library material. There is also the issue of unavailability of special educators and assistive devices to cater for the educational needs of these special learners. There is also the challenge of stigmatization, discrimination and marginalization which students with disabilities face from members of the university community as a result of their disability.

³ (Adiela, 2019)

⁴ (Oladejo & Oladejo, 2011)

⁵ (Muzemil, 2018)

These students, in addition to these social challenges, contend with psychological challenges which are aftermath of the burdens placed on them by the social challenges thrown at them by the society. These psychological challenges include depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness, loss of interest, despondency and dejection; anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness or uneasiness about something with an uncertain outcome; while low self-esteem may be seen as a lack of confidence perhaps because of inherent flaws. Students with disabilities face these psychological challenges and other social challenges which possibly affect their scholastic adjustments. This paper attempted to examine if these psychological challenges which bedevil undergraduates with disabilities in Rivers State owned universities have any relationship with their scholastic adjustment.

The research questions are:

1. To what extent does depression relate to scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities?
2. To what extent does anxiety relate to scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities?
3. To what extent does low self-esteem relate to scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities?

The hypotheses are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Meaning and Nature of Disability

The word disability is derived from two words – dis meaning lack or absence of, and ability. Thus, disability is a lack of ability or absence of ability. The Americans with Disability Act defines disability is a physical or mental impairment that limits a person in one or more major life activities. It is an abnormal condition or deformity that creates inability to function as normal. The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act of 2018 defines disability to include long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which with interaction with other barriers may hinder the full and effective participation in the society on equal basis with others. Hence, disability is an impairment in a person's body which may be of a long-term nature which hinders such as person from equally participating equally with others. Such impairment may be of a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory nature, but must be of a long-term period.

Persons with disabilities are persons “who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective

participation in society on an equal basis with others” (United Nations, 2010). According to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons a disabled persons is any person unable to ensure by himself wholly or partly, the necessities of a normal individual and social life, as a result of deficiency either congenital or not, in his or her physical or mental capacities. It went on to characterize persons with disability as persons who are weak or infirm in terms of their body parts not functioning normally whether physically or intellectually or as a result of old age. Hence, a person with physical disability is one who as a result of a physical impairment associated with the limbs, together with social myth, fears, stereotypes, attitudes and the physical environment is substantially limited in his opportunities to enjoy a full and active life⁶.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 of England defines a person with disability as one with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This definition outlines four elements of a person with disability: physical or mental impairment; impairment must result in substantial adverse effect; the effects must be long-term; and must affect normal day-to-day activities.

From the foregoing definitions, a person with disability is one who suffers from an impairment that is of a permanent or long-term nature, and who is hindered by it from independently and effectively performing normal daily tasks. Disability thus, creates hindrances and barriers for the bearer and such persons also face cultural barriers as a result of social myths, fears and stereotypes about them.

The definition provided by the Discrimination Act is not all-encompassing but restrictive in the sense that it does not provide a definition for long-term, neither does it cover some invisible disabilities such as epilepsy and reproductive disabilities. Igwe and Adiola⁷ view disability as a physical or visible impairment, mental or invisible impairment which incapacitates a person from functioning normally in everyday activities and which attracts stereotypes from others. The above definition will include persons with physical disabilities such as visual impairments, hearing and speech impairments, mobility impairments, mental and psychiatric challenges, albinism and reproductive impairments.

The most recent definition of disability is that provided by the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health of 2001 which states that disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions, which result from the interaction between the person with a health condition and environmental factors (physical environment and attitudes), and personal factors (example age or gender).

Disability shows no discrimination on gender, race, age or religion⁸. Both male and female suffer from disability. Persons with disabilities suffer from impairments which may be physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. These impairments create barriers against them and hinder or

⁶ (Adiola, 2019)

⁷ (2020)

⁸⁸ (Mosope, 2011)

inhibit their active and effective participation in society on an equal basis with other members of the society⁹. Disability creates barriers and hinders opportunity for persons with it from having an education, employment or access to basic life necessities including access to justice and transportation. It is probable for persons with disabilities to be uneducated, unemployed and illiterate, therefore, they are also likely to be poor and are more likely to live in deplorable conditions.

Ozaji in Ubani and Sanikpege¹⁰ distinguished disability from impairment by defining disability as a lack of ability and impairment as an abnormality or disorder of the physical structure or organ of the body. Impairment can be in the form of physical impairment, mental impairment and sensorial impairment. Impairments may also lead to a form of disability. However, impairment and disability are many times used interchangeably.

