

Depression, Anxiety, and Intermittent Explosive Disorder Among Black Caribbean and  
African American Adolescents

Submitted by

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African American Adolescents

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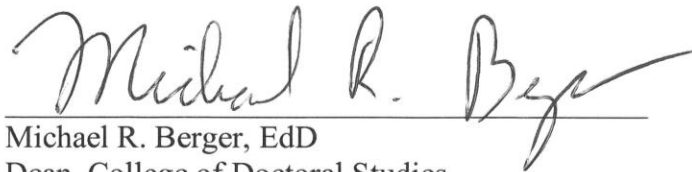
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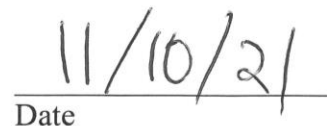
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## Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative correlational and comparative study was to investigate if, and to what extent, there is a statistically significant correlation between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if, and to what extent, there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents. The variables, depression symptoms, generalized anxiety disorder, and intermittent explosive disorder were self-report data extracted from the National Survey of American Life-Adolescent NSAL-A (2001-2004). Specifically, the sample used the data from the 360 Caribbean Black adolescents and the 810 African American adolescents. Two statistical tests were used to assess the correlation between depression and intermittent explosive and the difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents. Pearson's point biserial correlation was used to test the correlation between intermittent explosive disorder 12-months and depression was statistically significant,  $r_{pb} = 0.142, p < .001$ . Fisher's exact test used to examine the difference between having generalized anxiety disorder 12-months and intermittent explosive disorder 12-months. The findings of the non-parametric tests were not statistically significant based on a Fisher exact test alpha value of 0.05,  $OR = 0, p = 1.000$ , affirming that anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder could be independent of one another and there is no association between the two variables. Future studies could assess comparative measures of depression and subsequent measures of intermittent explosive disorder between and among groups.

*Keywords:* depression, anxiety, intermittent explosive disorder, adolescents, African Americans, Caribbean Blacks.

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PREVIEW

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

### **Introduction**

Adolescents across the United States tend to behave in the context of their ethno-racial and socio-cultural backgrounds (Booth et al., 2017). Consequently, numerous theories have been formulated and attributed to the observed behaviors which span practically every ethnic group (Allen et al., 2018). One area that has been observed is violence. Salas-Wright et al. (2017) inform that the results of a national study of 210,000 young adults show that aggression and violence are prevalent in all ethnic groups and subgroups.

Further studies posit that the structural characteristics of the social environment influence these behaviors among adolescents both individually and collectively (Chang et al., 2015). The prevalence of violence among adolescents across ethnic groups and subgroups underscores the need for research into the situational and contextual determinants of adolescent behaviors (Salas-Wright et al., 2017). These ideas are not clearly understood or studied for Caribbean Black adolescents and African American adolescence. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to assess if, and to what extent, there is a relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if, and to what extent, there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents living in the USA.

Typically, studies into the influence of social factors on behavioral and psychological outcomes among Black adolescence in the USA tend to lump all into one general racial category—African Americans, when in fact there are important distinctions

between these groups (Cross et al., 2018). This study, therefore, investigated if there is a relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents. It researched this topic within an ethnic context by focusing on the two groups subgroups, Black Caribbean adolescents and African American adolescents living in the United States of America. The sample for this study was taken from adolescents living in the USA in 2001-2004, typically referred to as Millennials (Paulin, 2018; Strauss & Howe, 2000).

Several studies have investigated depression, anxiety, and violent behavior among adolescents (Baden, 2015; Benner & Wang, 2015; Benner et al., 2018; Gonzalvez et al., 2018; Martinsen et al., 2019; Oliver et al., 2016; Subramaniam et al., 2018). Some studies in this area have focused on issues such as the impact of anxiety and depression on self-injury (Xu et al., 2018). Other studies have investigated factors such as the media's effects on anxiety, depression, and behaviors (Barcaccia et al., 2018; Ilakkuvan et al., 2019). However, (Cross et al., 2018; Heinze et al., 2018; Kyranides et al., 2017; Salas-Wright et al., 2017) highlight that there is a gap in the literature examining depression, anxiety, and the propensity of violence, and if, and to what extent, there is a relationship and/or difference between these traits for Caribbean Black adolescents and African American adolescents.

