

Spirituality, age, gender and academic self – Efficacy as determinants of psychological well – being of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Enugu state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy on the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Enugu State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A multistage sampling technique was used to select one hundred and twenty five students with hearing impairment. Four research questions were raised and answered. The Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) and Spiritual Experience Index-Revised (SEI-R) were used for data collection. Data was analysed using frequency counts, Pearson's product moment correlation and multiple regression. The results revealed that psychological well-being has a significant correlation with sex, age, academic self-efficacy and spirituality experience of the respondents. It is therefore recommended that the government and its agencies, as well as spiritual/religious leaders, should place more emphasis on how to improve psychological well-being for students with hearing impairment.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, spirituality, academic self-efficacy, hearing impairment.

Introduction

Psychological well-being is about emotional stability of an individual. Huppert (2009) considered the idea of feeling good to incorporate not only the positive emotions of happiness and contentment, but also such emotions as interest, engagement, confidence, and affection. Similarly, the notion of functioning effectively, according to Huppert (2009), involves the development of one's potential, having some control over one's life, having a sense of purpose (e.g. working towards valued goals), and experiencing positive relationships. Studies have shown apparent emphasis between well-being and positive

mental health (e.g. Seligman, 2002, 1991; Kahneman, 1999; Ryff & Singer, 1998). This positive perspective of relationship between well-being and mental health is also enshrined in the constitution of the World Health Organisation, where health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948). More recently, the WHO has also defined positive mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 2001).

Obviously, certain factors have been identified to influence the psychological well-being level of individuals. Adejumo and Adewale (2011), in their own findings, concluded that demographic factors such as age, gender, and marital status can influence changes in the psychological well-being of an individual with disabilities. It is therefore important to identify the factors that can influence or predict the psychological well-being of individuals with hearing impairment. Hence this study examines spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy as determinants of psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Enugu State, Nigeria. Hearing impairment, deafness, or hearing loss refer to the inability of an individual to perceive sound, either totally or partially (Mohanraj & Selvaraj, 2013). It is caused by dysfunction of the inner ear, the cochlea, auditory nerve, or brain damage and the impact of the disability ranges in severity from mild to moderate and moderate to profound. According to Dash (2000), hearing loss refers to a defect in or damage to the hearing mechanism which leads to hearing disability or hearing loss. Besides the primary effect of hearing impairment which is the inability to perceive and produce speech, there are still other various forms of difficulties associated to the disorder. Students with hearing impairment usually encounter some social, economic, psychological, and developmental difficulties resulting from their inability to hear or produce speech. Consequently, students with hearing impairment undergo some psychosocial related problems such as anxiety, depression, isolation, rejection, self-pity, and aggression. That is why Myklebust (1996) observed that severely deaf people think and behave differently from hearing people in order to make sense of the world. For him, severely hearing impaired persons have been variously described as impulsive and socially immature, less able to care for their own needs, lacking self direction, and more dependent on adults, than normally hearing peers.

Similarly, Panda (1997), opined that hearing impaired subjects feel inferior, helpless, have poor self-concept, temper tantrums, are submissive, have poor gross motor coordination, hyperactivity, short attention span, emotional inability, slightly low IQ than normal persons, poor language and communication skills. They also experience difficulty in understanding abstract concepts and have difficulties in vocational adjustments. Monzani, Galeazzi, Genovese, Marrara, & Martin, (2008) while investigating the psychological distress dimension of the hearing-impaired subjects, held that they were more prone to depression, anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity, and hostility than subjects with no hearing problems. In his own study, Tidball (1990) found deafness leading to a lot of psychological problems and sociological maladjustment. Moreover, according to Dharitri and Murthy (1990), hearing impaired subjects were found to be more restless, distractible, irritable, hypersensitive, aggressive, lack perseverance, self conscious, crying over minor

annoyances, shy, suggestible, lack self confidence, show temper outbursts, demanding and nail biting. Further they reported that the anxiety level was found to be significantly more among hearing impaired subjects. Hence Oyewumi, Akangbe, and Adigun (2013) observed that hearing impairment or delayed language development generally effects on every aspect of a child's psychosocial development, self esteem, self efficacy, emotional development, family concern, social competence and over all perceived quality of life of the hearing impaired person. They therefore concluded that children with hearing impairment present more behavioural and social problems than their hearing peer.

