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Relationship between Substance Abuse, Study Behavior and Academic Performance: A Case Study of Senior High Students of Some Selected Schools in the Accra Metropolis

Gladstone F.K. Agbakpe, Charlotte O. Kwakye –Nuako, Daniel Bruce, Adolf Awuku Bekoe
Department of Psychology, Methodist University College, Ghana

Abstract

Research has shown that substance use negatively affects academic performance of students. This study investigated the relationship between substance abuse, study behavior and academic performance. Five hundred randomly selected Senior High School Students were administered a 45-item validated instrument - Study Habits Inventory (SHI). The questionnaire comprised sections designed to provide information on academic performance, study behavior and use of substances. Results identified alcohol as the most commonly used substance and this is predominant among male students as opposed to use of prescription pain killer pills by female students. Cocaine was identified as the least abused substance whose use was predominant among female students. Rate of substance abuse among the sample was 30.8%. Substance abuse correlates negatively with study behavior and academic performance.

Students who used substances engaged in poor study behavior and performed poorly in school compared to those who did not use substances. It was concluded that in order to reduce use of substances by students, school authorities should educate students on dangers associated with the use of drugs and develop well-defined comprehensive and realistic programs to control drugs use.

Correspondence:

G.F.K. Agbakpe
Psychology Department
Methodist University College Ghana
P.O. Box DS 940 Dansoman, Accra, Ghana
gladstonef@yahoo.com (+233-(0)277137467)

The Impact of Divorce on Adolescents' Academic Achievement

Kingsley Nyarko

Psychology Department, University of Ghana

Abstract

The study was carried out to find out the effect of divorce on the academic performance of Ghanaian adolescents. A total of 100 senior high school students from four different family structures (arrangement) between the ages of 15 and 18 were selected for the study. As expected, the result shows that family structure impacts the academic performance of the students. Adolescents from intact families performed better than those from divorced families, but not better than those whose parents were never married or father being deceased. Another important finding was that adolescents from divorced homes performed poorer academically than those whose fathers were deceased. The significance of these results is discussed.

Key Words: Divorce, intact families, family structure, academic performance, academic achievement

Correspondence:

Dr. Kingsley Nyarko

University of Ghana

Psychology Department

P. O. Box LG 84

Legon Ghana

Telephone (Office): +233277973892

Email: kingpong730@yahoo.com

Violence, Harassment and Health in Tertiary Institutions in Ghana

Ishmael D. Norman, Moses Aikins, Fred N. Binka,
School of Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of Ghana

Abstract

This study investigated the prevalence of Ethnic/ Racial/Religious harassment within public tertiary institutions. We further investigated whether Ethnic/Racial/Religious minorities were more bothered by racial and religious harassment, or whether they were bothered more by sexual harassment instead. The study participants were six (6) public universities, ten (10) polytechnics and three (3) public professional institutions. Respondents completed self-administered and anonymous survey with open-ended question about critical events within the 12 months preceding the study, which they appraised as violent or harassment. The results revealed that the overall incidence of violence (inclusive of sexual harassment, bullying, verbal insults, threats) and physical threats or attacks, general verbal insults (irrespective of victim's antecedents) to be common among the participants. The study found that Ethnic/Racial/Religious harassment negatively affects the victims' health outcome in the same way as sexual harassment. It discusses the results and considers the implications for policy, research and practice.

Keywords: Harassment, Violence, Racial and Religious affiliations, Health, Tertiary Institutions

Correspondence:

Dr. Ishmael D. Norman,
Dept. of Biological, Environmental &
Occupational Health Sciences,
School of Public Health, College of Health
Sciences, University of Ghana
Email: idnorman@ug.edu.gh,
ishmael_norman@yahoo.com

Self-Esteem and HIV/AIDS: The Case of University Students

Frances Emily Owusu-Ansah¹, E. Frempong², Daniel Mensah², Diana Dumakor²

1Department of Behavioural Sciences, School of Medical Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi

2Department of Biological Sciences, College of Science, KNUST, Kumasi

Abstract

HIV/AIDS is one of the most devastating and challenging pandemic that face humanity today. The two-fold objectives of this study were: first, to obtain information on students' level of awareness about HIV-AIDS on the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, (KNUST) Kumasi, Ghana campus. Second, to delineate challenges and potential risk factors towards enhancing the efficacy of prevention programs; particularly the relationship of HIV-AIDS awareness to self-esteem. Four hundred and eighty (480) students, at various stages of their education, participated in the study. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale was used in addition to constructed questionnaires for the study. Results indicate that a healthy sense of self-worth can be a buffer against acquiring the disease. Persons with high self-esteem had more knowledge of HIV/AIDS and were less likely to engage in sexually risky behaviors. Other risk behaviors among students are noted and discussed for their clinical implications and the efficacy of prevention programs.