For the most part, the studies on adolescent experience have looked at these adolescent experiences generically (Chang et al., 2015; Taquette & Monteiro, 2019). Despite the generic, generalized approach, these all show at least a unidirectional connection between depression, anxiety, and violence (Choi et al., 2017; Heinze et al.,

2018), in which violence is a predictor variable for mental health outcomes. According to Kyranides et al. (2017), among adolescents, there is an association between the occurrence of boldness, meanness, and disinhibition with affective and physiological responses. Disinhibition, which is a deliberate lack of social regard, was especially noted as being associated with aggressive tendencies, impulsivity, increased levels of anxiety, cognitive suppression, and antisocial personality disorder symptoms. Further, findings assert that adolescent experiences often mitigate the trajectories of depression, anxiety, and response to violence (Heinze et al., 2018).

Pepping et al. (2016) posited that how experiences are internalized and externalized may be associated with the ability to manage emotions. Other arguments favor the development of behaviors based upon the exposure to those kinds of behavior (Fleckman et al., 2016; Oakley et al., 2016). However, given the prevalence of violence across ethnic groups and subgroups (Salas-Wright et al., 2017). Kyranides et al. (2017) asserted that the affective, interpersonal, and impulsive features that undergird behaviors need to be investigated using a large, diverse sample. More unambiguously and concisely, Salas-Wright et al. (2017) stressed that there was a need for research into the situational and contextual determinants of violence. This study established the premise for future studies to address these factors by investigating if, and to what extent, there is a relationship between the variables, depression, and intermittent explosive disorder, and if, and to what extent, there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents.

## **Background of the Study**

There is an established link between violent trends and mental health outcomes (Choi et al., 2017; Heinze et al., 2018). However, this linkage presents as being unidirectional, and violent behaviors are identified as the causal factors. Conner and Yeh (2018) broke from this trend by postulating that cultural identifying factors, collective self-esteem, spirituality, creative coping, and worldview could predict measures of mental health outcomes. Nevertheless, these studies fall short of showing a consistent relationship or differences between violence and mental health outcomes. Specifically, there is paucity of literature that investigate the relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and the difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder among Caribbean Black adolescents and African American adolescents living in the USA. The research that needed to be better understood is if there is a relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents living in the USA.

This study on anxiety, depression, and the propensity for violent behaviors among Black Caribbean adolescents and African American adolescents living in the United States stemmed from the need to fill the identified gap in the literature as regards measures in the adolescent population (Baden, 2015; Benner & Wang, 2015; Benner et al., 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2018; Heinze et al., 2018; Kyranides et al., 2017; Martinsen et al., 2019; Oliver et al., 2016; Oshukova et al., 2016; Salas-Wright et al., 2017; Subramaniam et al., 2018). Research on this topic ascertained the role of socio-cultural

factors play in behavioral outcomes relative to measures of anxiety and depression outcomes.

Cross et al. (2018) inform that despite the tendencies to subsume Black Caribbean migrants with native-born African Americans, there are distinct cultural or other ethnic differences between these two groups that may result in different behaviors. Further, Belsky (1997b) Differential Effect/Susceptibility Theory posits that physical, mental, social, or psychosocial factors may determine how a person will internalize and externalize experiences. As such, this raised the question as to whether the psycho-social and socio-cultural features that establish the uniqueness of Black Caribbean adolescents, as a subset of the African American community, determine how they experience depression and anxiety and subsequent the relationship or difference with violent or aggressive behaviors. The sample for this study was extracted from the most comprehensive mental health national survey conducted in the United States. Even though these data were released in 2016, the actual data collection spanned the period from 2001 to 2004. Further, these data are derived from a probability sample that establishes the representative nature of the study results. These data boast a representative sample of Black Caribbean adolescents and African American adolescents living in the USA.

