

# UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS IN ADOLESCENTS

OKECHUKWU CHIDOLUO VITUS\*

\*Independent Researcher, Nigeria.

**Corresponding Author:** OKECHUKWU CHIDOLUO VITUS, Independent Researcher, Nigeria

**Received date:** November 19, 2024; **Accepted date:** November 21, 2024; **Published date:** December 04, 2024

**Citation:** OKECHUKWU CHIDOLUO VITUS\*UNDERSTANDING THE INTERSECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH, ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS IN ADOLESCENTS, *Mental Health and Psychological Wellness*, vol 1(1). DOI: 10.9567/ISSN.2024/WSJ.92

**Copyright:** © 2024, Dr. OKECHUKWU CHIDOLUO VITUS \*, this is an open-access article distributed under the terms of The Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

## Abstract

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. This period is inherently stressful and can significantly influence mental health, academic performance, and overall psychological wellness. This research paper investigates the complex interplay between these domains among adolescents, considering the multifaceted factors that contribute to their mental health and academic outcomes. A literature review was conducted to analyze existing studies on the relationship between mental health and academic performance, the impact of stressors such as familial issues, peer relationships, and socio-economic factors, and the importance of psychological wellness programs in schools. Results indicate that poor mental health adversely impacts academic performance, while positive psychological wellness contributes to better educational outcomes. Recommendations for interventions aimed at improving mental health in educational settings are also discussed.

**Key words:** Mental wellness, Emotional well-being, psychological health

## Introduction

Adolescents face unique challenges as they transition from childhood to adulthood, often leading to psychological distress and a decline in mental health (Steinhausen, 2009). Mental health disorders are prevalent among adolescents, with one in five experiencing a mental health issue at some point (Merikangas et al., 2010). These psychological struggles can significantly affect academic performance, as cognitive functions and motivation may deteriorate (Eisenberg et al., 2009). This paper delves into the relationship between mental health, academic performance, and psychological wellness in adolescents, exploring how these elements influence one another and the implications for educational outcomes.

### Mental Health in Adolescents

Mental health in adolescents encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, affecting how young people think, feel, and act (World Health Organization [WHO], 2018). Common mental health issues during this stage include anxiety, depression, behavioral disorders, and

stress-related problems. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2021), approximately 31.9% of adolescents aged 13 to 18 experience an anxiety disorder, and 13% experience a major depressive episode. As adolescents grapple with identity formation, social pressures, and academic expectations, these mental health disorders can hinder their development and academic achievements (Keenan-Miller et al., 2007).

### Factors Affecting Adolescent Mental Health

Several factors contribute to mental health challenges in adolescents:

**Familial Influences:** Family dynamics, including parental relationships, can deeply impact adolescent mental health. Research indicates that adolescents from dysfunctional family settings are more likely to experience anxiety and depression (Forness et al., 2019).

**Peer Relationships:** The teenage years are marked by intense peer relationships that can foster both support and stress. Bullying, social media pressure, and the quest for

acceptance can profoundly affect an adolescent's mental state (Nansel et al., 2001).

**Socio-Economic Status (SES):** Adolescents from lower SES backgrounds may face additional stressors, including financial instability and limited access to mental health resources, which can adversely affect their mental health and academic performance (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997).

### **Academic Performance and Its Correlates**

Academic performance is typically measured through grades, standardized test scores, and overall school engagement. Mental health significantly affects these outcomes. For example, anxiety can impair concentration and memory, leading to decreased academic performance (Eisenberg et al., 2009).

### **The Relationship Between Mental Health and Academic Performance**

Research consistently shows a negative correlation between mental health issues and academic performance. Merikangas et al. (2010) found that adolescents with psychiatric disorders had significantly lower GPAs than their peers without such disorders. Similarly, a study by McLeod and Kaiser (2004) revealed that depressive symptoms among adolescents were linked to lower grades and increased school absenteeism.

### **Psychological Wellness in Adolescents**

Psychological wellness involves an individual's capacity to manage stress, build resilience, and maintain well-being despite challenges. Programs promoting psychological wellness can mitigate the negative effects of mental health disorders on academic performance. Promoting emotional intelligence, stress management skills, and positive coping strategies can result in better academic outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011).

### **The Role of Schools in Promoting Wellness**

Educational institutions play a vital role in fostering psychological wellness. Comprehensive mental health programs in schools can help identify at-risk students, provide counseling services, and create a supportive environment for academic achievement. Evidence suggests that implementing social-emotional learning (SEL) programs can enhance students' psychological well-being and academic success (Durlak et al., 2011).

## **Discussion**

The interconnectivity of mental health, academic performance, and psychological wellness in adolescents is undeniable. Deteriorating mental health can lead to significant academic challenges, which in turn can exacerbate mental health issues, creating a vicious cycle.

Conversely, promoting psychological wellness through targeted interventions can enhance both mental health and academic performance.

### **Recommendations for Interventions**

**School-Based Mental Health Services:** Schools should integrate mental health services, including counseling, workshops, and crisis intervention, into their systems.

**SEL Programs:** Implementing SEL programs can equip adolescents with essential skills, such as emotional regulation, empathy, and resilience.

**Parental Involvement:** Encouraging parental engagement in their children's education and mental health can create a supportive home environment that fosters psychological wellness.

**Public Awareness Campaigns:** Raising awareness about adolescent mental health can help reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking behaviors.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding the intersection of mental health, academic performance, and psychological wellness in adolescents is crucial for educators, parents, and mental health professionals. Addressing these issues through effective interventions can not only improve the mental well-being of adolescents but also enhance their academic performance and overall quality of life. Future research should continue to explore the dynamics of these relationships and evaluate the efficacy of interventions aimed at promoting mental health in educational settings.

## **References**

1. Brooks-Gunn, J., & Duncan, G. J. (1997). The effects of poverty on children. *The Future of Children*, 7(2), 55-71. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1602387>
2. Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x>
3. Eisenberg, D., Golberstein, E., & Gollust, S. E. (2009). The impact of mental health on academic performance: The role of student health insurance. *Health Affairs*, 28(6), 140-150. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.28.6.140>
4. Forness, S. R., et al. (2019). Family variables, teacher variables, and the school behavior of youth with and without behavior disorders. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(5), 1335-1346. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-019-01336-w>

5. Keenan-Miller, D., Hammen, C., & Brennan, P. (2007). Environmental factors and adolescent depression: A review of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 27(8), 1076-1092.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2007.02.003>
6. McLeod, J. D., & Kaiser, K. (2004). Childhood emotional and behavioral problems and academic achievement. *American Sociological Review*, 69(3), 370-385.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240406900304>
7. Merikangas, K. R., He, J. P., Brody, D., et al