It can be deduced that there are basically two causes of disability namely congenital and adventitious. Congenital cause of disability refers to a cause occurring before birth and refers to congenital conditions and birth defects wherein the individual is born with an impairment or disability. An example is a baby born without limbs; such an individual will grow up not having limbs and will experience several challenges relating to mobility. While adventitious causes refer to causes other than birth defects which occur later in life.

Cases of disabilities are on the increase in recent times following the increase of man's inhumanity to man and the economic state of our environment. Disability shows no discrimination to gender, religion, race or status, it can occur at any time in a person's life – whether at birth, childhood or adulthood¹¹.

The Concept of Physical Disabilities

Physical impairment is a type of disability which is defined as the inability to perform one or more life's daily activities independently without assistance¹². It is a condition wherein a person's body part is damaged or not functioning properly. Physical impairment includes physical defects affecting the upper or lower limbs' loss or impairment, poor manual dexterity and damage to one or more organs of the body such that the ability to move is defective or impaired. Physical impairment could either be congenitally acquired or consequences of disease, and people who have broken or deformed skeletal structure also fall into this category.

Physical impairment limits a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina. Students with mobility disability may find it difficult to explore and navigate through their environment because of social and physical barriers they encounter. Some need and use assistive devices such as wheelchairs, clutches, walkers, prosthetic devices and orthotic devices. They are further hindered from independently carrying out their daily academic and social activities within

⁹ (Lang & Upah in Adiola 2019)

¹⁰ (2020)

¹¹ (Adiola, 2018)

¹² (Adiola, 2019)

the university as a result of these impairments. These disabilities cause and create challenges for these students which are capable of affecting their scholastic adjustments one way or another.

Psychological Challenges of Undergraduates with Physical Disabilities

These persons encounter challenges from other members of the university community who hold wrong prejudices against persons with disabilities. They sometimes face ridicule, embarrassment or neglect and isolation from other members of the university community because of their disability. This sort of treatment could lead to depression, anxiety and low self-esteem on the part of these undergraduates with physical disabilities.

Depression among Undergraduates with Physical Disabilities

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It also affects one's feelings, thinking and behaviour, and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems; and described as a feeling of severe despondency and dejection. The presence of impairment is capable of stirring up feelings of sadness, despondency and dejection among persons with disabilities in general and students with disabilities in particular.

Richter-Levin and Xu¹³ opined that stress is a critical factor for depression. It may take the form of an accumulation of minor daily hassles, more severe chronic strains, or specific negative life events. These have individually been linked to depression. Stressful life experiences could lead to acute or chronic periods of depression which are likely to undermine a variety of school related competencies including scholastic performance. Depression has been linked to a range of negative school-related outcomes comprising of poor grades, decreased classroom participation and so on. Depressive behaviours may also elicit negative reactions from teachers and peers and further lead to social isolation.

The stress associated with disability and thought of these undergraduates with disabilities not being able to independently carry out their everyday tasks without the assistance of others may lead to depression. Such feelings may be worsened when they are ridiculed, embarrassed, marginalized and discriminated against by their peers and lecturers; depression may also creep in when they encounter barriers created by the university community as a result of their disability.

Anxiety among Undergraduates with Physical Disabilities

The Macmillan Dictionary defines anxiety to mean a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome. In a related view Merriam-Webster defines anxiety as a strong desire or concern to do something or for something to happen. Similarly, a health and medical commentator describes it as the body's natural response to stress; a feeling of fear or apprehension as to what is to come. Davidoff in Izuchi and Opara¹⁴ further identify anxiety as emotion characterized by feelings of anticipated danger, tension and distress and by arousal of the sympathetic nervous system. They further assume anxiety as an emotion just like sadness or

¹³ (2018)

¹⁴ (2017)

happiness that is characterized by feelings that unfavourable or dangerous circumstances are imminent; which lead to the individual becoming tensed up, troubled and distressed. Anxiety is common in our daily lives, however, where it is high and persistent, it becomes a problem. It can take on different levels- low, medium or high. High level of anxiety can be debilitating, and most persons with disability elicit high levels of anxiety on persons with disabilities.

