



Impact of academic stress and parental expectation on mental health of first year students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of stress and parental expectations on mental health of first year students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses guided the study using a descriptive survey. A sample of 378 first year undergraduate students drawn through proportionate sampling technique from a population of 23,248 first year students randomly drawn from the five tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis was used for the study. Data was collected through the use of Academic Stress Scale (ASS), Parental Expectation Scale (PES) and Mental Health Inventory (MHI). The instruments were duly validated and the reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha which yielded a coefficient index of 0.65, 0.72 and 0.75 respectively for each measure. The instruments were administered with the help of five research assistants and retrieved promptly. For data analyses, Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to analyse the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that factors such as academic stress and parental expectations have significant impact on mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis respectively. The study therefore recommends among others that, first year undergraduate students should be properly sensitized on the normal aspect of stress during orientation programme to enable them develop positive attitude toward learning and the learning environment, lecturers should show understanding to the fundamental challenges of first year undergraduate students, educational psychologists and guidance counsellors together with the tertiary institutions, should devote time for impactful orientation programme for the first year undergraduate students to improve the students' mental health.

Keywords: Academic stress, parental expectations, mental health and first year undergraduate students

Introduction

Mental well-being is one of the dimensions of positive health state. This deals with happiness, life satisfaction, stress management and psychological functioning, among others. In the present society, the positive mental state of individuals is so important in their activities and productivity level in any environment they find themselves. This also applies to the undergraduate students and the tertiary institution environment. However, this environment has entirely different working surroundings which make students face new methods of teaching and learning, new academic requirements, new type of relationship between students and lecturers and even among fellow students from different affiliations. This makes the academic environment by virtue of its demands to be considered as that which confronts these students not only with dynamic changes as in human life but also a stressful academic atmosphere, coupled with parental expectations, rules and demands. All these lead to situations of serious psychosocial, academic and physical breakdown that raises the anxiety level of students. This situation gradually empties into a mental distress condition/state that queries the mental health of the students in tertiary institutions, especially the year one (1) students whose joy and excitement that welcomed their admission into the tertiary institution is cut short. That is to say that, due to the expected changes, students can potentially experience different types of stress that can affect their mental, social and physical health, raise their anxiety level and academic achievement. This makes the consideration of the mental health of first year

undergraduate students to be very important due to the impact of some influencing factors.

Mental health is a condition of psychological well-being whereby an individual accepts self. According to American Academy of Physician Assistants cited in Onyekeru (2021), mental health has been defined as the ability of one to enjoy life and create a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological flexibility. From this perspective, mental health can mean the successful performance of mental functions which result into productive activities, fulfilling relationships and coping with adversities. Furthermore, Mohommed (2023) described it to consist of cognitive, behavioural and emotional wellbeing of an individual at all stages of human development. The World Health Organization cited in Ukwieke *et al.* (2023) [26] described it as a process of feeling capable and competent and at the same time having the ability to cope with some levels of stress sustaining and satisfying relationships, live independently and recover from difficult situations. Some researchers have shown mixed evidence on the impact of university students' prior academic environment experiences on individual's mental health. The American College of Health Association (2015) reported that stress is the most serious academic constraint among undergraduate students as these students experience numerous mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and overwhelming stress. These health issues have grown to an alarming rate among college students as Ebenezer and Kurokeyi (2018) [19] reported that among 34.6% students, this mental health issues have posed a threat to not only their health but also their academic performances. In line

with this view, Branlund *et al.* (2017) ^[30] study revealed a negative relationship between mental health problems and educational outcomes.

Furthermore, Oduwaiye *et al.* cited in Obi and Nicholas (2020) ^[18] noted that there exists a significant relationship between stress level and academic performance among students in Kwara State. Green *et al.* (2016) ^[8] also reported that academic stress impacts mental health of students.

Misra and Castilo cited in Barbayannis *et al.* (2022) ^[4] noted that these students are exposed to novel academic courseload, substantial studying, time management, classroom competition, financial concerns, familial pressures and adapting to a new environment. With this the tertiary institution which is seen as an academic environment that welcomes and accommodates the year one students, confronts them with a more stressful situation of learning to balance academic, financial, social and health related demands independently. Ibrahim *et al.* (2015) ^[9] stated that this period of change from secondary schools environment to tertiary education environment is a process that could cause serious psychosocial, academic and social shock that end up serving as stressor. Indeed, many mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders begin during this period. This new environment which consists of entirely different working surroundings is therefore seen as that which paves way to the development of serious academic and psychosocial shock that lead to academic stress and high parental expectations in the lives of the year one (1) undergraduate students.

