

Beyond Grades: Depression as a Determining Factor in the Academic Performance of Adolescents

Más Allá de las Calificaciones: La Depresión como Factor Determinante en el Rendimiento Académico de los Adolescentes

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Academic Performance, Adolescents, Depression, Mental Health, Secondary Education.

This article examines the relationship between depression and academic performance in high school students, focusing on the biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to the onset of depression in adolescents. The research studies the theory and analyzes two existing cases to determine how these factors can influence academic performance by reviewing studies conducted in diverse educational contexts to identify common patterns and significant differences. The findings indicate that depression negatively impacts key aspects of academic achievement, such as motivation, energy levels, and concentration, resulting in poorer school performance. However, some studies fail to identify a direct relationship between depression and academic grades, highlighting the importance of exploring other moderating variables, such as family support, school resources, and individual coping strategies. These differences underscore the need for further research that addresses the specific characteristics of different educational and cultural settings. Lastly, the article provides practical recommendations for educators, parents, and policymakers. Among these, it emphasizes the importance of implementing psychological support programs in schools and designing interventions tailored to adolescents' cultural and emotional needs to mitigate the impact of depression on academic performance.

RESUMEN

Palabras clave: Adolescentes, Depresión, Educación Secundaria, Rendimiento Académico, Salud Mental.

Este artículo examina la relación entre la depresión y el rendimiento académico en estudiantes de secundaria, con un enfoque en los factores biológicos, psicológicos y sociales que contribuyen a la aparición de la depresión en adolescentes. La investigación se centra en estudiar la teoría y analizar dos casos existentes para determinar cómo estos factores pueden influir en el desempeño escolar, evaluando estudios realizados en contextos educativos diversos para identificar patrones comunes y diferencias significativas. Los hallazgos muestran que la depresión afecta negativamente aspectos clave del rendimiento académico, como la motivación, el nivel de energía y la capacidad de concentración, lo que se traduce en un desempeño escolar deficiente. A pesar de ello, algunos estudios no logran identificar una relación directa entre la depresión y las calificaciones académicas, lo que resalta la importancia de explorar otras variables moderadoras, como el apoyo familiar, los recursos escolares y las estrategias de

afrontamiento individuales. Estas diferencias enfatizan la necesidad de realizar más investigaciones específicas que aborden las particularidades de distintos entornos educativos y culturales. Finalmente, el artículo propone recomendaciones prácticas dirigidas a educadores, padres y formuladores de políticas. Entre estas, se destaca la importancia de implementar programas de apoyo psicológico en las escuelas y diseñar intervenciones adaptadas a las necesidades culturales y emocionales de los adolescentes, con el fin de mitigar el impacto de la depresión en el ámbito académico.

Introduction

The beginning of the school year for JR was no different than any other fifteen-year-old in a new environment. The nervous glance scanning teachers and classmates, the shy and reserved smile, and the fidgety hands revealed his anxiety. However, a deep sadness dulled her honey-colored eyes, a lingering melancholy dwelling in her mind. This sadness was not the common sadness of someone leaving old friends to enter a new school; it was a constant shadow in his life.

In the complex world of school life, the pursuit of academic success is inextricably linked to a critical and often overlooked aspect: students' mental health. Depression, a mental health condition that affects a significant number of high school students, negatively impacts their academic performance and overall well-being. This article aims to examine the relationship between depression and academic performance in adolescents. Through a comprehensive literature review and theoretical analysis, we aim to identify factors contributing to depression in this age group, review significant studies conducted in educational settings, and provide practical recommendations for educators, school administrators and policy makers. It highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers, educational psychologists, parents and the community at large to recognize and treat depression in students, thus creating a more conducive and supportive educational environment.

Although not a new topic, talk of mental health has gained more acceptance in recent years. A growing body of research on mental health issues facing college students emphasizes the need for faculty to consider how mental health might influence students and what options are available (VanderLind, 2014). Symptoms such as hopelessness, feeling overwhelmed, loneliness, sadness, difficulty functioning due to depression, overwhelming anxiety, suicidal ideation and attempts, and self-injurious behavior will necessarily impact students' academic performance.

The lack of sufficient studies on the connection between mental health and developmental education is problematic, especially when there is evidence about the incidence of reports given by students about symptoms experienced in relation to mental illness and their connection to the learning process (Lundh et al., 2011). Consequently, these symptoms have an impact on school performance or failure, being precursors of mental illnesses such as major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and comorbid symptoms such as panic attacks and insomnia, among others (Solmi et al., 2021; VanderLind, 2014).