From the above development, it seems evidently certain that persons with hearing impairment virtually experience little or poor level of psychological well-being. The lives of hearing impaired students are saddled with various forms of negative emotions resulting from social, economic, psychological, and developmental difficulties associated with the disorder. It is therefore pertinent that this study examines the influence of spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy on the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Enugu State, Nigeria. It is believed that certain factors may predispose individuals to react in a specific way in given situations. Oluwole, (2012) observed spirituality as one of those factors that has significant influence on an individual's disposition towards the events that occur in certain aspects of life. It implies that spirituality is a vital psychological factor as well as an essential individual difference factor that can affect and shape people's sense of meaning to life (Matrecia, 2005). This understanding explains how spirituality can predict the psychological well-being of an individual.

In the view of some researchers, (Sheldrake, 2007; Bellamy, Jarrett, Mowbray, Macfarlane, Mowbray, & Hotler, 2007) spirituality can be described as an inner path enabling individuals to discover the essence of their being, or the deepest values and meanings by which people live. They emphasize that spirituality refers to the central way of life which guides people's conduct, and is the essence of an individual's existence that integrates and transcends the physical, emotional, intellectual, volitional, and social dimensions of life. Based on the definitions of spirituality and theories related to it, one could therefore recognize the reason Oluwole, (2012) maintained that the sense of spirituality remains one of the vital reasons individuals differ in their reactions to given situations. In essence, spirituality is expected to moderate between an individual and his given situations. The perception here indicates that spirituality could be explained in relationship to coping (Ogundayo, 2007: Oluwole, 2008). Consequently, an individual's level of spiritual well-being could invariably influence other aspect of well-being such as physical well-being, social well-being, economic well-being, and psychological well-being. Similarly, this would also imply that with a strong sense of spirituality, a secondary school student with hearing impairment would also experience a better psychological well-being and other forms of well-being in life as well as enhance his or her self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy could be described as the learned expectation of success, the belief that one can perform behaviour regardless of past failures or current obstacles. Similarly, academic self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief or conviction that he or she can successfully achieve at a designated level on an academic task or attain a specific academic goal (Eccles

& Wigfield, 2002; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002 Bandura, 1997). This is closely related to academic self-concept which refers to the personal beliefs about one's academic abilities or skills. Salami (2005) and Adegoke (2012) have found that there is always a relationship between self-efficacy and psychological well-being. The above assertion reveals that self-efficacy has a moderating effect on the psychological well-being of an individual. Evidently, this finding supports the view of Bandura (1982) which observes that self-efficacy interacts with expectancies about the outcome of behaviour in general and the result of this interplay helps to shape an individual's psychological well-being. Downey, Eccles and Chatman (2005) also suggest that having high self-efficacy when attempting difficult tasks creates in a student feelings of calmness and serenity while low self-efficacy may result in a student perceiving a task as more difficult than reality, which, in turn, may create anxiety, stress, and a narrower idea on how best to approach the solving of a problem or activity. This perception implies that a student with high sense of self-efficacy is one who has learned to believe that his/her efforts can lead to success, but a student with low sense of self-efficacy believes that his/her efforts leads to nothing but failure, and the result is likely to be self-disparagement and depression. It is therefore pertinent in this study to examine the effects of academic self-efficacy on the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment.