The presence of impairment is capable of creating stress which results in anxiety. The stress caused by impairment bothers more on the barriers that exist in the society as well as the negative perception that society holds about disability. For example, a student with mobility disability faces the problem of inaccessible transportation system within the university community; and as such is forced to roll himself from one place to another. Such movements produce stress, which may lead to anxiety leading to missing classes because it takes them a longer time to move from one location to another. Again, it is easily foreseeable that the undergraduates with physical disabilities may arrive tired and exhausted because of the stress of rolling themselves from one location to another.

Low Self-Esteem among Undergraduates with Physical Disabilities

Low self-esteem is when someone lacks confidence about who they are and what they can do; they often feel incompetent, unloved, or inadequate. Some students with disabilities suffer from low self-esteem because of their disability and the negative perception society has about disability. The consciousness of their impairment may sometimes leave them feeling different from the “average student”. They sometimes feel inadequate because of the impairment, coupled with negative treatment meted out to them; resulting from them suffering from low self-esteem and inferiority complex. People with disabilities may have poor self-esteem and think that they do not deserve or have the ability to take part in activities and events because of their disability¹⁵.

Hewitt¹⁶ noted that self-esteem is a psychological construct that projects a person’s evaluation of their worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude towards oneself. Self-esteem comprises of beliefs about oneself such as “I am beautiful and worthy”; as well as emotional state such as triumph, despair, shame and pride. Smith and Mackie¹⁷ define self-esteem as a person’s positive or negative evaluation and inherent feeling of themselves. Researchers Hewitt in Orth and Robins¹⁸ conceptualized self-esteem as an influential predictor of certain outcomes such as academic achievement, happiness and criminal behaviour. Baron and Byrne¹⁹ hold that the recall of negative life event or the personalized situation like physical challenge that impairs one’s movement have the negative effect on an individual’s self-esteem. Blake and Rust in Ithome and others²⁰ found a significant relationship between school attendance behaviour and self-esteem of physically challenged students.

¹⁵ (Laveena et al 2017)

¹⁶ (2009)

¹⁷ (2007)

¹⁸ (2014)

¹⁹ (2008)

²⁰ (2021)

Scholastic Adjustment and Undergraduates with Physical Disabilities

The term scholastic adjustment is coined from two words – scholastic and adjustment. The word scholastic refers to school and education. Weiten and Lloyd²¹ defined adjustment as the psychological processes through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. According to Denga in Kinanee²², adjustment is the harmony, congruence or a goodness of-fit between an individual and the standards they are adjudged. Adjustment is a common expression used frequently by people in their daily life. Therefore, adjustment can be defined as a psychological process that involves coping with new standards and values. For example, it is often used in the bus when asking a fellow passenger to perhaps sit properly or make room for another; or when a guest visits for a few days, we have to adjust room for them in the house. Makwana and Kaji²³ opined that adjustment can be viewed from two perspectives. Firstly, adjustment may be seen as an achievement or how well a person handles his conflicts and overcomes the resulting tension. Secondly, adjustment may be viewed as a process as to how a person adjusts or compromises to his conflicts. According to Iro and others²⁴, school adjustment may be measured or evaluated in terms of associated aspects of students' education processes including appreciation of the school environment, school experiences, school engagement, school readiness, and school performance. They asserted that students' interaction with the university environment involves academic achievement, personal growth and accomplishments within the classroom. However, it is the researcher's opinion that adjustment is not limited only to children's progress and achievement but also their attitudes toward schooling, anxieties, loneliness, social support, and academic motivation.

Salami in Ukaegbu and Obikoya²⁵ opined that there are basically four sub-scales of adjustment which include: academic, social, personal-emotional, as well as institutional attachment adjustment. Academic adjustment refers to how well students deal with educational demands, for example motivation to complete academic requirement; academic effort and satisfaction with academic environment. Social adjustment refers to how well the students participate or are involved in social activities and the satisfaction with various aspects of school experience. Personal-emotional adjustment refers to how satisfied a student feels psychologically and physically.