Academic stress has been a topic of interest for many years as it remains constant for students. Stress is an undesirable, unpalatable but unavoidable phenomenon that crops up as individuals pursue their personal interests and goals. This made Ekechukwu and Isiguzo cited in Isiguzo and Amaeze (2022) ^[24] to define stress as a psychological reaction caused by the perception of aversive situation which could be hazardous to one's health. Although these explanations of stress above may sound negative, it is good to note that stressful situation can help an individual to accomplish a task. Stress occurs in different situations and settings such as in the home, workplace, college/tertiary institutions and any other human setting. Moreover, stress may be named according to the setting. For example when it occurs in an academic setting such as tertiary institutions, it can be referred to as academic stress. For academic stress, Krishan (2014) ^[11] defined it as a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustrations associated with academic failure or even unawareness to the possibility of such failure. Academic stress is described as that which combined with other stressors or perceived failures can cause feelings of hopelessness and despair (Zhang *et al.* 2022) ^[23]. According to Nwosu *et al.* (2023) ^[21] academic stress is that which links to psychological distress, causing anxiety, disorders, depression and other mental health problems.

These explanations show that academic stress is a pressure from school environment that can cause tension to the students who are beginners, Stress consists a form of strain, inconvenience or disturbance experienced by the students during the course of their academic pursuits. As a result of the fact that students experience stressful condition due to mainly academic commitments, poor study habits and ineffective time management skills, these year one (1)

students usually face the combination of the many sources of stress (stressors) such as struggling with assignments, examinations and planning for the future, meeting the demands of the institution can be an overwhelming experience for many of these year one students. Thus the students become tensed, disturbed, and worried or anxious because of academic demands and pressure (Adeoye, 2009) ^[1]. However, it should be noted that the importance of performing adequately on tests without second chances or alternative ways of raising ones grade may cause stress. Academic stress to students is understood by many to be an unpleasant experience but academic stress which is positive is embedded in it.

In all these, notably, the stress these first year undergraduate students feel may not only compromise their learning experience but it also takes a toll on their health and well being (Conner *et al.* 2010) ^[6]. This is supported by Kaur (2014) ^[10] study of school- going adolescents in Batthinda district which showed that mental health of adolescents is very much influenced by academic stress. In addition, Beiter *et al.* (2015) ^[5] in what he grouped as a major academic stressor faced by students include non-conducive physical classroom environment, poor student-teacher interaction, stringent rules and disciplines, teaching methodologies, indifferent attitude of lecturers, overcrowded classrooms and too many assignments. Furthermore, the issue of poor physical and social environments seen in most universities constitutes stressors for students that can impact on their mental health. This is in line with Erkutlu and Chafra (2006) ^[7] study which maintained that academic stress makes the individual to become disorganized and disoriented and therefore not able to cope up, thus resulting in stress related health problems. Okorie (2016) ^[15] noted that these stressors invariably affect the mental health of students exposing them to serious mental health issues than other young adults. There have been other growing bodies of evidence which also argued that academic related stress plays significant roles in colleges. The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development survey cited in Pascoe *et al.* (2020) ^[31] reported that secondary students who self - reported higher levels of academic-related stress also reported lower well-being, measured using psychological, social, cognitive and physical components. Furthermore, the study of Ribeiro *et al.* cited in Pascoe *et al.* (2020) ^[31] reported that a systematic review of 13 studies revealed that higher education students self-reported levels of stress were associated with poorer quality of life and well-being. Green *et al.* (2021) study also reported that academic stress impact mental health of students.

Parental expectation is another factor that affects many children's academic progress and also the mental health of students. According to Smith cited in Oranekwu (2015) ^[16], parental expectation has been defined by as the pressure parents put on their children to pursue particular career that they believe will make their children very comfortable in life. This means that parents expect their children to make a choice of career or aspire a career which they feel is lucrative and prestigious and which can make them comfortable. This concept has also been described by Nwosu *et al.* (2023) ^[21] as those academic pressure and demands parents place on their children's academic performance. Ahmad *et al.* (2023) ^[25] outlined these parents' expectations to include setting high academic standards, emphasis on high grades, among others. In the view of Xu *et*

al. (2024) ^[33], this concept is described as those highest levels of education that parents believed their children could achieve in the future. In every society, the need for children to succeed is highly valued by parents and this has made the issue of parental expectation for academic success to be widely recognized by most parents in Nigeria especially among the educated. Parenting is very important to children as it directly influences children's outcomes in schools. Wang (2013) ^[17] observed that these parents are highly interested in their children's education as they express passions and strong desires to help their children succeed regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status.

