

Effect of Depression on Productivity Among the Youth

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Abstract

Youth can only achieve meaningful social and psychological maturity if he or she is able to master successful roles expected of him/her at different stages of life. Maturity and responsibility leads to productivity that will be of benefit to the youth and society. Depression is one of the major mood disorders; it is associated with a pervasive feeling of sadness/low mood, lack of interest and engagement in previously pleasurable activities and reduction in energy or feeling of weakness. The youth suffering from depressive reactions, on the other hand, is an unhappy individual with a pessimistic outlook on life, vulnerable to threats and even minor frustrations, which may bring along increased feelings of depression and low productivity. The belief that youths are the leaders of tomorrow is still strongly held in our societies. As future leaders, youth can only actualize the goal of maintaining national stability, integration, and productive if they can successfully surmount the academic, social and psychological challenges confronting their present stage of life development. This paper discussed causes of depression, effects of depression on productivity and a way forward.

Keywords: *Depression, Productivity and Youth.*

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Background to the Study

Youthfulness is a time when an individual is full of energy and life for productivity. The National Vocational Guidance Association Commission on criteria for careers Education as a programme of activities organized in all educational levels, which facilitates the process of career development was designed by Pietrofesa and Splete cited in Okpe (2020) as an ongoing process that occurs over the life-span and included home, school and community experiences related to an individual's life- concept and its implementation in life style as living. The career education movement proposes to maximize the potential of individuals to achieve job satisfaction and adjustment through the structuring and integration of experiences in life. This can far fetch reached because of the effect of depression that battles with the individual.

Chokom (2019), sees youth as a young person, or the time of life between childhood and maturity: the state of being young, immature or inexperienced. The youth are not those spending their productive hours every day spewing hate and bigotry on social media platforms just because they have personal scores to settle with some politicians. The youth are not those shooting indiscriminately at places of worship and centre's of learning. A youth is not the young man or woman sitting all day facing his computer looking for those to fall for his or her scams, instead of channeling such energy into a legitimate job online.

According to Alsahlancy (2019), isolating young people, intentionally or unintentionally can contribute to drug abuse, illegal and criminal action, depression, migration and so on. Young people are the backbone of a society. Their participation in all aspects of society is very important. Unfortunately, we see many Nigeria youth being deprived of this. They have no or limited roles in decision making processes or leadership programs at the local and national level.

It is quite interesting to note that though of every employee in an organization works with similar materials, machines and tools, yet the level of individual performance do vary in great proportions. It indicates that some sort of relationship does exist between an employee's performance and his mind-set, i.e., his attitudinal and personality characteristics. Differences in the levels of performance among workers on the same job indicate that the level of performance of a worker on a job is a direct outcome of his motivation to perform the job efficiently. In order to give a boost to productivity, most organizations just fiddle with their strategies or change the organizational structure – they do everything except changing the way their employees work. However, the biggest problem faced by employees that are youth is not in the „outer space“ but in the „inner space“.

It is this relationship between the individuals attitudinal and personality characteristics and productivity that has not received due attention in Nigeria. It is important to understand that the measures to improve productivity are not the end result of one's productive attitude and so are measured in terms of non-attitudinal criteria (such as financial gains, cycle time reduction, etc.). Rather, productivity ends in optimization of resources and minimization of wastes, but it begins from within. Sukh (2001) expressed that productivity lies, not so much in the outward things people do, but in what they inwardly are. Productivity is not an outer aspect of one's job but a true reflection of ones inner world. This means that when the inner world is in conflict

depression can set in and when depression sets in, productivity is also affected negatively. Okpe (2020), opined that inner conflicts not only affect everything about the individual but also the lives of those we live and work with. An inner conflict affects all aspects of our lives, the psychological, spiritual and physical. Our behaviour involved around these feelings. The cause of destructive behaviour in our lives is the presence of inner conflicts. When productivity is affected, demand is affected, supply is affected also sales. Businesses and the economy of a nation as a whole are affected too.

Youth can manage depression if they develop good self-image and self-esteem. Pinto (2011) expressed that self-image is the mental picture of oneself and self-esteem is the respect one has for one's self-image. Self-esteem is the way in which one relates with oneself and the way one feels about oneself. Self-esteem is the key that unlocks all the treasures within oneself, thus enabling one to give expression to oneself, to experience job satisfaction, and to find deep and meaningful love relationships in one's life. A healthy self-esteem fosters health and vibrancy, One sees clearly who one is and is delighted at what one sees.