Method

Procedure

Given the complex relationship between depression and academic performance in adolescents, which is not complex because of a lack of empirical evidence, but because of the paucity of studies focused specifically on college students, the question arises: What influence does depression have on the academic performance of adolescents? This question leads to another: What studies are available in this area? To answer

these questions, an exhaustive review of the existing literature on depression and academic performance in adolescents was conducted to provide a solid theoretical framework to support the research. Relevant studies on the influence of depression on adolescent academic performance were also identified and analyzed. It was identified that this area has not been widely explored, so two representative studies were selected for detailed analysis: one conducted in a Western context and the other in a Latin American context.

To address the relationship between depression and academic performance in adolescents, a two-phase methodological approach was carried out. First, a comprehensive review of the existing literature was conducted to establish a solid theoretical framework. Then, specific empirical studies were investigated in two different contexts: one Western and the other Latin American.

Phase 1: Literature Review

An exhaustive search of academic databases, including Dialnet, PsycINFO, Google Scholar and theoretical material in the author's possession as part of his studies, was conducted to identify relevant theories examining the relationship between depression and academic performance in adolescents. Search terms included “depression”, “academic achievement”, “adolescents”, “mental health”, and “secondary education”. The literature review identified key factors contributing to adolescent depression and its impact on academic performance.

The literature reviewed included studies highlighting the prevalence of depression in adolescents, the biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to depression, and how these factors affect academic performance. The findings of the literature review provided a solid theoretical basis for interpreting the results of the empirical studies investigated.

Phase 2: Research of Empirical Studies

Two representative studies were selected for detailed analysis. These studies were chosen for their relevance and methodological quality, and provided a comparative view of the relationship between depression and academic performance in different cultural contexts.

Study 1: Western context: The first study, conducted by Bansal et al. (2009), investigated the prevalence of depression in adolescent students in a public school using the Children's Depression Questionnaire (CDI). The results indicated that a significant proportion of students presented depressive symptoms, being more prevalent among female students. Factors such as poor academic performance and problems in the family environment, such as lack of support and conflicts, increased the risk of depression.

Study 2: Latin American context: The second study, conducted by Ana Icela Collado Urbina and Emelda Inés Cortez López at the Centro de Educación Integral DIANOVA Esther del Río “Las Marías” in Santa Teresa-Carazo, Nicaragua, evaluated the relationship between depression and academic performance in boarding students during the second semester of 2012. Using the Hamilton Depression Scale, it was found that 23% of the students evaluated presented symptoms of depression, most of them being females from urban areas. Despite the prevalence of depression, no significant direct relationship was found between depression and poor academic performance.

Results

Definition and Prevalence of Depression

The word depression comes from the Latin *depressus*, past participle of *deprimere* meaning “to press down.” According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the earliest known use of the word *depression* is in the Middle English period, specifically around 1400 by the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer who “often depicts the emotions of his characters through the external physical signs of the body, and often does so using discourse that draws on Galenic theories” (McNamara, 2015). For example, in *The Knight's Tale* and *The Duchess Book*, Chaucer strikingly describes the suicidal impulse associated with love.

Through his poems and the medicalized language Chaucer uses to depict emotional disorders, other characters and the reader are challenged to empathize, begin to understand and react to the sufferer.

The word *depression*-this concept of being pushed down-is used in this context to express both emotional disorders and a sense of suffering. In common parlance, depression refers to the state of being sad, guilty or *down*, a popular neologism that describes how someone seems lower than usual (Marietán, 2008). This author states that the word depression could refer to a syndrome, a disease or a type of mood (or state of mind).

As a mood state, depression is characterized by a persistent feeling of sadness and/or a loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities. Pessimism, dissatisfaction and negativity are common: emotional thoughts influence cognitive thinking, which is then projected into the future. This leads to a loss of purpose and desire, and an increased sense of inadequacy, especially in relation to personal performance, general well-being and interactions with others.

On the other hand, a depressive syndrome is characterized by a combination of several symptoms that significantly affect the person's quality of life. These include hypoergia, which manifests as decreased energy, boredom, listlessness and lack of interest, often expressed as “I don't feel like it” (Marietán, 2008). This leads to slowed thinking and reduced performance in daily tasks, with feelings of overexertion and clumsiness in previously automatic activities. Intellectual work is compromised and fatigue becomes constant, with a tendency to rest and difficulty getting out of bed, which may cause a feeling of guilt.

