



## Relationship Between Mental Health and Out-Of-School Children Problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** This study examined the relationship between mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses. A correlational research design was used. 5,300 Basic Six (6) children across 15 schools in Bosso Local Government Area was the population of the study. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample and the sample size of 200 children, determined using Taro Yamane 1967 formula as respondents. Mental Health Questionnaires (MHQ) and school attendance registers were used as instruments for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts who yielded a validity index of 0.85 and 0.79 and a reliability coefficient of 0.76. Percentage and frequency were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 significance levels. The findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between depression and out-of-school children problem of Basic 6 children in the Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State. Also, there is a significant relationship between anxiety and out-of-school children problem of Basic 6 children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between mental health and out-of-school children problems of basic 6 children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria. The study recommended that schools should implement

comprehensive mental health programs to address and mitigate out-of-school children problems. There should also be a collaboration between schools, families, and mental health professionals in order to create a supportive environment that will promote the well-being and academic success of children. Training of teachers and school staff on how to identify and manage mental health issues in school should be enhanced by school authorities.

**Keywords:** Relationship, Mental Health, Out-of-school children problems, and Out-of-School Children

### 1. Introduction

Children often face various challenges both in and outside of school that can significantly impact their well-being and academic performance, sometimes leading to dropping out or not attending school regularly. These out-of-school children problems can stem from a range of issues, including family circumstances, socioeconomic factors, and mental health challenges. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2022) stated that in the year 2022, Nigeria has about 20 million out-of-school students (children). The organization also submitted that there are 244 million children and youths between the ages of 6 and 18 worldwide who are still out of school in the year 2023. The organization further revealed that Nigeria, India, and Pakistan have the highest figures of out-of-school

children (students) globally (Jacob, Chinwube & Ayoka, 2022). Nigeria out-of-school children or students' figure has increased between 0.5 million and around 20 million over a decade partly caused by increasing situation of insecurity that can lead to mental health problems for the children in the country. According to United Nations cited in Jacob et al (2022), Nigeria has about 20 million out-of-school children with 33 percent from the North-East which is the highest proportion of out-of-school children, followed by North-Central with 26 percent; North-West with 25 percent, South-South with 24 percent, South-East with 22 percent and the South-West with 19 percent (Thompson, 2023).

According to World Bank (2022), out-of-school children refer to children that are out of school (enrolment and retention) as a result of factors in the school or outside the school environment. In other ward, out-of-school children are the children who are yet to be enrolled in any formal education. The term out-of-school children are a non-attendance or retention of school-age children or students for some established factors. Out-of-school children students are children or students who are officially in the primary or secondary school age range. It is also children or students who are yet to be enrolled in a formal education excluding pre-primary education children. It is important to note that some of them (children or students) may have attended school in the past but dropped out, and some have never or will never go to school. According to Zira and Zumo (2020), out-of-school children are school dropouts, it is when students or children are untimely withdrawn from the school system, that is, is a situation where the children withdraw or drop from school prematurely as a result of mental health or any other factors.

Many factors can lead to out-of-school children problems in Nigeria, among the factors are; the Socio-economic background of parents, socio-cultural norms, mental health, and insecurity among others. Zira and Zumo (2020) state that, the low socio-economic status of parents, low parental education, poor school environment, and mental health are factors that cause out-of-school children problems. Moore, Norman, and Suetani (2022) assert that poverty, depression, anxiety, and school environment are among the factors that can cause out-of-school children problems in children. Therefore, this study is on mental health as a factor that could cause out-of-school children problems for children in our society.

Mental health is the emotional, social, and psychological well-being of children, it affects how the children think, act, and interact and there is a need

to motivate them in other to pursue their academic goals. Felman (2024) observed that mental health is how students think, feel, and behave in a given situation. Mental healthcare professionals can help children to manage their conditions such as depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders that can affect their thoughts, feelings, and behaviour which can lead them to out-of-school children problems, mental health could affect a student or children on a day-to-day life, relationship, and physical health.