Theoretical Framework

The paper is anchored on Abraham Maslow theory of Self-actualization. In Maslow's hierarchical theory of human needs (to be safe e.g. from harm, disease, and disaster) is so basic that it is difficult for people to survive when this need is not sufficiently satisfied, and that other higher need, such as belongingness, will not manifest if this need is not satisfied Maslow cited in Okpe (2019). The highest need is self-actualization need (Nnachi, 2013). One is motivated to self-actualization after all other lower needs have been satisfied. One is said to have self-actualized himself if the target and highest ambition in the person's life has been achieved. Such ambition could be professional ambition e.g becoming a general in the army; becoming a professor in academic; becoming a chartered accountant, medical doctor, entrepreneurs etc. The implication for this theory to this paper is that for youths to be self-actualized they must have their basic needs met. Meeting youth basic needs will prevent depression and increase productivity. Maslow asserted that the three basic needs of every human being include: food, clothing and shelter. Many youth who are depressed is because of the lack of these basic human needs. Without these needs some find no meaning in life or the need to live on? Kamath (2010), explained that Abraham Maslow has given several characteristics of the self-actualized people as: superior perception, acceptance of self, problem-solving ability, detachment, creativeness, transcendence etc.

A self-actualized youth will see productivity as a constant striving towards the efficient mode of producing goods, services and commodities needed by society. It plays a crucial role in raising the standard of living of the people and the economy of a nation. Productivity is an important tool for managing inflation by lowering the cost of goods and services needed by the people. Creating a safe and friendly business environment becomes a very important knee. In a nutshell higher productivity means prosperity and peace for the people. When prosperity and peace are the order of the day depression will give way in the lives of the youths. "The essence of education lies in drawing out the very best that is in you." - Mahatma Gandhi.

The Concept of Depression

Sadness, feeling down, and having a loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities are familiar feelings for all of us. But if they persist and affect our lives substantially, the issue may be depression. Depression is the main cause of disability worldwide, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). It can affect adults, adolescents, and children. Goldman (2019) stated that depression is a mood disorder that involves a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. It is different from the mood fluctuations that people regularly experience as a part of life. Major life events, such as bereavement or the loss of a job, can lead to depression. Depression is an ongoing problem, not a passing one. It consists of episodes during which the symptoms last for at least 2 weeks. Depression can last for several weeks, months, or years.

Britannica (2020) sees depression, in psychology, a mood or emotional state that is marked by feelings of low self-worth or guilt and a reduced ability to enjoy life. A person who is depressed usually experiences several of the following symptoms; feeling of sadness, hopelessness, or pessimism, lowered self-esteem and heighten self-depreciation, a decrease or loss of ability to take pleasure in ordinary activities, reduced energy and vitality, slowness of thought or action, loss of appetite; and disturbed sleep or insomnia.

According to Micheal (2019), the symptoms of depressive disorders are: depressed mood, negative/pessimistic thoughts about self, the world and the future, lack of enjoyment, reduced energy or feeling of weakness, poor attention and concentration, disturbed sleep pattern with either insomnia or hypersomnia, change in appetite with either increased or reduction in appetite, change in weight, reduction in sexual interest, unnecessary guilt feelings, lack of memory and poor judgment, hopelessness, suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts. Among children and the youth, the following features may also suggest a depressive disorder like: abuse of alcohol and other drugs, social withdrawal, poor school or work attendance, lower marks at school or poor job performance and dangerous driving.

Depression also affects self-actualization. Self-actualization is the highest level of self-esteem which an individual wants his life to attain. Nwachukwu (2007), expressed that self-actualization is highly personalized. It could be described as personal dream aimed at to be realized. Self-actualization factors differ from person to person. To some it may be height of educational level to be reached; to another is may be skill acquisition of an art; robust financial base; acquisition of properties; internal virtues; religious heights; political ambition or professional fame and other such celebrities. In other words, what gives one person a sense of self-actualization in life does not necessarily give to another person. Many individuals live and die without self-actualizing.

Hindrance to self –actualization by Maslow cited in Nwachukwu (2007), are as follows:

1. Blindness to their potentials and the possibility of attainment.
2. The stifling of human development by social enrollment towards cultural stereotypes.
3. The strong negative influences exerted on people by safety needs thus providing anxiety which hinders willingness to take risks to change.
4. Lack of sustainability of adult motivation to stay on activity until task accomplishment.

Productivity

Productivity is not about producing goods and services. In production the human person is and should be of importance. Even if it is machine that does the production, the machine was invented by somebody. Productivity is quality of self, goods and services. It also means producing more and/or better in lesser time, with lesser money, with lesser efforts and /or with lesser resources. Sukh (2001), defined productivity as an increasingly efficient and effective use of the resources, i.e., capital, raw materials, labour and technology. Productivity is a matter of the efficiency with which inputs are used to produce outputs. Efficiency is doing a thing right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing. And, productivity is doing both.