This paper adopts the perspective of Ukaegbu and Obikoya²⁶ who view school adjustment of students with disabilities holistically as including academic, emotional, social and environmental adjustments. Thus, the above parameters will be considered in assessing the scholastic adjustments of students with mobility disability in Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

²¹ (2006)

²² (2010)

²³ (2014)

²⁴ (2017)

²⁵ (2017)

²⁶ (2017)

Theoretical framework

The theoretical review of this paper is hinged on two outstanding theories that have stood the test of time and they are: The Social theory of disability and the Rights-based model of disability. The Social Theory of Disability. The social theory of disability was propounded by Mike Oliver in the year 1983 when he coined the phrase as an ideology. The political activism in the United States provided the bases for the movement of independent life which was the bedrock of the social movement. In the United Kingdom, from a sociological perspective, they created some theoretical bases which would at the time be known as the social barrier model and would later be known as the social model of disability²⁷. This theory sees disability as arising from the “interaction of a person’s functional status with the physical, cultural and policy environments”. Here, disability is the outcome of the interaction of a person with the environment, therefore, it is neither person nor environment specific²⁸. It focuses on the restrictions which society places in the way of persons with disabilities. This theory opines that the experience of being a person with disability consists of the challenges or encounters with the barriers erected by the society.

The criticism of this model is that it separates impairment from disability and asserts that people with impairments are disabled not by the impairment but by the society. It advocates that where barriers placed by the society are removed that persons with disabilities will be able to function better in the society. With respect to this study, the theory argues that environmental situations can cause a challenge for undergraduates in the school environment because of the manner in which structures and networks are built. It explains that if undergraduates with any form of disabilities are to succeed in their environment, then classrooms, faculty buildings, hostels and transportations and all the areas that they move around to within the two universities under study are expected to be constructed in a manner that will be accessible for them to easily attend classes and other Faculty engagements without experiencing any form of accessibility barriers.

The Right-Based Model of Disability

This model of disability was developed after the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006. The Convention was adopted on the 13th of December, 2006 and opened for signature on the 30th March, 2007 with 82 countries signing on the opening day. The right-based model of disability is a political strategy which has become a way of construing disability by grouping people with disability into an identity which is based upon membership of a minority group. Entitlement into this group is based on the ability to come under the definition of a person with disability²⁹. This theory necessitated the clamor for and passing of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disability (Prohibition) Act, 2018 in Nigeria, which articulates the rights of persons with disabilities while prohibiting discriminatory practices against them. It argues that persons with disabilities are humans and deserving of rights accruable to other humans; and frowns against the ill-treatment, discrimination, stigmatization and segregation of persons as a result of their disability status.

²⁷ (Barnes et al in Palacios, 2017)

²⁸ (Awah in Adiola 2019)

²⁹ (Awah in Adiola 2019)

Adiela³⁰ advocates that women with disabilities in particular and persons with disabilities in general are entitled to rights first by virtue of their being humans and then as one having a disability. It was opined that persons with disabilities in general are humans – thus part of the human family. Therefore, qualified and entitled to the enjoyment of equal and inalienable rights which are contained in international instruments³¹.

The above theory is relevant as it explains that as long as a person is a member of a particular community, they should be given the rights and privileges accrued to them irrespective of their age, gender, ability or disability status. Specifically, it explains that persons with disability should not be treated as outcast in an environment where they belong to, rather they should be treated with respect and given the rights and privileges as other members of the society and be allowed to partake in all activities that able bodied persons are involved in without any form of stigmatization, discrimination and marginalization of their rights. Thus, undergraduates with physical disabilities should be seen as humans deserving of equal rights as their able-bodied counterparts.

Empirical framework

Dabana and Gobir³² conducted a study to determine the prevalence of depression and the academic factors that are associated with it among students of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Nigeria. The study was a cross-sectional study conducted among 127 undergraduate students of ABU. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) and were analyzed using IBM-Statistical Software for Social Sciences, version 20.0. The results from the study revealed that majority of the respondents (58.2%) had depression, with 37.0%, 15.7%, 3.9%, and 1.6% having mild, moderate, moderately-severe, and severe depression, respectively, according to the PHQ-9 scoring system, using a cutoff score of 5. There was no statistically significant association between depression and academic performance of respondents ($P = 0.360$) nor with interest (or lack thereof) in the course of study ($P = 0.266$). The study concluded that depression, at different levels of severity, was noted among respondents; and that more screening and counseling services should be made easily accessible to students in the study area.

McGovern and others³³ investigated the relationships between dimensions of anxiety, age, gender, and school adjustment in students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). The study consisted of a sample size of 177 students with SLD who completed measures of anxiety and school adjustment. The results of a hierarchical regression analysis indicated that age and gender together were not significant predictors of attitude to school. It however found that physiological and social anxiety, tended to cause poorer attitudes towards school adjustment. A second hierarchical regression indicated that younger students reported more negative attitudes toward teachers, and after controlling for age and gender, students with more social anxiety reported more negative attitudes toward teachers.