The mental health of children is a state of mental well-being that enables children to cope with the stress of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute positively to the development of their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins children's ability to make decisions, build relationships, and shape the world around him or her (Burke, McElroy & Elklit, 2023). Mental health conditions of children or students include mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities as well as other mental states associated with significant distress, impairment in functioning, or risk of self-harm. Students with mental health conditions are more likely to experience low levels of mental well-being which can lead to poor academic performance and out-of-school children problems (WHO, 2022).

Mental health can affect children's lives such as reducing their quality of life, academic performance, physical health, and negative relationships with friends and family members (Campbell, Blank & Croyder, 2022). The mental health of children is a term used to describe the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of children. The quality of children's mental health is often measured by how adaptively they can cope with the everyday stressors of education. World Health Organization (2022) opined that the mental health of children is a state of well-being in which a child realizes his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can perform in class, and achieve education goals. However, poor mental health can affect the energy level of children, concentration, dependability, mental ability, and optimism, hindering school enrolment, retention, performance, and academic achievement. Common mental health problem is associated with anxiety and depression.

Anxiety disorders are one of the most commonly diagnosed mental health problems among children which can lead to out-of-school children problems. It is what children feel; when they are worried, tense, or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen or that they think could happen in the future.

Anxiety can become a mental health problem if it impacts children's ability to live life and feel uncomfortable with school. An anxiety disorder is a type of mental health condition that causes fear, dread, and other symptoms that are out of proportion to the situation (APA, 2023). There are several types of anxiety such as generalized anxiety disorder, specific phobias, and social anxiety disorder. Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by excessive, frequent, and unrealistic worry about everyday activities, such as school, health, or chores, causing fear, worry, and a constant feeling of being overwhelmed (National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 2023). Specific phobia; is when something causes you to feel fear to anxiety that's so severe, consistency, and overwhelmingly disrupts children's lives. Children with this phobia often avoid new areas and unfamiliar situations such as crowds and places outside of their homes which can prevent the children from going to school. Social anxiety disorder; this condition (formerly known as social phobia) happens when students experience intense and ongoing fear of being punished negatively and/or watched by others in school or society (Mayo, 2023).

Anxiety is a natural biological response to fear or uncertain situations. It involves feeling worried or fearful and often triggers the avoidance of a particular situation. Sometimes, anxiety can become generalized when people or children experience anxiety in many situations, not just uncertain or dangerous ones. In such circumstances, anxiety can become detrimental to well-being as it may lead children to avoid all kinds of situations or social engagements perceived to be too stressful in school. Anxiety becomes an issue when it begins holding the children back from opportunities such as participating in extracurricular activities or social engagements in school. The National Institute of Mental Health reported that approximately 25% of teens between 13 and 19 years old have an anxiety disorder and slightly less than 6% have a severe anxiety disorder (Umar & Haruna, 2021). Children's anxiety manifests in three different forms such as school refusal, test anxiety, and social anxiety. These three branches of children's anxiety can be caused by a number of factors and are usually a sign of a deeper anxiety disorder. Common symptoms of anxiety disorder in children may include excessive worrying, change in sleep pattern, irritability, difficulty in concentrating on school activities, headaches, and stomachaches. If these signs persist and interface with the daily life of children it may lead to out-of-school children problems or not attending school at all and they need to seek the help of professionals. Therefore, anxiety disorder can have a significant impact on children well-being and their educational enrolment

and retention. These conditions of anxiety can also affect children's behaviour in the classroom, their academic performance, and social interaction which can lead to out-of-school children problems (Olusegun & Awuya, 2021).