Many previous studies reveal that parental expectations are positively related with children's high academic performance (Danisman, 2017). This according to Frioland *et al.* cited in Ma *et al* (2018) ^[12] is reported to may have a significant long term effect on children's academic achievement from childhood until adolescence stage. However, relatively few studies focused on the influence of high parental expectations beyond the realm of adolescent students' academic performance to examine the impact on the mental health of the students. These students on their own desire to meet their family expectations struggle to do their best without the parents knowing the emotional feelings their children go through the learning process, which can cause emotional stress and learning problems for the students such as nervousness, worry, frustration, abasement, depression among others. The instability of these emotions easily initiates unusual behavior which can push students to other ways of meeting up or handling their challenges. Several studies have revealed that excessive pressure from the parents expectations could impact negatively on the wellbeing of adolescents. Quach *et al* (2015) ^[29] study noted that high levels of parental academic pressure (parental expectation) are usually associated with negative mental health outcomes in adolescents. In addition, Fu *et al* (2022) ^[28] argued that internalizing the demanding expectations leads to increased stress level and emotional distress. This can also cause increased stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms. Ganesan *et al* (2020) noted that those adolescents who may develop distorted beliefs about their worth as a result of academic achievements usually go to the extent of nursing suicidal or self-harming thoughts, Failure, hopelessness and despair could also be attributed to the result from the fear of not being able to meet up with the parents expectations. The parents' behavior toward their children is of vital importance because it leaves its good and bad effects on the children, which in turn affect the society. These reflections depend on what class of home a child belongs to and the kind of parents they have.

Parental expectation can therefore have a strong effect on students' motivation and self-expectations. While healthy and realistic expectations can encourage students success, unrealistically high expectations can set children up for failure, Green (2016) ^[8] noted that such unrealistic expectations can lead to anxiety and discouragement when a child cannot live up to his or her parents goals. These demands made by parents may exceed capacity of students, as a consequence, they can be disturbed, frustrated, bored and displeased which relate to the major mental health hazards, problems with both physical and mental stress related diseases. This alters the mental health state of an individual as the individual may find it difficult to effectively utilize his or her capacities in making personal

and social adjustments to fit the dynamic environment within which he or she co-exist with other persons (Mullen, 2010) ^[13]. Furthermore, Asma *et al.* (2023) ^[3] study revealed that parental expectations positively predicted academic stress among students. They however observed that neither parental expectations nor academic stress were significant predictors of academic satisfaction. Therefore, for students who study in tertiary institutions, the rates of completion of their programmes are a function of how they are able to manage school-related stress and pressure from their parents. Thus the overlapping symptoms of these two psychological problems can lead to increase in mental health challenges for the first year undergraduate students.

The increased rate of mental health issues among first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions is becoming overwhelming and very worrisome in the Nigerian society. This is because the period of transition from secondary school to tertiary institution is always characterized by stress that affects these new students' psychological, physiological and behavioural adjustment in their new environment. These new students who are mostly adolescents are confronted with confusion in trying to understand the challenges they are to face in the new study environment such as locating the new lecture halls or classes for their lectures and adapting to new changes in lecture time if need arises. In the case of those of them that are off campus students, they are confronted with challenges like meeting up lecture time especially those who come from areas far away from the institution. Some face financial challenges in terms of transportation fares to and from lecture areas. The married female first year students also face the challenges of coping with family demands which contribute to their not meeting up the challenges of the new academic environment. In addition, majority of these students' parents often expect so much from them at the new level such as having best grades without minding the influencing factors on a student's performance on any course of study. This is coupled with the pressure and challenges that are associated with the academic demands such as test taking, grade competitions, time demands, class environment and concerns about future careers. With these concerns, the first year students are stressed out as they show signs of emotional disabilities, aggressive behavior, shyness, social maladjustment and often lack of interest in otherwise enjoyable activities. It is however pathetic that confronted with these myriads of challenges, the first year students exhibit negative emotions and heightened anxiety toward their academic work. These problematic behaviours often affect academic self-efficacy of students as many develop numerous behavior disorders such as depression. As a way out of their dilemma, some students engage in examination malpractice, illicit use of drugs and substance abuse ostensibly as a short cut to meet up with their educational pursuit, family and societal demands without considering the impact of these acts on their mental well being. It is against this background that the study investigated the impact of academic stress and parental expectations on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

The following research questions guided this study.