People with this syndrome also experience changes in personal interaction, becoming more introverted, intolerant of meetings and noises, and hypersensitive to dramatic events, which can result in easy crying and suffering over insignificant issues. Daily routine is altered, with variations in the rhythm of symptoms, such as greater discomfort in the morning or at night, alterations in sleep and appetite, and fluctuations in weight and sexuality. Anxiety and distress accompany these symptoms, intensifying the syndrome and further affecting the person's ability to lead a normal life.

A syndrome is defined as a series of symptoms that occur together and, by convention, acquire a nosographic identity and fall under nosology. We recognize this as a disease. Marietán (2008) argues that, in the field of mental health, where the exact causes are often unknown and only the pathogenesis is suspected, these syndromes are recognized more by agreement among experts than by definitive knowledge, leading to considerable theoretical dispersion. Thus depression, as a disease, can be classified in several ways depending on the supposed “trigger”:

- Symptomatic depression: Caused by an organic factor, affecting the anatomo-physiological aspect.
- Situational depression or exhaustion: Precipitated by life situations such as retirement, a move, or a bereavement, addressing the social aspect.
- Neurotic depression: Reactivated by internal conflicts according to psychoanalytic theory.
- Endogenous depression: It arises unmotivated from within the person.
- Masked depression: A form of depression that does not manifest itself in an obvious way, playing hide-and-seek with its symptoms.

Therefore, depressive syndromes are identified and classified through conventions in the medical community, reflecting a diversity of theories and approaches that seek to understand and treat the complexity of depression and other mental disorders. Thus, mental health is an aspect that should be considered when evaluating school performance. In Ecuador, for example, one in ten adolescents suffers from some type of mental illness. Globally, one in seven young people aged 10-19 years has a mental disorder, accounting for 13% of the global burden of disease in this age group (WHO, 2021).

Depression is a common mental health concern among high school students, with data showing that a large number experience symptoms ranging from ongoing melancholy to thoughts of hopelessness. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) estimates that approximately 20% of adolescents will experience at least one episode of major depression before reaching adulthood (NIMH, 2021). According to the World Health Organization, worldwide, 1.1% of adolescents aged 10 to 14 years and 2.8% of those aged 15 to 19 years suffer from depression. Of these numbers, according to the Ministry of Public Health, in Ecuador, 20% of children and adolescents in the country present symptoms of depression or anxiety and 10% have considered or attempted suicide (World Vision, 2023).

Impact of Depression on Academic Performance

Defining Academic Performance

Jiménez and López-Zafra (2009) argue that the study of academic achievement presents many difficulties because it is a multidimensional construct, determined by a diversity of variables such as intelligence, motivation and personality, and influenced by personal, family and school factors. Despite this perspective, it can be proposed that academic performance be defined as an indicator of the level of learning achieved by the student, thus making it an indicator of educational quality. Although academic achievement and school failure are studied separately, the two are correlated,

since success or failure are indicators of the academic process, which includes the cognitive, affective and volitional performance of the student.

Since student performance or failure is an indicator of academic development, it needs to be evaluated. Citing Adell (2006), Jiménez and López-Zafra (2009) add: "Although student grades are indeed the most visible or apprehensible indicator, it is necessary to emphasize that grades do not always accurately reflect the student's conceptual, procedural, and attitudinal responses to the interpellations of the subject matter, the teacher, or the dynamics of the class. Grades do not always reflect the degree of student participation and involvement, the attention paid, the predisposition to learn, the student's position in relation to the subject, the class group, the group of classmates, the center and the teaching staff, etc." De la Torre (2005) argues that "Evaluating is a process by which we collect information, compare or contrast it and make decisions about it."

Following Jiménez and López-Zafra's argument, if it is accepted that student grades should not be the only indicators of academic performance, what other factors should be considered in the evaluation of school performance or failure? In addition to cognitive processes, what role do volitional and affective factors play during the educational process?

The evaluation must consider personal factors that influence education, such as intellectual level, the student's personality (including biological and historical-cultural factors that shape it) and motivation (understood as the student's aspirations and desires). This encompasses not only the cognitive area, but also the affective and volitional areas of the personality in the internalization of knowledge. As Vygotsky pointed out, the social, cultural and historical characteristics of subjectivity are not the result of direct external influences, but rather every lived experience becomes subjective within the network of meanings that characterizes the social insertion of individuals (Gonzales, 2011, cited in Rodríguez, 2013).