Depression is a mental health disorder characterized by persistently depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in the daily life of children. The possible causes of depression include a combination of biological, psychological, and social sources of distress. These factors may cause changes in brain function such as altered activity of certain neural circuits in the brain. Depression is a common mental problems child that varies in severity and duration in its less serious form. It is a temporary reaction to loss, stress, or life challenges. It can be alleviated through the passage of period of time and/or its natural healing effect of social support, daily routines, and simple coping strategies like duration and exercises severe or chronic. Depression usually requires professional help such as Doctors, Psychologists, and counsellors to treat the effect (World Health Organization, 2024).

Psychological symptoms of depressed children include:

- Feeling of emptiness, hopelessness, helplessness, and worthlessness
- Deep sense of sadness
- An ability to experience pleasure
- Irregular eating and sleeping.
- Difficulties with concentration, memory, and decision-making.

Sometimes depression in children includes irritation, anxiety, and anger. In its most serious form, depression can be accompanied by self-destructive intentions as a way to escape from the emotional pain. Research shows that depression can be treated by both psychotherapy and medication (Anima & Obika 2020).

Depression is classified as a mood disorder in children. It is described as the feeling of sadness, loss, or anger that interfaces with children's daily activities in school or home. It is an ongoing problem that consists episodes during which the symptoms last for at least two weeks.

According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA, 2018), depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how children feel, think, and act. It leads to a variety of emotional and physical problems thereby decreasing children's interest in school activities once. Depression can affect

any child regardless of social status, age, ethnic group, socio-economic status, and parental upbringing among others. Every child at some points has experienced a sad mood, the short period of sadness is not uncommon, and a child's struggle with the pressures of school and home activities such as homework, tests, and examinations among others will lead to sadness. The nine symptoms of depression include; a sad depressed mood, loss of interest and pleasure in regular activities, loss or increase in weight and appetite, loss of energy, negative self-concept and feelings, worthlessness and guilt, difficulty in concentration, and recurrent thoughts of death. In schools, the symptoms are more of somatic life, social withdrawal, and irritability manifesting in behaviours, life fearlessness, and physical complaint and clinging behaviours which can lead to poor academic performance and out-of-school children problems (withdrawal from school). Therefore, the main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso local government area of Niger state.

### 1.1 Statement of Problem

The growing prevalence of mental health issues among children has become a critical concern for educationists, parents, and policymakers. The mental health of children refers to children's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, it encompasses how children think, feel, and behave in their daily lives, and it includes their ability to handle stress relate to other children, and make decisions. Mental health can be a result of depression and anxiety which can lead to out-of-school children problems for children. The problem of the study is to examine the relationship between mental health (anxiety and depression) and out-of-school children problems of children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria.

### 1.2 Objectives of the study

Assess the relationship between depression, mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

Examine the relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

### 1.3 Research Question

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between depression, mental health and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

### 1.4 Statement of Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

## 2. Conceptual Review

According to the World Health Organization (2024), mental health is a state of complete well-being. According to World

Health Mental Report (2022), mental health is a state of mental well-being which enable people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. The report further highlighted that, mental health is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health enables people live harmoniously with themselves and others while making appropriate choices and decisions since most of their psychosocial, economical and biological needs are met, such individuals experience lesser strain and pressure which are part of the precursor of mental health issues or challenges.

The American College Health Association (2022) asserted that survey on mental health, over the years, has increasingly become prevalent in efforts to understand its many components and impacts on individuals. Mental health is a crucial contributor to the global disease burden and is expected to increase annually over the next decades. According to estimates by the WHO (2024), mental health illnesses account for 30% of the nonfatal disease burden worldwide and 10% of the overall disease burden, including death and disability.

According to the United Nations, out-of-school children refer to children who are yet to be enrolled in any formal education, excluding pre-primary education. The age range for out-of-school children is 6-11 years. Out-of-school children are school-age children that are supposed to be in schools but are not in schools due to parental and governmental failures to provide accessible quality education for them. Out-of-school children are young children in the age group of 1 to 12 that are roaming the street without access to a functional educational system (Ojelade, Aiyedun & Aregebesola, 2019). Out-of-school children are the children whom the government and the parents have failed to provide quality basic education for. The term "out-of-school children" is a non-attendance of the school of school-age children for some established factors.