1. To what extent does academic stress impact on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis?

- To what extent does parental expectation impact on mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant impact of academic stress on the mental health of first year students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.
- There is no significant impact of parental expectations on the mental health of first year students of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

Material and Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of all the 23,248 first year students of five tertiary institutions (Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto 5043, Sokoto State University Sokoto 1010, Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto 11,000, Shehu Shagari College of Education Sokoto 5902 and School of Nursing and Midwifery (UDUTH) Sokoto 293) in Sokoto Metropolis. A sample size of 378 first year students was drawn using proportionate sampling technique and simple random sampling technique to allow equal chance of subjects in the selection procedure. Data collection was done through the use of three instruments tagged Academic Stress Scale (ASS) adapted from Balaji, (2013) to measure academic stress and Parental Expectation Scale (PES) adopted from Odeunmi (1988) [14] to measure Parental Expectation and Mental Health Inventory (MHI) adopted from Balaji (2013) to measure mental health. The Academic Stress Scale consisted of forty (40) items and was based on five point likert scale of No Stress (NS), Slight Stress (SS), Moderate Stress (MS), High Stress (HS) and Extreme Stress (ES). Parental expectation scale was based on four (4) point likert of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Mental health inventory was designed on four (4) point likert scale. The instruments were subjected to face and construct validity by three experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto and University of Port Harcourt, since two of the instruments were not designed locally. More so, its use for a similar study was with foreign students. The reliability of the instruments was achieved through Cronbach Alpha statistics which yielded a reliability index of 0.65, 0.72, 0.75 respectively for each measure; meaning that the internal consistency of the item to measure the variables of the study were appropriate. Data analysis was done using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and independent simple t-test for hypotheses testing, at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of academic stress on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis?

Table 1: Simple Regression Analysis of the influence and prediction of academic stress on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.126	.016	.013

The table 1 shows a simple correlation coefficient (R) that measures the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variable (academic stress) and the dependent variable (mental health). In this analysis, the value of R is 0.126. This suggests a weak positive correlation between academic stress and mental health. The R Square (Coefficient of Determination): represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (mental health) that is explained by the independent variable (academic stress). In this case, the R Square value is 0.016, indicating that only 1.6% of the variance in mental health can be explained by academic stress while 98.4% is accounted for by other variance not included in this model. This suggests a very weak explanatory power of academic stress in predicting mental health. The weak positive correlation (R = 0.126) suggests that there is a slight tendency for academic stress to be associated with a slightly higher level of mental health issues among first-year undergraduate students in Sokoto Metropolis. However, the low R Square (0.016) indicates that academic stress explains only a very small proportion of the variation in mental health. This suggests that factors other than academic stress are likely contributing to the overall mental health outcomes of first-year undergraduate students. The Adjusted R Square (0.013) reinforces the idea that the model's explanatory power is limited, and there might be other unaccounted factors influencing mental health. It's important to note that correlation does not imply causation. While there is a correlation between academic stress and mental health, it does not necessarily mean that academic stress causes mental health issues or vice versa. Thus, based on this simple regression analysis, there is a weak positive relationship between academic stress and mental health among first-year undergraduate students in Sokoto Metropolis.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of academic stress on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

Table 2: T- test associated with Simple regression Analysis of the influence and prediction of academic stress on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Acade Stress	.144	.059	.126	2.438	.015

Unstandardized Coefficient (B), gives a positive value of 0.144 which suggests that as the level of academic stress increases by one unit, the mental health score is expected to increase by 0.144 units. This indicates a positive association between academic stress and mental health. The standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.126 provides a measure of effect size and contribution of academic stress on mental health, indicating that the relationship between academic stress and mental health is relatively small but still discernible.

The t-statistic of 2.438 alongside the sig is used to test the null hypothesis that the coefficient for Academic Stress is statistically significant. The p-value associated with the t-statistic is 0.015, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude

that there is a statistically significant influence of academic stress on the mental health of first-year undergraduate students. $t = 2.438, p = .0015 (p < .005)$.

The results of the t-test suggest that there is a statistically significant positive influence of academic stress on the mental health of first-year undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis. The moderate effect size and positive correlation (Beta = .126 and R .126) emphasizes the importance of addressing academic stress in efforts to promote positive mental health outcomes among first-year undergraduate students.

The result indicates that higher levels of academic stress are significantly associated with higher levels of mental health issues among these students. It underscores the importance of considering and addressing academic stressors in efforts to promote better mental health outcomes among first-year undergraduate students.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of parental expectation on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis?

Table 3: Simple Regression Analysis of the influence and prediction of parental expectation on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.084	.007	.004

The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.084, indicating a weak positive correlation between parental expectation and mental health. This suggests a slight tendency for parental expectations to be associated with a slightly higher level of mental health issues among first-year undergraduate students in Sokoto Metropolis. R Square (Coefficient of Determination) represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (mental health) that is explained by the independent variable (parental expectation). In this case, the R Square value is 0.007, indicating that only 0.7% of the variance in mental health can be explained by parental expectation. This suggests a very weak explanatory power of parental expectation in predicting mental health.

