PREDICTIVE ESTIMATES OF SOME PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

BY
Adeleke Ifedayo David: Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria; E-mail: ifedayo.david@yahoo.com

Fehintola Victor Ayodeji: Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria; E-mail: fehintolavictor9@gmail.com

Okpako Ochuko Ernest: Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria; E-mail: ernest.kelvin26@gmail.com

Ojomolade Micheal Damilola: Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria; E-mail: ojomoladedamilola@gmail.com

Sylvester Ehimare Umanhonlen: Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria; E-mail: umasylvester@gmail.com

Abstract
The study investigates the influence of some psychosocial factors on the psychological wellbeing of postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan. Four hundred postgraduate students constituted the study’s sample. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with relevant standardized instruments and the data obtained was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression statistical method. The instruments used were psychological wellbeing, emotional maturity, self-esteem and school connectedness scale. Three research questions were answered in the study. The result showed that there was significant relationship between the three independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing and that the independent variables both jointly and relatively contributed significantly to the prediction of psychological wellbeing. The study recommended that counselling psychologists should develop psychological intervention that will focus on self-esteem skills of students, since it is the most potent factor in determining psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: Psychological wellbeing, Self-esteem, Emotional maturity, School connectedness

Introduction
Starting postgraduate studies and attending graduate college can be very stressful, given the numerous challenges that come with it such as financial stress, accommodation problems and stress of combining job with studies for those who are already working, family responsibilities as well as seeking job for those who are still hunting for job. Lamentably, the majority of postgraduate students most especially in Nigeria fall in into the category of job seekers, and this group are predominantly youths who in a bid of not sitting down at home enroll for the post graduates programmes and post graduates experience that has made many to relax or be away from school activities (Raji, 2018). The psychological wellbeing of many of these postgraduate students has become a concern to many educational stakeholders, which is a state of happiness.
(Ryan and Deci, 2008). World Health Organization (2011), stated that psychological wellbeing is a condition by which every individual realizes his or her own potential to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productivity and fruitfulness, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Traditionally, it is perceived as lack of symptom distress such as lack of depression, anxiety, and other symptoms of mental disorders (Keyes, Shmotokin and Ryff, 2002). Recently, psychological wellbeing is more than just an absence of distressful symptoms, but now includes positive qualities individuals possess that can lead to mental health. The recent models of positive functioning have been designed that explain key aspects of psychological well-being. Basically, the demand of been a student is enormous which often time cause stress and puncture one’s psychological wellbeing especially the postgraduate students.

The variables of emotional maturity, school connectedness and self-esteem are evaluated within the study areas of psychological wellbeing. Emotional maturity is the fruits of normal emotional improvement. That is, level which could be very vital in humane existence. One of the foremost targets of any precise academic programme is to assist the learner to gain emotional maturity. Van Heck, Oudsten, and Den (2008) suggested that emotional abilities are strong predictors towards healthy life and psychological wellbeing. The positive emotional state is an exceptional indicator in the direction of life satisfaction, health fitness and wellbeing. The ability accurately perceives emotional expression, the capability to recognize and regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer and Salovey, 1997). The study also found that those having robust potential to adjust their emotions need to be able to hold properly health, psychological wellbeing and better outlook on life (Van Heck et al., 2008). Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall assessment and sense of one's worth or value. It is likewise described as self-belief, self-respect, satisfaction and conditional form of acceptance. High self-esteem suggests wonderful self-regard, retaining opinion about one’s personal self, not egotism (Edelstein, 2000). DeBord (2009) additionally, explains self-esteem as how an individual feel about himself/herself. It is an image an individual creates of himself, that's based totally on many images; the images build how an individual look upon himself in extraordinary roles. According to Tudor (1996), the most critical elements of mental fitness are self-concept, self-esteem and identity. Self-esteem is often considered as a guide of preferred happiness or wellbeing (Ryff, 1989).

School connectedness is another vital factor that could enhance psychological wellbeing of graduate students. When students are interested in school activities and gets involve in school academic events such students tend to be psychologically stable and demonstrates high psychological wellbeing. on the contrary, students who are not interested in school related events tends to be stressed by school activities, hence, such students will likely manifest some psychological distress symptoms such as stress and anxiety. Thomas and Smith (2004) opined that school connectedness is an essential and modifyable component related to students’ studying and improvement. Lamentably, several researches in Education have focused more on academic performance of students, which is mainly on undergraduate students, with little or no attention on their psychological wellbeing. Similarly, few studies that were carried out on psychological well-being have not considered the vital roles of emotional maturity, self-esteem and school connectedness on the psychological wellbeing of postgraduate students. Based on these issues, this current study investigated emotional maturity, self-esteem and school connectedness as
determinants of the psychological wellbeing of postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan.

**Research Questions**
The following research questions were answered in this study
1. What is the relationship between the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on the postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing?
2. What is the combined effect of the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on the postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing?
3. What is the relative effect of each of the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on the postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing?

**Methodology**
The study adopted an ex-post facto research approach. Such an approach does not involve the manipulation of variables in the study. It is therefore, after the fact study. It neither adds to nor subtracts from the existing fact. However, it is carefully observed and record information as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted. The subjects for the study were all the postgraduate students in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The survey was carried out in five faculties in the University. These were Education, Arts, Social Sciences, Agriculture and the Sciences. The study was limited only to the bona fide postgraduates currently enroll for their postgraduate’s studies in the University of Ibadan. The number of bona fide postgraduate’s students during this research was 11,170. The researchers adopted the multistage sampling technique in selecting the participants. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed to students in the five selected faculties.