Correspondence:

Frances Emily Owusu-Ansah, Ph.D.

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and
Technology

School of Medical Sciences

Dept. of Behavioral Sciences, KNUST, Kumasi

Ghana

Tel: 0243082765

Is Religion Enough? A Comparative Study of Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (RCBT) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CT) In Substance Abuse Treatment

Charlotte O. Kwakye-Nuako
Methodist University College, Ghana

Abstract

Religion has always been a part of the healing process for Ghanaians. To investigate its relative influence in healing using psychological principles, this study was conducted to find out if religion combined with cognitive behavioral skills would serve to decrease the amount of substances used by seventy-two (72) patients admitted to 3 psychiatric hospitals for abusing alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes. The study also aimed at finding out the effect of church attendance and religious affiliation on substance abuse. A clinical quasi-experimental study with a pre-post-test treatment design was employed. Results showed that Cognitive-Behavioral therapy (CBT) alone was effective in reducing alcohol use, but Cognitive Behavioral therapy combined with religion (RCBT) had no effect on the use of any of the substances. Church attendance had no significant influence on the use of any of the substances. However, denominational affiliation affected marijuana abuse. The implications for therapy and further research are discussed.

Key words: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Substance Abuse, Religion.

Correspondence:

Charlotte O. Kwakye-Nuako
Psychology Department
Methodist University College Ghana
Email: charlotteomane@yahoo.com

Effects of Multifaceted cognitive training for Healthy Older Adults

*Robert Fellows¹, C. Charles Mate-Kole^{2,1}, Jake McDougal¹, Katherine Catayong.¹

¹Central Connecticut State University

²University of Ghana

Abstract

The aim of this study was to test the effectiveness of a multifaceted cognitive training program designed to train a broad range of cognitive functions in healthy older adults. The primary outcome was standardized composite variables of executive function, learning/memory, verbal fluency, motor speed, information processing speed, and overall cognitive function. Additionally, self report measures of depression and cognitive failures were used to assess affective and functional changes following training. Participants improved on measures of executive function, learning- /memory, verbal fluency, motor speed and overall cognitive function. Cognitive gains remained significant after the three-month no contact interval ($p < .001$). There was no significant reduction in self-reported cognitive failures or depression following the program. The results indicate that healthy older adults may benefit from a multifaceted approach to cognitive training. These findings support previous studies that have shown the benefit of cognitive training on mental abilities in older adults.

Key words: cognitive training; neuropsychological function; older adults

Correspondence:

Robert P. Fellows

Department of Pathology

Mount Sinai School of Medicine

One Gustave Levy Place

Box 1134, New York, NY 10029-6574.

E-mail: robert.fellows@mssm.ed

**How the African Personality (PsychologicalAfricanity) Develops:
Basic Implications for Re-birthing African Civilization**

Daudi Ajani ya Azibo and Gwendolyn Scott-Jones
Delaware State University

ABSTRACT

A view is offered of the development of the African personality (psychological Africanity) as articulated by African personality theorists who use the African-centered worldview as a conceptual framework. This view can contribute to the understanding of how contemporary African people worldwide may be socially engineered to develop a psychological orientation to sustain, develop, extend, and defend African life and culture. The African-centered worldview also affords insight into the thwarting of this orientation.

Keywords: African personality, psychological Africanity, psychological misorientation, the newAfrican.

Correspondence:

Daudi Ajani ya Azibo, PhD
Delaware State University, U.S.A
Email: azibod@yahoo.com

**Towards a 'healthy' future for Mental Health
Recordkeeping in Ghana: The Accra Psychiatric Hospital
In Focus**

Emmanuel Adjei
Department of Information Studies
University of Ghana

Abstract

This study investigates the mental health recordkeeping system at the Accra Psychiatric Hospital in Ghana. The state-of-the-art for the management of mental health records is reviewed with a view to identifying systemic weaknesses and making recommendations for remedial action. The existing recordkeeping practices are described, problems which come to light discussed, and recommendations made for improvement. Data for this study was collected by means of interview and observation. The study reveals that the records system at the Accra Psychiatric Hospital is beset with critical difficulties. Essentially the system in place has remained grounded in the practices and logistics of earlier period and appears to have little sense of future direction. The recordkeeping problems being faced by the hospital are rooted in the lack of adequate policies and procedures; insufficient resources including qualified manpower; and the general absence of a coordinated records management program for the Hospital.

Key words: Mental health records; records system; active records; inactive records; records management; retention schedule.

Correspondence:

Emmanuel Adjei
Department of Information Studies
University of Ghana
PO Box LG 60, Legon, Ghana
eadjei@ug.edu.gh