This leads to consideration of the academic, institutional, and socioeconomic factors that influence the assessment of academic performance or failure. According to Vygotsky, social, cultural and historical characteristics, which in general encompass these factors, become subjective according to the subjective significance given by the person. These meanings are due to individual psychic processes, which in turn are influenced by social, cultural and historical characteristics. These perceptions will depend on and influence students' mental health, a factor that has not been sufficiently considered in the evaluation of academic performance.

Depression and Academic Performance

The encyclopedia of psychology/pedagogy defines school failure as the result of intellectual inhibition that leads students to disengage, to a greater or lesser extent, from schoolwork, resulting in underachievement. The student does not reach normal intelligence-related standards, and as a consequence, personality changes negatively affect his or her healthy adaptation to life and the surrounding environment.

This definition is important because it includes both the cognitive area of academic performance/failure, as well as the affective and volitional aspects, and its incidence

in school success or failure. In addition, it covers the evaluation of academic performance or failure from the perspective of normality, and its consequences on development and social participation. Cognitive, affective and volitional processes, which are present in the development of the personality, are affected by the mental (psychological) state of the student. This is crucial because a student's mental health directly influences his or her ability to perform academically. The symptoms of a depressive syndrome affect not only the student's cognitive capacity, but also his or her emotions and motivation, essential elements for academic success and social adaptation. The following describes how these symptoms manifest and affect students in the school setting, including hypoergia, changes in personal interaction, and pacing of symptoms.

Hypoergia: Hypoergia refers to decreased energy and ability to perform daily activities. In the school environment, this translates into:

- Lack of motivation and energy: Students may express a constant “I don't feel like it” to participate in classes or school activities.
- Reduced academic performance: Slowed thinking and decreased performance on academic tasks are common. Students may feel that everything costs them a great deal of effort and that previously easy tasks now require extreme concentration.
- Fatigue and exhaustion: Students may need frequent breaks, often reporting that they need to lie down or find it difficult to get out of bed, especially in the mornings.
- Disinterest in extracurricular activities: Unwillingness to participate in previously rewarding activities is noticeable, affecting their participation in sports, clubs and other school activities.

Change in personal interaction: Depression can significantly alter the way students interact with peers and teachers:

- Introversion and isolation: Students may become more introverted, avoiding meetings and group activities.
- Irritability and hypersensitivity: They may be intolerant of noise and waiting, and react disproportionately to minor emotional events, such as receiving grades or comments from teachers.
- Neglect of personal care: Students may neglect their personal appearance and dress, which can be noticeable in the school environment.

Symptom rhythm: Depressive symptoms may vary throughout the day, affecting school performance differently at different times:

- Diurnal variations: Some students may experience accentuated discomfort in the morning, improving towards the evening. Others may find that their symptoms are aggravated after lunch or during the afternoon.
- Sleep disturbances: Problems falling asleep, waking up early and not being able to go back to sleep, and nighttime ruminations are common. Lack of sleep directly affects their ability to concentrate and perform academically.
- Changes in appetite and weight: Variations in appetite and weight may be evident, with some students losing or gaining weight significantly due to depression.

Anxiety and distress: All of these symptoms are accompanied and exacerbated by elevated levels of anxiety and distress, which color the entire student experience. Anxiety can manifest itself in behaviors such as avoidance of

schoolwork and difficulty participating in group activities, affecting their overall performance in the school environment.

Risk Factors Contributing to Depression in College Students

Socioeconomic, cultural and racial factors influence academic development and affect the volitional area with respect to students' educational and career aspirations and desires. According to Vintimilla-Pesántez and Cárdenas (2023), “triggering” factors can be classified as biological, psychological and social.