Smiles (2010) expressed that the duty of industry applies to all classes and conditions of society. All have their work to do in their respective conditions of life-the rich as well as the poor. The gentleman by birth and education, however richly he may be endowed with worldly possession, cannot but feel that he is duty bound to contribute his quota of endeavor towards the general well-being in which he shares. He cannot be satisfied with being fed, clad, and maintained by the labour of others, without making some suitable return to the society that upholds him. To be idle and useless is neither an honour nor a privilege. There must be work before and work behind, with leisure to fall back upon.

The Japanese Productivity Centre defines productivity as follows: "Above all else, productivity is an attitude of the mind. It is mentality of progress of the constant improvement of that which exists. It is being able to do better today than yesterday. It is the will to improve on the present situation, no matter how good it may seem, no matter how good it may really be. It is the continual effort to try new methods and new ways; it is the faith in making progress each day. Productivity, in a nutshell, is belief in being the best."

Thus, for enhancing productivity, one strives to be more efficient and effective, not just working harder or being busy. There has been growing awareness that productivity cannot be improved without improving the human element. Today, no organization can afford to think of enhancing productivity by disregarding the importance of the human mind-set. Productivity of an organization is governed by the inner attributes of its employees. Bua (2020), expressed that performers mindset includes actions that engage positive emotions. Examples include setting challenging goals, allowing failure as a natural part of attaining high performance goals and providing conditions in which the performer feels a right amount of safety. Human capital is a means of production, into which additional investment yields additional output. Wages level is are directly related to the profitability of the products in those markets and to the level of skill, which are developed through training and experience in order to produce those products.

Factors that affect Productivity of Youths in Nigeria

1. Lack of motivation from the organization. Differences in the level of performance among youths on the same job indicate that the performance level of youths on the same job is a direct outcome of his or her motivation to performance job efficiently. The greater the motivation the higher the productivity and vice versa. And ones motivation is governed by ones emotions. To improve youth productivity, it becomes necessary to understand their emotions and motivate them in cash and in kind.

2. Lack of team work. Team work in an organization is and should be all involving. When employers do not involve youths in the problem solving and decision making, such an experience will discourage employees to enhance productivity, it will increase unproductive behaviour.
3. Lack of quality training for youths to see the need for productivity. Many youths are not aware of the importance of productivity. Research in psychology has proved that awareness at the „thought level“ alone does not bring about any change in the behaviour of the person. It is only when they youths start feeling or realizing the situation that productivity is a need that that they begin to have a positive change.
4. Unhealthy culture of organization. Some cultural practices of some organization have no “human face”. Example, where a youth because of his or her energy or strength does over time or overwork without incentive or promotion, sometimes underpaid. These can lead to depression and automatically low or no productivity.
5. Inconsistencies in government industrial policies. Inconsistencies in government policies are the major problems affecting the growth of small business in Nigeria, this in turn discourage youths who want to be self-reliant by having their own businesses. Kpelai (2009) noted that policy inconsistency in the sudden reversal of the backward interaction, which required firms to source their raw materials locally and the inability of government to execute budgets on time becomes major obstacles on the manufacturing firms. When a particular government policy is suddenly changed, the effect on small businesses could be devastating. Onuoha (2014) opined that the role of government should be limited to creating the enabling environment aimed at facilitating sustainable growth and development in the country. In this regard, government needs to simplify procedures for doing business. Sabo and Igwo (2007) add that it is necessary for those in leadership to understand that the foundation of any good policy (and hence good governance) is sincerity of purpose and transparency in the conduct of public affairs.
6. Lack of infrastructural facilities. Many banks blame their inability to fund small business on the poor economic climate prevalent in the country, citing for instance, the low performance of public utilities as one of the factors threatening fund managers. Inadequate infrastructure has led to high cost of doing business in Nigeria. This have affected the youths who may not have the capital to start business.

Effect of Depression on Productivity of Youth

1. Poor attitude to work; when youth show poor or negative attitude to work, the country's economic development will be delayed. There is also the poor attitude toward schooling. A depressed youth may see no need going to school because of high cost of material. Onuoha (2014), explained that cost of material will affect the willingness and readiness of potential entrants e.g. if the cost of education materials such as books, uniform, accommodation, feeding, etc. are high, potential students will be discouraged and even the existing ones may withdraw from school.
2. Low Standards of living; this can be when little or no effort is put in to production, the next thing is poor salaries or loss of job. This effect is a chain like experience- no job, no good food and medical needs, in short the basic needs will be lacking.