By and large, the way that individuals respond to different stimuli or situations is subject to situational and or dispositional factors (Fiske & Taylor, 2017; Fleckman et al., 2016). To this end, Demirbaga (2018) informed that people must be understood in the context of both their evolutionary and socio-environmental factors. Psychological and interpersonal functions are biologically and socio-culturally constructed (Lee et al.,



2015). Jobe-Shields et al. (2015) traced the development of the cultural and individual selves based upon experiences such as social interaction with parents and society.

Further, according to Kokkoris and Kühnen (2013), cultural norms set the platform on which social schemata and subsequent cognitive processes and behaviors are developed and experienced.

The literature on ethnicity and culture studies that investigate the behavioral traits across age-groups tend to focus primarily on race (Oshukova et al., 2016). As such, they assert that much more must be done in investigating the ethnic groups or subgroups. Cross et al. (2018) pointed out that while studies into ethnic variations of family support and outcomes are already small in number, even fewer studies on this topic focus on adolescents. Kyranides et al. (2017) explain that adolescent behaviors may differ based on their exposure to risk. Hence, from an ethnic perspective, family support may be either a risk or protective factor (Cross et al., 2018). Nonetheless, while the paucity of studies on racial/ethnic differences in a varied number of health and health related areas is known within and across these groups, this is especially the case among African American adolescents. Specifically, this study responds to the need to understand the extent to which depression correlate with intermittent explosive disorder and to what extent there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Caribbean Black adolescents and African American adolescents.

### **Definition of Terms**

This study made use of the following terms with the affixed definitions:

**Adolescent.** Adolescent is the 13-17 years age group who participated in the NSAL-A survey. A total of 1170 adolescents, 360 Caribbean Blacks, and 810 African

Americans participated in this study. This population is a protected group and therefore some data are restricted and required permission to access (Assari & Caldwell, 2017; Jackson et al., 2016). However, this study used only the public data of the data set.

**African American.** African American is a legal designation that describes a born and raised Black citizen of the United States of America of original African Descent (Jackson et al., 2016). Both Black Caribbean and African Americans have been typically referred to as Black. They share the same segregated communities and have a shared experience in the context of the discrimination and other related areas (Cross et al., 2018).

**Anxiety or generalized anxiety disorder.** Anxiety or generalized anxiety disorder is a mental disorder characterized by excessive worrying and evinced by several different physical symptoms (Anyan & Hjemdal, 2016). Anxiety or generalized anxiety disorder is a variable in this study. Specifically, this study used Generalized Anxiety Disorder 12-months (D\_GAD12), which is categorical data.

**Caribbean Blacks.** Caribbean Blacks is a legal designation that describes a born and raised Black resident of the United States of America of original African Descent with Caribbean Heritage (Jackson et al., 2016). This group has historically constituted the largest group of immigrants to the United States (Cross et al., 2018)

**Depression Symptoms.** Depression symptoms are defined as symptoms that identify a mood disorder, depression, which is characterized by a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest and presents in a variety of emotional and physical manifestations (McConnell, 2019). Depression symptom is a variable in this study.

Measures of depression are continuous data determined from data recorded on the CES-D12 depression scale.

**Intermittent Explosive Disorder/Propensity for Violence.** Intermittent explosive disorder (D\_IED12) is a categorical classification that is as described by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM–5). Intermittent explosive disorder is an impulsive control disorder that is characterized by destructive behavioral outbursts and verbal or physical aggression (Oliver et al., 2016). IED is typically out of proportion to precipitating stressors and is expressing in the form of recurrent episodes of violence and aggression or destruction of property (Kessler et al., 2006; McLaughlin et al., 2012;). McLaughlin et al. (2012) and Kessler et al. (2006) explained that IED is a persistent, highly prevalent, and seriously impairing mental disorder among adolescents. Specifically, this study used Intermittent Explosive Disorder - 12 months (D\_IED12), which is categorical data.