³⁰ (2019)

³¹ (Adiela, 2019: 255-256).

³² (2018)

³³ (2016)

Namcek³⁴ carried out a study to determine the status of self-esteem in people with physical disabilities and compare SE scores between active and inactive individuals. The sample of people with physical disabilities (n = 186) was divided into two groups of those who are regularly participating in sport (active; n = 88) and those who are not participating in any sport in their leisure (inactive; n = 98). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was used as a primary research method. 10-item scale measures global self-worth by measuring positive and negative feelings about the self. Higher scores (from 10 to 40 points) indicate higher self-esteem. The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine the differences of 10 RSES items and total scores between active and inactive people with physical disabilities. We found that the mean score of RSES in people with disabilities was 28.83 points; active people with physical disabilities observed total score of RSES 30.01 points and group of inactive people with physical disabilities showed the lowest self-esteem by achieving 27.76 points. Mean scores comparison of each RSES item between active and inactive people with physical disabilities revealed higher self-esteem in the group of active people with physical disabilities. Significantly higher self-esteem was presented by 4 from 10 RSES items and by total score in the group of active people with physical disabilities. The results of our study confirmed that actively living people with physical disabilities have significantly higher self-esteem comparing those people with physical disabilities who are living sedentary life style.

Seyi-Adeyemo³⁵ carried out a study to compare participation of Nigerians with mobility disability (the focus group) and their age-matched counterparts without any physical disability (control group). The influence of self-esteem and health status on participation was also investigated. A total of 90 individuals aged between 16 and 35 years, with 45 members in each group, took part in the study. Participation, self-esteem and health status were assessed in all participants using the Craig Handicap Assessment and Reporting Technique (CHART), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the Nottingham Health Profile, respectively. Participation and health scores were significantly lower in the focus group. Although their self-esteem score was high (19.56 ± 3.87), this was significantly lower than for the control group ($U=720$; $p=0.01$). Only the affected life areas ($\rho=0.36$; $p=0.01$) and sleep ($\rho=-0.23$; $p=0.12$) influenced participation in the focus and control groups respectively. The results showed that individuals with mobility disability have lower self-esteem, health status and participation compared with their age-matched peers without physical disability. However, the mean score obtained by the focus group indicates that they have high self-esteem. The sampling technique and sample size are important limitations of this report.

Ukaegbu and Obikoya³⁶ designed a study to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence, social support, self-esteem and coping strategies predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlation design and had seven research questions with seven corresponding hypotheses to guide the conduct of the study at 0.05 alpha levels. A sample of 382 first year university undergraduates of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, 2015/2016 academic session was chosen for the study

³⁴ (2017)

³⁵ (2008)

³⁶ (2017)

through simple and proportional stratified random sampling techniques. Results showed among others that; emotional intelligence, social support, self-esteem and coping strategies taken together significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates. It was therefore recommended amongst others that university authorities should introduce personality programmes that will provide training in emotional skills that will help university undergraduates in their overall adjustment to the new university environment.

Undiyaundeye and Basake³⁷ carried out a study to investigate the psychosocial challenges of physically challenged secondary school students in the context of inclusive education in Nigeria. The study was carried out in selected mainstream schools in Ogoja Educational Zone of Cross Rivers State. The researchers employed mixed method paradigm; both descriptive cross-sectional and naturalistic phenomenology designs to collect the data. Probability and non-probability sampling were employed to select the sample; 67 teachers/counselors. Questionnaires were used as tools for data collection, and interview guide for teachers, counselors and the support staff. Convergent model was used to analyze and interpret the data. The study found that learners with physical disabilities in integrated schools suffer low self-esteem, however, they enjoy warm peer acceptance from both teachers and the support staff relate indiscriminately.

Similarly, Famakinwa and others³⁸ carried out a study to identify the psychosocial challenges of public-school students in Ore and the associated factors that may predispose the students to these challenges. The study which was a descriptive one with cross – sectional design had a total of three hundred and fifty-seven respondents who accurately completed the questionnaire participated in the study. Descriptive statistics was done and results were presented in percentages using tables. The findings revealed a good number of the respondents are able to identify with some of the psychosocial health problems such as bully (43.1%), anger (33.9%), hunger in school (40.1%) and thought of committing suicide (21.8%). The perceived factors related to the causes of these identified psychosocial health problems by the respondents were poverty (94.1%), peer pressure (96.4%), abuse and neglect (86.3%), emotional stressors (96%) among others. The study recommended that public health nurses and school health nurses should work with school administrators to enhance mental health of school children with a view to ensuring conducive learning environment that will promote academic performances.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted correlational survey design. This design addressed the independent and dependent variables so as to determine the extent of relationship between them, and the two sets of results were correlated on the assessed variables to obtain the extent of relationship. The areas of study were the two universities owned by the Rivers State Government, which are: Rivers State University, Nkpolu - Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.