### 2.1 Causes of Out-of-School Children in Nigeria

There are many factors responsible for out-of-school children in Nigeria. Some of the factors include; poor funding of education, corruption, poor implementation of Child Rights law, insecurity problems, Lack of political will to address the problems, high rate of poverty, and high fertility rate (Raliyat, Umma, & Aisha; 2022; Ogunode & Stephen, 2021; Olorube, 2016; Ogunode, Josiah & Ajape, 2021; Vanguard newspaper, 2020; Ahmed, 2022; Ogunode, Ahaotu & Obi, 2021; Deji, 2022; Punch, 2022; Ogunode, 2020; World Bank, 2011; and Ayoko, 2022).

### 2.2 Empirical review

Oyeyemi, Chukwudum, & Okenwa (2025) surveyed mental health and out-of-school problems among adolescents in Lagos State, Nigeria. They argued that mental health and out-of-school problems are related to an individual's social and physical health and is of global priority. According to the survey, mental health is the complete physical, social, and mental well-being of an individual. Adolescence, including the ages between 10 and 19 years, is the phase in which changes in mental health usually occur. Half of all mental health disorders begin by the age of 14 years, but most cases are not detected or treated at all. Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. Survey was used to conduct the study. The target population of the study comprised of adolescents in Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area of Lagos State. One hundred (100) copies of questionnaires were randomly distributed to the respondents and retrieved for data analysis. A self-developed questionnaire was used for the study. The bio-data of the respondents were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency counts, while the stated

research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study include: the level of awareness of mental health and out-of-school problems among adolescents in Lagos State on the high side; there are prevalence of mental health and out-of-school problems among adolescents in Lagos State. Recommendations made include; teachers should ensure a friendly teaching and learning environment coupled with low threat in order to motivate students and foster stress-free learning. Teachers should ensure the usage of appropriate teaching strategies and techniques, enhance more collaborative relationship with their students and also provide basic facilities in schools including a serene atmosphere for learning; Secondary school authorities and teachers in Lagos should ensure comprehensive monitoring of adolescents within the ages of 12-15 years with utmost priority due to the prevalence of mental health issues among them, and also take stringent punitive measures in addressing truancy and bullying from senior students.

Also, Prendergast and Lynch (2025), assessed the relationship between mental health and academic performance of final year undergraduate students at a University. They asserted that mental health is a major issue that can have a negative impact on students and their academic performance; notably, 31.4% of students' report symptoms of mental health issues in the past year. However, a knowledge gap exists around mental health issues and academic performance in the Caribbean and even more so in Jamaica. The study's objective was to note the impact of mental health issues on academic performance, how a college/university engages students who suffer from these issues and the administration's perception of its effectiveness. The researcher utilized the single case holistic case study and the qualitative methods of focus group discussion, interviews and document analysis. The study found that the demanding requirements of the final year, the culture shock of the classroom environment, challenges associated with the transition to online learning and the looming transitions after university impacted students' mental health and academic performance. Universities must develop effective strategies to address and mitigate these impacts, especially during the final year. Four major strategies found include seminars, guidance counsellor support, advocacy from student leadership and social gatherings. The study found mixed perceptions of the effectiveness of the strategies employed. This indicates the need for further evaluation and assessment to determine the actual impact of these strategies on students' well-being and academic performance. The findings of the study,

however, have important implications for campus mental health strategies and initiatives.