### **Anticipated Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations**

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are essentially unavoidable factors in every scholarly research. They are factors that the researcher has no control over. This section furnishes the restrictions of this study and the self-evident truths that guided the study.

#### ***Assumptions***

An assumption is a self-evident truth. According to Simon and Goes (2018), an assumption, though absolutely relevant for scholarly research, cannot be controlled by the researcher. The following assumptions were present in this study:

1. Given the large sample size for this comprehensive survey, it was assumed that the margin of error would be minimal. The margin of error is the statistic that

identifies the amount of sampling errors in the survey. Large margin of errors would result in lower confidence levels (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2013; Petersen & Allman, 2019;). Consequently, the results of this study would have accurately represented the population under investigation.

2. It was assumed that the data and subsequent research of data presented an accurate representation of the experiences of the Black Caribbean adolescents in the USA. Further, it identified risks and protective factors that influence mental disorders (Jackson et al., 2016)
3. It was assumed that the existing archival data were collected in an accurate and standardized manner as outlined in the data collection and methodology in the dataset (Jackson et al., 2016).
4. It was assumed that the findings of this study would add to the body of knowledge by providing evidence of how culture, and ethnicity either directly or indirectly affect the mental wellbeing and behaviors of adolescents understand and explain the rationale for various experiences or social outcomes (Fiske & Taylor, 2017).

### ***Limitations***

Limitations are those factors or conditions over which the researcher has no control. Simon and Goes (2018), explained that these conditions may restrict the scope of the research and could possibly affect the research outcome. The following limitations and delimitations were evident in the study:

1. The first limitation was that of time as it relates to the data. Though recently released in 2016, the data were collected over 10 years (2001-2004). Additionally, because of the timeframe within which the data in this study were collected, the sampling was based upon the previous census. Consequently, there could have been some demographic changes.
2. The second limitation was that limitation was that the instruments for measurement of data were determined by the primary researchers responsible for collecting the dataset for the dataset.
3. The third limitation was that the use of archival data restricts this dissertation to the variables included in this study.
4. Another limitation is that the use of a cross-sectional research design does not allow for testing of the potential impact of change over time in the measures included in this study.

### ***Delimitations***

Delimitations are research guideline and parameters that are set for the study by the researcher. The following delimitations were present in this study:

1. A delimitation of the study was that it was strictly confined to the population under and therefore focused only on the characteristics and factors unique to that group.
2. The second limitation was that the goal of this study was to ascertain a fit with the data being used and the research questions being considered. According to Elder et al. (1993), this is the primary function of the researcher when working with archival data.
3. Another delimitation was that the study did not take into consideration confounding. The intent of this study was to investigate the if, and to what extent, there is a relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if, and to what extent, there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for the population understudy.

### **Summary and Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

This researcher conducted a quantitative correlational and comparative study to assess the relationship between depression and intermittent explosive and the difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents. Chapter 1 of the study provides an overview of the research structure and process. While numerous studies have looked in the mental states and behaviors (Assari & Caldwell, 2017; Kyranides et al., 2017; Pepping et al., 2016), they fell short of addressing the need for inquiry into Black Caribbean adolescent behavior in context of their mental states. Other studies on mental states and behaviors fell short of establishing bidirectional considerations (Chang et al., 2015; Choi et al., 2017; Heinze et al., 2018; Kyranides et al., 2017; Taquette & Monteiro, 2019).

Chapter Two provides a review of Belsky's Differential Effect/Susceptibility Theory (DST) theoretical foundation for this study. DST offers valuable insights into physical, mental, social, or psychosocial factors that contribute to the complex interaction

within and between groups. It provides explanations of how these factors influence the outcomes of internalized and externalized behaviors. The next section of the chapter explains the themes that were pertinent in literature and explored five relevant themes: culture, ethnicity, and behavior; social influence; internalizing factors; trends and patterns in externalized behavior; and research instruments and methodologies. A summary of the literature review concludes the chapter.