It is believed that the age or gender of student with hearing impairment could influence their sense of concentration in handling their disorder as well as some psycho-social and economic difficulties associated with the disorder. This suggests that age and gender are critical and can influence the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment. This also explains why Oyewumi, Akangbe, and Adigun (2013), considered gender as a significant factor that generally impact upon the growth, demonstration and manifestation of perceived quality of life among adolescents with hearing impairment. Considering the vulnerability and challenging situations of students with hearing impairment, and the negative impact the disability creates in their psychological well-being, this study therefore examines spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy as determinants of psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Enugu State, Nigeria. Researchers have identified certain factors as predictors of the level of psychological well-being of students with hearing impairment, but to the best of the researcher's knowledge, little has been done on the areas of spirituality and academic self-efficacy as some of the predictors.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised for the study:

1. What is the profile of the students with hearing impairment with respect to spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy?
2. What is the relationship between spirituality, student's age, gender and academic self-efficacy and psychological wellbeing of students with hearing impairment?
3. To what extent would spirituality, student's age, gender and academic self-efficacy jointly predict the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment?

4. What is the relative contribution of each independent variable (spirituality, age, gender, academic self-efficacy) to the dependent variable (psychological well-being) of the study?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design of the correlational type. The choice for this research design is because the study investigated only the existing variables of the study which was the influence of spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy on the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment in Enugu State. Purposive sampling technique was used to select two secondary schools in Enugu State which were the Government Secondary School for the Deaf, Ogbete and Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School, Abakpa Nike, Enugu State. The study also used the simple random sampling technique of the balloting type to select one hundred and twenty five (125) Senior Secondary School students with hearing impairment from the selected secondary schools.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used for data generation. These are Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) developed by Ryff (1989), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) developed by Zajacova, Lynch and Espenshade (2005) and Spiritual Experience Index – Revised (SEI-R) developed by Genia (1997). The Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) was adapted by the researcher to measure the psychological well-being of the students with hearing impairment. The instrument consists of ten (10) items comprising Ryff's six (6) dimensional model of psychological well-being. The items were presented in a four Likert scale scoring of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The Psychological Well-Being Scale was revalidated and was found to be reliable at 0.76. Similarly, The ASES was adapted by the researcher to measure academic self-efficacy of the students with hearing impairment. The instrument consists of ten (10) items which were presented in a four Likert scale scoring of 1-4, which ranges from not confident at all to extremely confident. The ASES was revalidated and found to be reliable at 0.88. The study also adapted the Spiritual Experience Index – Revised (SEI-R) to measure spirituality of the students with hearing impairment. The instrument comprised of ten (10) items which were presented in a four Likert scale scoring of 1-4, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability value of the Spiritual Experience Index – Revised (SEI-R) was found to be 0.65. The data obtained through the instruments were analysed using descriptive statistics involving frequency counts and simple percentages and inferential statistics involving Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the profile of the students with hearing impairment with respect to spirituality, age, gender and academic self-efficacy?

Table 1: Profile of the respondents on spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy

	Item	Standard deviation
Spirituality	I often feel strongly related to a greater power than myself	2.62
	My faith gives my life meaning and purpose	2.73
	My faith helps me to confront tragedy and suffering	2.78
	I believe that the world is basically good	2.91
	I feel a strong spiritual bond with all of humankind	3.08
	My spiritual beliefs change as I encounter new ideas and experiences	2.66
	I believe that the world is basically evil	2.93
	My spirituality is an important part of my individual identity	2.74
	Persons of different faiths share a common spiritual bond	2.98
	I gain spiritual strength by trusting in a higher power	3.11
Academic self-efficacy	Asking questions in class	2.79
	Understanding my teachers	3.29
	Understanding my peers	2.90
	Taking good class notes	2.88
	Preparing for exams	2.47
	Managing time efficiently	3.01
	Improving my reading and writing skills	2.22
	Participating in class discussions	2.95
	Getting assignments done on time	3.14
Getting help and information at school	3.26	

Table 1 showed that students with hearing impairment are average with confidence with respect to academic self-efficacy since their mean response on all the items on academic self-efficacy is approximately 3. In addition, the profiling of the participants showed that they all agree to the statement attached to spiritual experience and the modal response rate is 3. This indicates they are all spiritual being.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between sex, age academic self-efficacy, spirituality and psychological wellbeing of students with hearing impairment?