**2.3 Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Modified labelling theory: The theory was propounded by Bruce Link and his colleague in 1989. According to the modified labelling theory of mental disease, when an individual is given a mental illness diagnosis, cultural stereotypes of people with mental illnesses become personally relevant and encourage unfavourable self-evaluations. Researchers investigate the impact of the psychiatric diagnosis on this procedure. It aims to balance the meanings attached to self-identities "myself as I really am" and reflected assessments "myself as others view me" with respect to stigma feelings. Studies about mental health and the stigma attached to it have utilized the modified labelling theory. Mehdi studied how epilepsy-related stigma affects the lives of women with the condition. The data was analyzed from a sociological standpoint using the Modified Labelling Theory. Similar methods have been employed in other studies to mediate the relationships between the variables like rejection, stigma management and social support. The modified labelling theory was created to explore the impact of stigma resulting from mental illness. Still, the structure of the theory has been adapted to other negatively stereotyped ideas that could lead people to adopt stigma management methods. The theory has thus been used to explain behaviour in groups such as those

living with mentally challenged persons, smokers and parents of children living with disabilities. As it relates to this study, the issue of stigmatization after being aware of mental health issues could trigger negative behaviour in relationship and interaction like rejection, stereotyping and stigmatization of students. Hence; possibilities of absenteeism and abscondment from schools.

**3. Research Methodology**

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. Correlational design is a method used to study the relationship between two or more variables. The design was chosen to establish the relationship between mental health and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State. The population of the study was 5,200 Basic six (6) children and the sample size of 200 children was used for the study as respondents. Sample random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. Mental health questionnaire (MHQ) and school register attendance were used as instruments for data collection. The instrument (MHQ) was validated by two (2) experts who yielded validity indices of 0.85 and 0.79 and reliability indices of 0.76 respectively. Percentage and frequency were used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical method was used to test the relationship of the Null hypotheses at 0.05 significance levels.

**4. Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problems of children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger state, Nigeria?

S/N Items	1 <sup>st</sup>		2 <sup>nd</sup>	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
1 Over the past two weeks, do you often feel worthless and hopeless in school?	60.5%	39.5%	68.0%	32.0%
2 Have you experienced a loss of interest or pleasure in academic activities in school?	69.0%	31.0%	69.5%	30.5%
3 Do you often feel tired or have a lack of energy, even when you engaged in academic activities?	83.0%	17.0%	77.0%	23.0%
4 Have you experienced difficulty in concentrating on academic tasks such as homework and class assignment	94.5%	5.5%	95.0%	5.0%
5 Do you often experience intense feelings of sadness, anxiety and anger in school?	75.0%	25.0%	82.0%	18.0%

*Source: Field Survey, 2026*

Table 1 presented above addressed the research question one; the table includes two sets of responses, which represent different time points. The responses to items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were analyzed, which are indicative of anxiety, mental health. In the first set of responses to item 1 shows that 60.5% of children often experience the feeling of worthless, anxiety, and hopeless in school. This percentage increased to 65% in the second set. For item 2, 69% experienced a lot of interest in academic activities in school, the item 3 shows 83 and 77% in both first and the second set. Item 4 shows 94 and 95% of the respondents' experience difficulty in concentration in academic task, lastly, item 5 shows

75% and 82% respondents experience intense feeling of sadness, anxiety and anger in school, therefore, data shows a high prevalence of anxiety, mental health problem among the sampled children, with a majority responding “Yes” to most items. These high percentages show a strong relationship between anxiety-related mental health issues and potential out-of-school children problems.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between depression, mental health and out-of-school children problems of children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics relationship between depression, mental health and out-of-school children problem in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

S/N Items	1 <sup>st</sup>		2 <sup>nd</sup>	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
6 Do you find it challenging to regulate your emotions, such as feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope during stressful situations in school?	92.5%	7.5%	93.5%	6.5%
7 Have you noticed changes in your mood, such as feeling consistently weak in the school?	73.0%	27.0%	75.0%	25.0%
8 Have you noticed changes in your self-esteem or confidence levels, such as feeling in academic activities?	83.5%	16.5%	86.0%	14.0%
9 Do you often experience intrusive or distressing thoughts about academic activities?	89.0%	11.0%	92.0%	8.0%
10 Have you noticed changes in your behavior patterns, such as increased procrastination, avoidance, or withdrawal from social interactions in school?	66.5%	33.5%	83.0%	17.0%