Biological Factors

- **Genetic predisposition:** It is important to understand that there is a genetic component to depression. These genetic variations can be passed from parent to child, increasing the risk for first-degree relatives. However, this does not guarantee that they will develop the disease. Even so, the heritability of depression is estimated at 40-50%, indicating that this percentage of the variation in depression among individuals can be attributed to differences in their DNA. Numerous studies have sought to identify specific genes that influence the development of depression. Although this task has been difficult and the results have not always been conclusive, some genes have been identified that appear to increase the risk of developing the disease. These genes do not act in isolation; they interact with other genes and environmental factors to influence predisposition to depression. Some of these genes include:
 - **SLC6A4 (5-HTT):** This gene encodes the serotonin transporter, which regulates the reuptake of serotonin from the synapse back to the presynaptic. Polymorphisms in this gene, such as 5-HTTLPR, are associated with susceptibility to depression and response to antidepressant treatment (Lesch et al, 1996; Hande et al, 2021).
 - **HTR2A:** It encodes serotonin receptor 2A, which is involved in postsynaptic serotonin signaling. Variants in this gene can influence the response to antidepressants and are involved in mood regulation (Hande et al, 2021).
 - **SIRT1 and LHPP:** Although less studied, these genes have been linked to the risk of developing depression. SIRT1 is involved in the regulation of longevity and stress response, whereas LHPP has recently been associated with treatment-resistant depression (Lesch et al, 1996).
- **Central nervous system:** Young people with depression show a decrease in the activity of certain brain regions, such as the prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus. Decreased generation of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine is related to the development of juvenile depression.
- **Environmental factors and genetics:** Stress early in life can activate certain genes associated with depression. Exposure to stressful situations during adolescence also contributes to the development of depression.

Psychological Factors

- Stress: Adolescents experience academic, social and family pressure, which can lead to feelings of overwhelm and lack of control, resulting in depressive symptoms.
- Low self-esteem: Adolescents with low self-esteem are more susceptible to depression due to feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness.
- Lack of coping skills: Lack of effective skills to manage stress and negative emotions increases the likelihood of developing depression.
- Anxiety disorders: Adolescents with anxiety disorders are more likely to develop depression, as anxiety symptoms can affect their mood and emotional well-being.

Social Factors

- Lack of social support: The absence of emotional support from family, friends or social environment can generate feelings of loneliness, isolation and hopelessness, increasing the risk of depression.
- *Bullying*: Being a victim of bullying increases the risk of depression, anxiety and other mental disorders due to the hostile and stressful environment.
- Social pressure and stress: Pressure to meet social expectations can cause young people to feel overwhelmed and stressed, triggering depression.
- Exposure to traumatic events: Events such as sexual abuse or domestic violence increase the risk of developing depression due to the neurobiological and emotional changes they generate.
- Precarious socioeconomic situation: Economic constraints can increase stress and anxiety in students, contributing to the development of depression.
- Consumption of psychoactive substances: The use of substances such as drugs and alcohol is associated with an increased risk of depression in adolescents.
- Conflicting family relationships: Conflicting relationships and weak family ties can generate an emotionally unstable environment, leading to depression.
- Learning difficulties and poor school performance: Academic difficulties and poor school performance can affect students' self-esteem and emotional well-being, contributing to depression.
- Discrimination: Discrimination based on sexual orientation, ethnicity or religion can lead to feelings of isolation and hopelessness, increasing the risk of depression.
- Unhealthy lifestyles: Unhealthy habits, such as poor diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use, alcohol abuse and insufficient sleep, can negatively affect mental health and contribute to depression.

Study 1: Study of Prevalence of Depression in Adolescent Students of a Public School

General Description

- **Researchers:** Vivek Bansal, Sunil Goyal, Kalpana Srivastava
- **Objective:** To investigate the prevalence of depression among adolescent students in a public school.
- **Methodology:**
 - **Sample:** Teenage students
 - **Evaluation Instrument:** Children's Depression Questionnaire (CDI)
 - **Period:** One academic year

Key Results

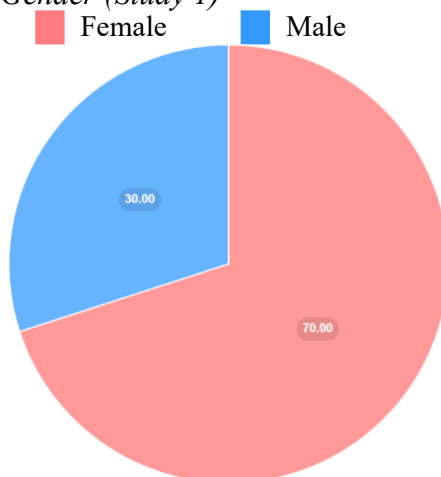
- **Prevalence of depression:** A significant percentage of adolescent students presented depressive symptoms.
- **Associated factors:**
 - **Genre:** Adolescent girls showed a higher prevalence of depression compared to their male peers.
 - **Academic Performance:** Students with low academic performance were more likely to show depressive symptoms.
 - **Family atmosphere:** Problems in the family environment, such as lack of support and the presence of conflicts, were associated with higher levels of depression.