Table 1.

*Project Timeline*

PSY 968E	Data Collection and Analysis	Date Due:
Week 3:	Download archival data ICPSR 38360 from ICPSR site	12/01/20
	Create data subset (extract variables for study)	to
	Prepare data to account for design effects that typically occur in complex sample designs	12/07/20
	Run a frequency analysis using the complex Sample survey plan file and the variables (CES-D 12, D_GAD12, and D_IED12).	
	Run descriptive analysis, Pearson's R and Fisher's exact tests.	
Week 8:	Write up Chapter 4 and 5 drafts	12/10/20
	Submit drafts for review	01/10/21
Week 9:		
Week 10:	Review and submit finalized chapter 4 and 5	01/20/21
Week 11:	IQR Submission	01/25/21
Week 12:	Dissertation Defense	02/15/21

Table 2.

*Alignment Table*

Alignment Item	Alignment Item Description
Problem Space Need: Problem Statement:	It was not known if, and to what extent, there is a relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if, and to what extent, there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder among Caribbean Black adolescents and African American adolescents
Purpose of the Study:	The purpose of this quantitative exploratory correlational and comparative study was to explore if, and to what extent, there is a relationship between depression and intermittent explosive disorder, and if, and to what extent, there is a difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Caribbean Black and African American adolescents
Variables:	Depression (continuous variable, ratio) and Anxiety (continuous variable, ratio) Intermittent explosive disorder (continuous data, ratio)
Research Questions:	RQ1: Is there a statistically significant correlation between depression and intermittent explosive disorder for Caribbean Black adolescents and African American?" RQ2: Is there a statistically significant difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Caribbean Black adolescents and African American adolescents?"
Methodology/Research Design:	This is a quantitative correlational and comparative study.

Chapter 3 of the study presents the methodology of the study. This section provides a detailed description of the sample population, the research design, a description of the data and data source, and the analysis procedures. This section also informs that data for this study were extracted from the comprehensive NSAL-A (2001-2004), which surveyed a variety of social factors that affect the health and wellbeing of adolescents in the US. Specifically, the sample used the data from the 360 Caribbean Black adolescents and the 810 African American adolescents. These data were used to assess the relationship between depression and intermittent explosive and the difference between having anxiety and intermittent explosive disorder for Black Caribbean and African American adolescents.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction to the Chapter and Background to the Problem**

Individual ethnic groups and subgroups living in the United States of America should be understood within the context of their specific cultures. Studies establish that adolescents across the United States tend to behave in the context of their ethno-racial and socio-cultural backgrounds (Booth et al., 2017; Ellis, 2017; Park et al., 2018; Romero et al., 2018; St. Pierre et al., 2019). Cultural distinctiveness could dictate both perceptions and behaviors (Weber et al., 2016). Hayward et al. (2018) informed that in addition to culture, other factors such as age, language play pivotal roles in levels of automaticity and cognition in developing schemata, which in turn affect the individuals' understanding as well as their response to stimuli. In alignment with this concept, Chang et al. (2015) focused on the adolescent age group and posited that the structural characteristics of the social environment influence both the individual and collective adolescent behaviors. Baden (2015) explained further that the socialization processes can create an environment that is conducive to the correlation between measures of depression in their culture.

Given the continued growth and expansion and shifting demographics of the USA (Benner et al., 2018), and the fact that psychosocial factors, environment, and social support may determine how a person internalize and externalize experiences (Belsky, 1997a, 1997b), it is beneficial to understand the functional nuances of every group. Cross et al. (2018) informed that there is a tendency to lump Black Caribbean migrants with native-born African Americans when there are distinct cultural and other ethnic differences between these two groups that may result in different behaviors. Research affirms that cultural markers differentiate Black identity (Nwabara, 2018). As such, the