Table 2: Relationship between the independent and dependent variables among respondents

	Mean	Std Dev	Sex	Age	Academic Self Efficacy	Spirituality	Psychological well being
Sex	-	-	1.000				
Age	30.64	4.06	-.249**	1.000			
Academic Self Efficacy	28.54	7.25	0.005	-.017	1.000		
Spirituality	28.93	4.60	-.204*	-.056	0.249**	1.000	
Psychological well being	28.13	4.80	-.240**	0.151*	-.180*	0.496**	1.000

N.B: ** Significant at $p < 0.01$ *Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 2 showed that psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment had significant correlation with sex ($r = -0.240$, $p < 0.05$), age ($r = 0.151$, $p < 0.05$), academic self-efficacy ($r = -0.180$, $p < 0.05$) and spirituality experience ($r = 0.496$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that sex, age, academic self-efficacy and spirituality are influences the psychological wellbeing of students with hearing impairment.

Research Question 3: To what extent would spirituality, student’s age, gender, and academic self-efficacy jointly predict the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment?

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the combined Prediction of spirituality, student’s age, gender, academic self-efficacy and psychological well being

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.619	0.383	0.362	3.82995

SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P	Remark
Regression	1091.73	4	272.93	18.61	0.000	Sig
Residual	1760.23	120	14.67			
Total	2851.95	124				

Table 3 showed that the prediction of all the four independent variables to the dependent variable. That is, psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment correlated positively with the four predictor variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.619 and a multiple R square of 0.383. This means that 38.3% of the variance in the psychological wellbeing of secondary school students with hearing impairment is accounted for by all the four predictor variables, when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $p < 0.05$ using

the F- ratio at the degree of freedom (df = 4/120). The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 18.61 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Research Question 4: What is the relative contribution of each independent variable (spirituality, age, gender, academic self-efficacy) to the dependent variable (psychological well-being) of the study?

Table 4: Relative contribution of each independent variable to the dependent variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	16.279	3.090		5.268	.000
sex	-.800	.733	-.083	-1.092	.277
age	.865	.409	.157	2.113	.037
ASE	-.211	.049	-.319	-4.297	.000
SEI	.592	.080	.567	7.441	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological wellbeing

Table 4 reveals the relative contribution of the four independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The partial correlation coefficients of age, sex, academic self-efficacy, and spirituality have positive relationship with the psychological wellbeing of secondary school students with hearing impairment. The positive value of the effects of age, and spirituality experience is actually determined by positive reinforcement of these two variables. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables to the explanation of the dependent variable age (B = 0.865, t= 2.113, p < 0.05) is the most potent contributor to the prediction followed by the spirituality experience (B = 0.592, t= 7.441, p<0.05), followed by academic self-efficacy (B = -0.211, t = 4.297, p<0.05) and finally followed by sex (B= -0.800, t= 1.092, p > 0.05) in that order.

Discussion of results

The results of table 1 revealed that it was no longer the case as in the past when students with hearing impairment lack opportunities of academic awareness and could not even express themselves. This could be as a result of the increasing number of private and public special schools for persons with hearing impairment, as well as Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who are carrying this awareness to every corner. Besides parents are becoming much interested in the education of their children despite any level of disability, with the sure conviction that education is liberation. This findings support the previous

findings of Santos, Magramo, Oguan, and Paat (2014) who maintained that high self-efficacy is related to positive well-being. This indicates that at their age, they already see their capacity in exercising some measure of control over life's events and as a consequence they become satisfied with their life. This finding is also consistent with previous findings of Bisschop, Knegsman, Beekman, and Deeg, 2004 which maintained that high self-efficacy is related to positive well-being, regulation of stress, higher self-esteem, better physical condition, better adaptation to and recovery from diseases. On the other hand, the results of this study contradict the findings of Panda (1997), Dharitri and Murthy (1990) who concluded that hearing impaired subjects feel inferior, helpless, have poor self-concept, low IQ than normal persons, and lack self-confidence. The result also indicates that spirituality or spiritual experience of the respondents has a mean score of 3. This shows that students with hearing impairment are currently looking towards the transcendent dimensions of their lives. This set of participants would seem not to favour the illusion of superstitions or false beliefs about hearing impairment. This is consistent with the previous findings of Al-Zboon, Ahmad and Theeb (2014) who reported that students rated religious and spiritual domain as the highest mean of quality of life domains.