Implications

- Need to implement psychological support programs in schools.
- Importance of involving families in these programs.

TABLE 1

Prevalence of Depression by Gender (Study 1)



This graph shows that a higher percentage of female students presented symptoms of depression compared to male students.

Study 2: Incidence of Depression in the Academic Performance of Boarding Students of the Centro de Educación Integral DIANOVA Esther del Río 'Las Marías', Santa Teresa-Carazo, in the Second Semester of the Year 2012

General Description

- **Researchers:** Ana Icela Collado Urbina, Emelda Inés Cortez López
- **Objective:** To assess the relationship between depression and academic performance in boarding students.
- **Methodology:**
 - **Sample:** 47 boarding students from 12 to 18 years old
 - **Evaluation Instrument:** Hamilton Depression Scale
 - **Academic Performance Data:** Collected from school records

Key Results

- **Prevalence of depression:** 23% of the students presented symptoms of depression.
 - **Gender Distribution:** 91% of the students with depression were female.
 - **Provenance:** 64% of the students with depression were from urban areas.
- **Academic performance:**
 - “Very Good” performance: 36%
 - “Good” performance: 46%
 - “Fair” or “Poor” performance: 9%
- **Relationship between depression and academic performance:** No significant direct relationship was found.

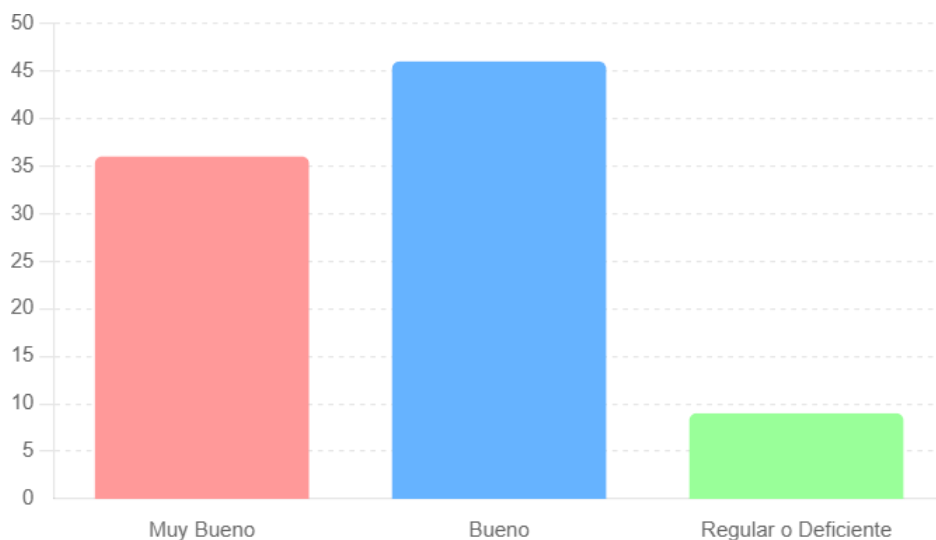
Implications

- Implementation of psychological support programs in educational centers to improve the quality of life and academic performance of students.

TABLE 2

Academic Performance of Students with Depression (Study 2)

x Percentage of Students and Academic Achievement



This graph illustrates the percentages of academic performance among students with depression. The majority of students with depression had “Very Good” and “Good” academic performance, while only a small percentage had “Fair” or “Poor” performance.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study confirm that depression is a prevalent problem among adolescent students and that it can have a significant impact on their academic performance and overall well-being. This section will discuss the findings in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework, highlighting implications and recommendations for educational practice and future research.

Prevalence of Depression

The studies analyzed show a high prevalence of depression among adolescents, especially among females. This is consistent with the literature that adolescent girls are more vulnerable to depression due to biological, psychological and social factors. Research by VanderLind (2014) and Solmi et al. (2021) support the idea that depressive symptoms, such as hopelessness, loneliness, and sadness, are present in a significant proportion of students and affect their ability to function adequately in an academic setting.

Factors Associated with Depression

Study 1 found that problems in the family environment and poor academic performance are strongly associated with depression in adolescents. This suggests that a supportive family environment is crucial for students' mental health. The literature reviewed by Vintimilla-Pesántez and Cárdenas (2023) emphasizes that family conflicts, lack of support and stress can trigger or exacerbate depressive symptoms, which, in turn, affect academic performance.