3. Overdependence on family members; when youths are gainfully employed or schooling their basic needs is met by the family. For large and poor families the weight will be felt more. Michael (2019) expressed that depression causes a heavy economic burden on the victim, the family and the nation at large.
4. Poor health which can lead to unproductive attitude which include absenteeism. Absenteeism, for instance causes increased workload for other employees. The more sever the illness the less the productivity of the individual affected. Depression has long been considered a leading cause of disability worldwide affecting an estimated population of over 300 million people and causing a substantial impairment in daily functioning. A significant factor here is impairment in cognitive functioning which ultimately affects depressed persons output, time management and lead to premature mortality and loss of wages.
5. Political protest/Strikes: Available evidence in the country has shown that every increase in prices or no payment of salaries for long attracts massive protest/demonstration by labour unions, students and human right organizations. Most of those used for protest or demonstrations are hungry, angry and depressed youths in most states. Instead of the youth been useful with their time, they politicians use it for them anyhow.
6. Increasing crime and social vices. The popular saying of “an idle mind is the devil workshop”. The increasing cost of living precipitated by increasing items in the market and youth receiving below minimum wage in the country creates serious social problems. Some youth who are due to marry cannot marry and even those who are married are likely to experience broken homes because they are not able to maintain their families. Besides the high cost of living aggravates social ills such as prostitution, drug abuse, armed robbery, 419, vandalisation of pipelines and ethnic rangling among others as experienced in many parts of Nigeria.
7. Frustrated Professionals: depression can set in as a result of wrong choice of career as the youth is compelled to choose a career outside the ability, interest, performance achievement level and aptitude of the individual. Many Nigerian youths are said to sit for UME/JAMB examination as many time as possible due to wrong choices. Finally such individual as a last resort end up training to enter occupations they despise, hate and reject even before graduation from the university. Thus, Nigeria education becomes divorced from economic and social realities of many certificate holders.
8. Destabilized Civil Society: Failure of grasp dignity of labour: when the youth fails to understand the importance of career relatedness in occupational fields, there is bound to continue the on-going lack of dignity of labour, the after effects of unfulfilled life expectation when a particular choice is unobtainable leads to depression, low productivity and a destabilized life.

Conclusion

It is very important to note here that the youth are the backbone of any nation. They can change the future of the society with their wellbeing and courageous behaviour. When youths are free from depression, it can lead to high productivity and creation of new business and creating of more jobs opportunities. Higher productivity is an important aspect of progress and growth at organization as well as national level. At the organizational level, productivity

is essential to profits and ultimately to the company's survival. At the national level, productivity is the major source of improvement in the standard of living of the people. If the effort as before produces more things than it did earlier, it generates less starvation, more education, less disease and more leisure time among many other benefits.

For productivity to be worthwhile to contribute to the economy of any nation, it needs to strengthen positive values, attitudes and beliefs, so that this world becomes a better place to live in. This will be possible when youths who are the leader of tomorrow are free from depression. As for productivity, it does not lie in any job as such. It lies rather in the person who holds the job. Having a job is very good but having the right frame of mind to do the job is more important.

Recommendations

- a. Home and school should provide a safe and nurturing environment for youth to study or work.
- b. Provision of counselling services to help depressed youths and also for prevention. Having counselling unit at different level of education in the school and outside the school will help youths to develop positive mind set. Those who need therapy can avail of it. There is every need to for early detection and sufficient treatment of depression among the youth to enhance the productivity and national wellbeing.
- c. Parents should avoid using threats to get children to do things they want them to do. Discussion should be encourage about important life changes such as changing of jobs of parents, relocation, death of loved one etc.
- d. Parents and teachers should be role models by managing their moods and emotions of different kind with healthy coping mechanisms. Conscious efforts should be made to eliminate corruption, economic sabotage and other social and economic vices.
- e. Government should come out with policy aimed at cutting down on unnecessary consumption in order to increase savings and investments. Encourage locally produces items and consumption.
- f. The school and home should help build youths self-image and esteem by being encouraging and affectionate. If what one sees is healthy it enriches one's entire life; if it is distorted, it damages one's life if not promptly rectifies. As a result, one feels contented just being oneself. Youths should be guided about which television programs, books and games they watch, read or play.
- g. There should be effective entrepreneurship education at all levels of education. This will help to handle the problem of graduate unemployment. It can also promote the dignity of labour and of man.
- h. Youth empowerment is very important. Empowerment can come in different form, not necessary money. Like to foster youth role in society, listen to their ideas and suggestions, conducts training and capacity building in areas such as leadership, advocacy, gender awareness, and communication and life skills. These will reduce unemployment, crime, drug abuse and lead to a better society, better country and a better world.

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