*Source: Field Survey, 2026*

The table 2 above addresses the question 2 which deal with items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 which are indicative of depressive symptoms. In the first set of responses, item 6 shows that 92.5% children feeling overwhelmed or unable to cope during stressful situation in school, which increased to 93.5% in the second set. Item 7 indicates that 73% children have a loss of in feeling consistently weak in the school, with a slight increase to 75% in the second set. Item 8 revealed that 83% children often feel tired or lack energy in academic activities in the first set, which increased slightly to 85% in the second set. Item 9 shows 89 and 92% of children experience intrusive or distressing thoughts about academic activities. Item 10 shows 66.5% and 83% noticed changes in your behavior patterns, such as increased procrastination, avoidance, or withdrawal from social interactions in school. These indicated high percentages of strong relationship between depression-related mental health and out-of-school children problems.

**Test of Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between anxiety, mental health and out-of-school children problems of children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Correlation between Anxiety and Out-of-School Children Problems

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Anxiety Score	6.365	1.818	0.8925	< 0.0001
Out-of-School Children problem Score	6.385	1.748		

*Source: Field Survey, 2026*

Table 2 shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between anxiety scores and out-of-school children problem scores is 0.8925, with a p-value < 0.0001. This indicates a strong positive correlation between anxiety and out-of-school children problems. The relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates that there is a strong, positive relationship between anxiety levels and out-of-school children problems among children in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between depression, mental health and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria?

**Table 3:** Correlation between Depression and Out-of-School Children Problems

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Depression Score	7.315	1.829	0.9897	< 0.0001
Out-of-School Children Problem Score	6.385	1.748		

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 3 shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between depression scores and out-of-school children problem scores is 0.9897, with a p-value < 0.0001. This indicates a very strong positive correlation between depression and out-of-school children problems. The relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This implies that there is a very strong, positive relationship between depression levels and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State.

### 5. Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one revealed that there is a strong, positive relationship between anxiety levels and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State. As anxiety levels increase, the likelihood or severity of out-of-school children problems also increases. The finding is in line with the study of Umar and Haruna (2021) children’s anxiety manifests in three different forms such as school refusal, test anxiety, and social anxiety. These three branches of children’s anxiety can be caused by a number of factors and are usually a sign of a deeper anxiety disorder. Common symptoms of anxiety disorder in children may include excessive worrying, change in sleep pattern, irritability, difficulty in concentrating on school activities, headaches, and stomachaches. Also, Olusegun and Awuya (2021) found that anxiety disorder can have a significant impact on children well-being and their educational enrolment and retention. These conditions of anxiety can also affect children’s behaviour in the classroom, their academic performance, and social interaction which can lead to out-of-school children problems.

The finding of hypothesis two implies that there is a very strong, positive relationship between depression levels and out-of-school children problems in Bosso Local Government Area of Niger State. As depression levels increase, the likelihood or severity of out-of-school children problems also increases. The finding of American Psychiatric Association (2018) unveiled that depression is a common and serious medical illness that affects how children feel, think, and act. It leads to a variety of emotional and physical problems thereby decreasing children’s interest in school activities once.

### 6. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that:

Both anxiety and depression show strong positive relationship with out-of-school children problems. Therefore, the study concludes that mental health has a positive relationship with out-of-school children problems in primary school in Bosso local government area of Niger State, Nigeria.

### 7. Recommendations

The study recommended that schools should implement comprehensive anxiety, mental health programs to address and mitigate out-of-school children problems of children, and also there should be collaboration between schools, families, and mental health professionals in order to create a supportive environment that will promote the well-being and academic success of children.

Training of teachers and school staff on how to identify and manage depression, mental health issues in school should be enhanced by school authorities.

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