³⁷ (2020)

³⁸ (2016)

The population of the study comprised twenty-five (25) undergraduates with physical disabilities in the two Rivers State owned universities. The sample size consisted of all the entire twenty-five (25) undergraduates with physical disabilities which constitute the population. It adopted the census or block sampling technique wherein the entire population of interest which comprised of a group whose members all share a given characteristics and experiences is studied.

A self-developed questionnaire for students with physical disability in Rivers State owned universities; titled “Psychological Challenges and Scholastic Adjustment of Undergraduates with Physical Disability Questionnaire” (PCSAUPDQ) was administered. The instrument was validated by an expert in Measurement and Evaluation, and two other research experts from Special Needs Education and Psychology.

The method of reliability adopted was the test – retest method and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The instrument yielded a reliability index of 0.85, with the reliability co-efficient of the sections as follows: psychological challenges subscale is 0.86, while scholastic adjustment subscale is 0.84.

In addition, the physical and psychological environment where data was collected was made comfortable by ensuring privacy, confidentiality and general physical comfort. Participants were informed not to write their names on the questionnaires to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaires were personally administered on all participants. The rights to anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent were observed. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Data

Research Question One: To what extent does depression relate to scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Table 1: Relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Variables		DEP	SAU
DEP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	25	25
SAU	Pearson Correlation	-.761**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 indicates the relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. This result shows a value of -0.761 which implies that there is a high negative relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. This result indicates that as scores on depression increases, there is a decrease in the scores on scholastic adjustment among undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities and vice versa.

Data in Table 1 also revealed that the relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This is because the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance guiding the study. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. This result of this null hypothesis is that there is significant negative relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Research Question Two: To what extent does anxiety relate to scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Table 2: Relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Variables		ANX	SAU
ANX	Pearson Correlation	1	-.339**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.026
	N	25	25
SAU	Pearson Correlation	-.339**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	
	N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 2 indicates the relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. This result shows a value of -0.339 which implies that there is a low negative relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. This result indicates that as scores on anxiety increases, there is a decrease in the scores on scholastic adjustment among undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities and vice versa.

Data in Table 2 also revealed that the relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This is because the p-value (0.026) is less than 0.05 level of significance

guiding the study. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. This result of this null hypothesis is that there is significant negative relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Research Question Three: To what extent does low self-esteem relate to scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Table 3: Relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Variables		LSE	SAU
LSE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.238**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	25	25
SAU	Pearson Correlation	-.254**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	25	25

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 3 indicates the relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. This result shows a value of -0.238 which implies that there is a low negative relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. This result indicates that as scores on low self-esteem increases, there is a decrease in the scores on scholastic adjustment among undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Data in Table 3 also revealed that the relationship between n low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This is because the p-value (0.003) is less than 0.05 level of significance guiding the study. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. This result of this null hypothesis is that there is significant negative relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Therefore, the data presented may be summarized thus:

1. There is a negative and significant relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.
2. There is a negative and significant relationship between anxiety and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.
3. There is a negative and significant relationship between low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

Recommendation

1. Undergraduates with physical disabilities should be encouraged to periodically seek counselling services where they can be counselled to accept themselves better, this will improve their self-esteem.
2. University administrators should make a policy giving extra time to undergraduates with physical disabilities to turn in their assignments and class activities, as well as exams because of the strain their disability puts on them.
3. The university administrators should create an office for undergraduates with disabilities which will suggest programmes and policies for the accommodation of undergraduates with disabilities generally, and that will treat disability issues as matters of right not welfare.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that there is a high negative relationship between depression and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities. While the study showed that there is a low negative relationship between anxiety, low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

The results on the test on hypotheses revealed that there is significant negative relationship between depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.

It can therefore be concluded that the psychological challenges comprising of depression, anxiety and low self-esteem have significant negative relationship on the scholastic adjustment of undergraduates with physical disabilities in Rivers State owned universities.