Academic Performance

Study 2 revealed that, despite the high prevalence of depression, many students maintained “Very Good” or “Good” academic performance. This may indicate the presence of cultural-historical factors that allow some students to manage depressive symptoms without significantly affecting their academic performance. According to Vygotsky (Gonzales, 2011 cited in Rodriguez, 2013), these factors may include strong social support, effective coping strategies, and a sense of purpose and motivation, as also mentioned in the work of Jimenez and Lopez-Zafra (2009).

Gender Differences

The higher prevalence of depression among adolescent girls suggests the need for gender-specific interventions. Adolescent girls may face different social and academic pressures than their male peers, which may explain their greater vulnerability to depression. This finding is in line with observations from previous studies that young women are more likely to experience depressive symptoms due to biological and social factors (Hande et al., 2021).

Resilience and Lack of Further Research

The lack of a significant direct relationship between depression and academic underachievement in Study 2 highlights the importance of resilience factors and school support. After analyzing other studies, Collado and Cortez (2012) reach three conclusions as to why no correlation is found between these two variables: (1) it is necessary to refine the variable assessment system, (2) childhood depression is presented as a state whose permanence is not sufficiently stable to be clearly related to academic performance, at least within the age range assessed, and (3) the findings indicate the beginning of a relationship, still incipient, but which may be definitively established in adolescence.

Conclusion

As a psychologist and college professor for six years now, I have observed diagnoses of major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder in students, and have seen how these affect their academic performance. Factors such as academic stress, social pressures, hormonal changes, family relationships and traumatic experiences contribute significantly to adolescent depression. Academic stress, stemming from the need to meet high standards and fear of failure, increases stress levels and worsens symptoms of depression. Social pressures and adolescent dynamics, including bullying and the need for acceptance, affect self-esteem and foster feelings of loneliness, contributing to depression. Hormonal changes during adolescence also influence mood and may increase susceptibility to depression. Dysfunctional family relationships and lack of emotional support are critical factors that can trigger or aggravate depression, as are past traumatic experiences. The mental health of adolescent students is a crucial aspect that must be considered when evaluating their academic performance. Depression and other mental disorders have a significant impact on their ability to learn and actively participate in school. Although studies indicate that depression does not always correlate directly with poor academic performance, it is clear that depressed

factors associated with mental health, such as academic stress, social pressures, hormonal changes, family relationships and traumatic experiences, play an important role.

Teachers, educational psychologists, parents and society in general must work together to recognize and treat depression in high school students. It is essential to establish an environment in which the mental health of students is actively promoted, recognizing the problems and underlying reasons, and applying appropriate assistance techniques for each particular case. It is essential to implement psychological support programs in schools that address both academic and emotional factors. These programs should include training for teachers and school staff on how to identify and support students who may be suffering from depression. In addition, it is crucial to foster an inclusive and supportive school environment where students feel safe to express their feelings and seek help when needed.

However, these strategies acknowledge the existence of childhood and adolescent depression, but do not focus sufficiently on the relationship between depression and academic performance, which is the focus of this article. There is a need to expand the field of research and invest in more studies that explore this influence. This research should consider depression from three perspectives: as a type of mood, as a syndrome and as a disease, and within the disease, as a nosological classification.

Likewise, it is imperative that such studies reformulate the definition of academic performance, considering all the areas that make up the student's personality: cognitive, volitional and affective. Academic performance should not be evaluated solely on the basis of grades (which mainly measure the cognitive and, to some extent, the volitional area), but should include the complex world of emotions and the psychic processes involved in the various emotional disorders. From this more holistic perspective, it will be possible to obtain more conclusive data on how depression impacts adolescent school success or failure.

This additional study will provide a solid foundation for developing appropriate academic and psychological interventions, enabling educators, mental health professionals and parents to create more effective strategies to support students and ensure their academic success. This will include appropriate trainings for both parents and teachers to truly understand what depression is from a clinical perspective, so that strategies are designed to help adolescents cope with their pathology and create accommodations necessary to meet the curriculum set by the school and district.

This combination of efforts is vital to improving the quality of life and academic success of students facing depression. By creating a supportive and understanding environment, and by investing in ongoing research, we can help adolescents navigate the challenges of depression and reach their full academic and personal potential.

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