The weak positive correlation (R = 0.084) suggests a slight association between parental expectation and mental health issues among first-year undergraduate students. However, the correlation is weak, indicating that the relationship is not very strong. The low R Square (0.007) implies that parental expectation explains only a very small proportion (0.7%) of the variation in mental health while 99.3% is accounted for by other variance not included in this model. This suggests that factors other than parental expectation are likely contributing significantly to the overall mental health outcomes of these students. Thus based on this simple regression analysis, there seems to be a weak positive relationship between parental expectation and the mental health of first-year undergraduate students in Sokoto Metropolis. However, the limited explanatory power of the parental expectation suggests that other factors beyond parental expectation likely play a significant role in shaping mental health outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of parental expectation on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis

Table 4: T- test associated with Simple regression Analysis of the influence and prediction of parental expectation on the mental health of first year undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Parent Expe	.246	.152	.084	1.614	.107

The Unstandardized Coefficient (B) gives a positive value of 0.246 suggests that as the level of parental expectation increases by one unit, the mental health score is expected to increase by 0.246 units. This indicates a positive association between parental expectation and mental health.

While the Standardized Coefficient (Beta) of 0.084 provides a measure of effect size and contribution indicating that the relationship between parental expectation and mental health is relatively small.

The t-statistic of 1.614 and sig is used to test the null hypothesis. The p-value associated with the t-statistic is 0.107, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistically significant influence of parental expectation on the mental health of first-year undergraduate students. as $t = 1.614, p = .107 (p > .005)$. The results of the t-test suggest that there is no statistically significant influence of parental expectation on the mental health of first-year undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis even though there is a very small effect size and very low positive relationship moderate effect size and positive correlation (Beta = .084 and R .084) The result support the hypothesis that there is no significant influence of parental expectation on mental health.

Discussion of Findings

From finding one, it is revealed that there is a significant influence of academic stress on mental health of first year students. This finding means that students who undergo academic stress may likely suffer mental health problems. It also means that having a good or balanced wellbeing is a function of academic stress. The finding of the study is not surprising to the researcher because she is aware of the negative impact of stress on mental wellbeing. The findings of the study may come because majority of the respondents may have experienced academic stress in one way or the other which may have affected their mental wellbeing. The present findings is in line with that reported earlier by Erkutlu and Chafra (2006)^[7] as well as Kaur (2014)^[10] who all reported significant influence of stress on mental wellbeing of students.

Finding two also revealed that there is a significant influence of parental expectation on mental health of first year undergraduate students of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis. This study shows that students who experience parental expectation may suffer mental health problems. This corroborates with the view of Green (2016)^[8], that such unrealistic expectations can lead to anxiety and discouragement when a child cannot live up to his or her parents goals. They may remain disturbed, frustrated, bored and displeased which relate to the major mental health hazards or problems with both physical and mental stress-related diseases. They may find it difficult to effectively utilize their individual capacities in making personal and social adjustments to fit in the dynamic environment

(Mullen, 2010) ^[13]. In addition, the finding is also in agreement with Coldwell in Riley (2003) ^[22] who found that there is a strong relationship between pressure, test anxiety and academic dissatisfaction. This shows that pressure from the study is a significant contributor to many mental health problems in learners. This is because, excessive parental pressure on the children may lead to severe psychological symptoms, such as depressed mood, anxious feelings and even suicide thoughts and acts when coping resources are exhausted. However, Danisman (2017) and Asma *et al.* (2023) ^[3] argued that some previous studies revealed that parental expectations are positively related with children's high academic performance although Asma *et al.* clearly pointed out that neither parental expectations nor academic stress were significant predictors of academic satisfaction

Conclusion

Conclusion drawn from this research showed that, there is significant influence of academic stress and parental expectations on mental health of first year undergraduate students in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis. This confirms that first year students of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis are not fully acquainted with the new academic environment since some of them are leaving their families for the first time to stay in school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. First year students should be properly sensitized during their Orientation Programme that stress is a normal aspect of our daily life engagement; as such their ability to handle it with ease will go a long way in helping their mental health.
2. Lecturers should show understanding to the fundamental challenges of first year students.
3. Educational psychologists and counselors should be on the look out to identify symptoms like nervousness, forgetfulness, loss of concentration, feeling of helplessness, loneliness and isolation from students and guide the students with proper counseling.
4. Tertiary institutions should devote sufficient time to impactful orientation programme for the first year students.

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