**Psychological wellbeing Scale**
The psychological wellbeing scale constructed by (Ryff, 2014) was adopted to be used as a measure of psychological wellbeing questionnaire. It is a fifteen items scale with responses anchored base on the likert points. Some of the items of the scale read as follow: “I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizon” and “I live life one day at a time and don’t really think about the future”. The scale has an high internal consistency with alphas ranging from .83 - .91.

**Emotional maturity Scale**
The emotional maturity scale constructed by (Singh and Bhargava, 2010) was adopted to be used as a measure of emotional maturity questionnaire. It is a fifteen items scale with responses anchored base on the likert points. Some of the items of the scale read as follow: “I am easily discouraged and I have occasional moments of depression” “I am able to stay calm in unexpected and dangerous situation”. The instrument has a Cronbach alpha value of 0.74.

**Self-esteem Scale**
The self-esteem scale developed by (Rosenberg, 1989) was adopted to be used as a measure of self-esteem questionnaire. It is a ten items scale with responses anchored base on the likert points. Some of the items of the scale read as follow: “I feel that I’m a person of worth, at least am equal plane with others” “all in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure” among others. The scale is internally reliable showing a test-retest reliability of 0.85.
School Connectedness Scale
School connectedness scale was developed by Adeleke (2015). The scale consists of 10 items school connectedness scale. It is a ten items scale with responses anchored base on the likert points and a Cronbach’s Alpha of .88 was obtained. Some of the items of the scale read as follow: “I always feel accepted at school” “Am always included in school activities” among others.

The researcher made use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression and Pearson product Moment Correlation statistical analysis as statistical tool. Multiple regression analysis was employed to find the joint contribution and relative effects of the independents variables on the dependent variables.

Results
Three research questions were raised and answered. The data were analyzed using multiple regression statistical method. The results are presented below:

Research Question One: What is the significant relationship among emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness and psychological well-being among postgraduate students of the University of Ibadan?

Table 1: Summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between the study variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Psychological wellbeing</th>
<th>Emotional maturity</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>School connectedness</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological wellbeing</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional maturity</td>
<td>.273**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.432**</td>
<td>.475**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School connectedness</td>
<td>.320**</td>
<td>.575**</td>
<td>.693**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables. As shown in the table 1, psychological wellbeing is significantly correlated with: (1) emotional maturity (r = .876; p<.05); (2) self-esteem (r = .432; p<.05) and (3) school connectedness (r = .320; p<.05). There were also significant correlations among the three independent variables.

Research Question Two: What is the combined effect of the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing?

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis on Psychological wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of square (SS)</th>
<th>Df2</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>2662.782</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>665.695</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>5500.462</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>17.189</td>
<td>38.728</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8163.243</td>
<td>402</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows that the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) when pulled together have significant effects on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing. The value of R (adjusted) = .571 and R2 (adjusted) = .326. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F ratio value of 38.728 and was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

**Research Question Three**: What is the relative effect of independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing?

**Table 3**: Relative contribution of each of the independent factors to the prediction of psychological wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 (Constant)</td>
<td>26.562</td>
<td>1.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional maturity</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School connectedness</td>
<td>-.181</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that two out of the three independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing. In term of magnitude of contribution, self-esteem made the most significant contribution (Beta = .568; t = 8.581; P<0.05) and followed by school connectedness (Beta = -.209, t = -2.880, p<0.05) to the prediction. However, emotional maturity did not significantly contribute to the prediction.

**Discussion of Findings**

The result of the first research question revealed that there was significant relationship between the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing. This finding is consistent with evidence of Kumar & Smriti, (2014) who posited that the most outstanding mark of emotional maturity is the ability to bear tension and it will enable a person to tolerate the frustration they undergo. However, Libbey, (2004) research findings is also in consonance with the results where he posited that school connectedness is associated with a number of behavioural, emotional, social, mental, physical and academic outcomes in adolescence. Research has shown that self-esteem is an important precursor of happiness and that it has a positive relationship with happiness (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Diener & Diener, 1995; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 2006).

The result of the second research question revealed that the independent variables (emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness) have combined effect on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing. The result thus demonstrated that 32.6% of the variance in the psychological wellbeing of postgraduate students is accounted for by the linear combination of the independent variables. What the results are saying is that the capacity of the independent variables to predict postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing could not have happened by
chance. This finding is in consonance with the work of previous researchers (Donnellan et al., 2005, Rothon, Goodwin, and Stansfeld, 2011 and Kockar 2004).

The result of the third research question revealed that two of the independent variables (self-esteem, school connectedness) has a relative effect on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing. That is self-esteem and school connectedness predict postgraduate student’s psychological wellbeing. In term of magnitude of contribution, self-esteem has the most significant contributions to the prediction and followed by school connectedness. This is consistent with the previous research of Shochet, Dadds, Ham and Montague (2006) who found that school connectedness predicted mental health symptoms of depression, anxiety and general functioning one year later after controlling for prior symptoms. Also, Paradise and Kernis (2002) found that high self-esteem was associated with greater wellbeing

Conclusion
The study discovered that emotional maturity, self-esteem and school connectedness influences the psychological wellbeing of postgraduate students. By and large, emotional maturity, self-esteem, school connectedness has a great influence on postgraduate students’ psychological wellbeing. As such, it is very crucial to improve these variables so as to eradicate the persistent occurrence of students’ poor psychological wellbeing.

Recommendations
1. Counselling psychologists should develop psychological intervention that will focus on self-esteem skills of students, since is the most potent factor in determining psychological wellbeing in this study.
2. Educational stake holders should also consider all the factors mentioned in this study especially emotional maturity, self-esteem, and school connectedness since they are potent in determining psychological wellbeing. By this, educational goal of building self-reliance minds will be achieved.

References