The finding of this study also revealed that sex, age, academic self-efficacy, and spirituality show positive and significant correlation with psychological well-being. This shows that academic self-efficacy and psychological well-being have direct relationship because of the positive relationship. This result corroborates Muller, Creed, and Francis (2001) who reported that well-being is directly influenced by spirituality, and those with better spiritual outlook are in turn associated with better well-being. The results also provides support for Oluwole (2012) who found out that stronger spiritual beliefs can lead to a greater sense of control, meaning, and deeper intimacy, buffer the effects of negative perceptions, as well as positive attitudes and outlooks. With regard to age, the results reveal that there is a positive and significant correlation with age psychological well-being. Hence the works of Mohanraj and Selvaraj (2013) which reveals that increase in age of the hearing impaired adolescents tends to have decreased frustration level, and that they might easily adjust as they grow in age corroborate this recent finding.

The results further indicate a significant relationship between gender and psychological well-being. This result is in agreement with the research findings of Visani, Albieri, Offidani, Ottolini, Tomba, and Ruini (2011) who explored gender differences in the levels of psychological well-being and distress. They found out that, girls reported higher levels of distress than boys especially during the adolescence period of development. The results also support the findings of Perez (2012) who determined gender differences in various aspects of psychological well-being and found out that females reported significantly higher scores in the aspects of daily spiritual experience, relationship with peer, positive relationship with others, and purpose in life. Furthermore, the results from this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and psychological well-being. The results of this study corroborate the research findings of Adegoke, (2012), who found out that there is a significant effect of self-efficacy on psychological well-being. It also supported the findings of Alarape and Afolabi (2001), and Salami (2005). According to these authors, self-efficacy interacts with an individual's behavioural expectancies, and the result of this interaction helps to shape an individual's

psychological well-being. They concluded that an individual with high self-efficacy have the learned belief that his or her efforts will lead to success which leads to better psychological well-being.

Implications and Recommendation

The research findings of this study have enormous implications for the government and its agencies, spiritual/religious leaders, parents, hearing impaired individuals, special educators and regular teachers, and employers of labour. These students are part of the future leaders and future work force of the nation, efforts should therefore be made by the government and the policy makers to reflect a shift from what presently obtains in the current educational system of individuals with hearing impairment to a new emphasis on how to improve their psychological well-being in their system of education. The government would thus provide the enabling environment for the policies to be implemented, and also ensure that qualified personnel would handle the psychological, educational, emotional, and social affairs of students with hearing impairment. Teachers assigned to teach the students with hearing impairment must be qualified not only in their area of specialization or subject, but also in skills and ability to handle both the academic and psychological life of the students. School proprietors, NGOs, and employers of labour should partner with the government and teachers to provide adequate infrastructural facilities for the proper education and training of students with hearing impairment at various levels. Finally, religious / spiritual leaders are encouraged to work towards improving the spirituality of students with hearing impairment through spiritual counselling and religious activities.

Conclusion

This study has been able to examine the influence of spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy on the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment. The study has established that there are positive significant relationships between spirituality, age, gender, academic self-efficacy and psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment. The findings clearly show that the relative influence of spirituality, age, gender, and academic self-efficacy on the psychological well-being of secondary school students with hearing impairment is significant. This simply means that if the students with hearing impairment have an improved self-efficacy and are spiritual, their level of psychological well-being will be improved. It is therefore important that students with hearing impairment should be assisted towards an improved psychological well-being, given the effects of hearing impairment and various forms of difficulties associated with the disorder. Besides, psychological well-being should be perceived as a topic of considerable interest for students with hearing impairment since it is likely to influences their lives significantly. To this end, their level of spirituality and self-efficacy ought to be considered and be assisted to improve.

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