## FOREWORD

The Department of Psychology, University of Lagos has continued to expand the frontiers of knowledge through the engagement of cutting edge research by her seasoned faculty members, and the publications of rigorously processed articles in her new journal. This new journal has been welcomed in the academia as a veritable tool for the dissemination of research findings in Nigeria and beyond. The first issue has continued to attract the interest of scholars and researchers and has guided enlightened conversations in the specific areas wherein the studies were conducted; In this edition we are presenting even more fascinating topical issues being addressed by different authors. We hereby invite you to savour these well researched articles. The edition is, as usual, a combination of thought-provoking analyses and discussions on different quests to understanding human behavior and mental processes for a sustainable world; it also highlights promising paths and directions for future intervention. It is hoped that findings from this edition of the journal will furnish the understanding of scholars on how to improve human behaviour for a sustainable society through effective use of modern therapy and intervention models. Finally, this edition has advanced the combined ideas of scholars and academics from different academic disciplines. For this reason, I want to thank everyone who is interested in promoting the boundaries of knowledge, transformation process and ultimately adding to the body of research in behavioural science.

**Editor**

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## Perceived Influence Of Resilience and Social Support on Adjustment to Widowhood among Educated Yoruba Widows in South -Western Part of Nigeria

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**Abstract**

This study examined perceived influence of resilience and social support on adjustment to widowhood among educated Yoruba widows in the South-Western part of Nigeria. This survey research adopted the purposive research design. A sample of four hundred and sixty-three (463) educated Yoruba widows from the South-Western part of Nigeria were selected from three states: Lagos, Oyo and Ogun, using the simple random sampling technique. The study used structured questionnaires with structured and validated scales to gather data from respondents. Results showed that there was no interaction influence of social support and years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood ($f=.011, (2.435)$; $p > .05$), however, there was significant main influence of social support on adjustment to widowhood ($f=40.53, (1.435)$; $p < .01$), but there was no main influence of years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood ($f=2.15, (3.435)$; $p > .05$). The result also revealed that there was significant influence of resilience on adjustment to widowhood. ($f=167.96$, $t=12.96$, $\beta = .517$; $p < .01$) with resilience accounted for 27% variance on adjustment to widowhood. The results were discussed and the researcher recommended that widows should be given adequate social support by all stakeholders in the society which include the relatives of the widow, the relatives of the deceased, the widowed friends, the religious groups and the various N.G.O's in the South- Western part of Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Adjustment to widowhood, Social Support, Resilience, Educated Yoruba Widows

## 1.       Introduction

**Background to the Study**

Living entails series of challenges, which require every human being to make conscious adjustment in the course of his life. Any difficulty or failure to adjust to life stressors and challenges of life can predispose an individual to experience stress-related disorder such as sadness, hopelessness and apprehension (Olkin, 1998). Widowhood has been described as a tragic and complex life event that involves loss of a spouse, especially older adult (Sanchez, 2019). The sudden loss of a spouse or partner can be a stressful life event often combined with health deterioration, and in addition to the loss, many life changes may occur, often including financial insecurity and loneliness or anxiety about managing household responsibilities (Lee and Demans, 2017). Although, some people experience psychological distress after living a traumatic event, others do not. Recent researches have shown that many people, who have experienced an aversion event, such as the death of a loved one, indicate psychological benefit and increased psychological growth (Bonanno, 2017).

Widowhood is the state of an individual whose spouse has died and who has not remarried. The death of a spouse is rated as among the most stressful life event that human experience and yet it is a common occurrence in the lives of midlife and older women. Almost one half of women over the age of 65 years are widowed (Fields & Casper, 2016). Since a widow is no longer married, but has full responsibility for her upkeep and those of her children, the struggles to care for herself and her children could be challenging, which more often than not makes widowhood stressful for women. Becoming a widow might come along with status loss for the surviving partner because singles in general have a lower status in society than married people (Solomon, 2016). Financial strains are generally a threat to psychological well-being. Persons reporting not being able to make ends meet show elevated levels of depressive symptoms (Mirowsky & Ross, 2018). Therefore, the death of a spouse is potentially a greater financial problem for widowed women than for widowed men, which should result in elevated levels of depression in widows compared with widowers (Utz, 2015).

The experience of widowhood is complex and may vary considerably from person to person, depending on situational factors surrounding the death, access to the resources needed to support

adjustment and individual-level factors, such as gender and age. Circumstances of the death, situational variables, including forewarning, can influence adaptation following bereavement.

The experience of spousal death varies between those who had some forewarning and those whose spouse died suddenly (Carr , 2016). Care work is emotionally and physically challenging, and older adults providing care for a spouse may also experience isolation. Yet, longer terminal illnesses may allow the surviving spouse to discuss and prepare for the death with their spouse and anticipatory grieving may take place. In sudden death situations, on the other hand, there is usually, no opportunity to discuss impending death with the spouse, which may cause poorer health. Research demonstrates that unexpected deaths, violent deaths and suicide are more often associated with psychological distress compared to other types of deaths, especially those which occurred in natural circumstances. Other circumstances of death, such as the relationship between the deceased and the surviving spouse, influence the adjustment to widowhood. A higher level of dependence on a spouse during marriage is associated with a higher level of yearning and anxiety in widowhood. In contrast, marriages which were high in conflict predict better outcomes following the death of a spouse (Carr, 2016).

Research evidences by Moon (2016) have shown that widowhood is associated with increased mortality as married older couple's age the risk that one of them will be left widowed increases. In the South-Western parts of Nigeria, about three times more women than men over 65 are widowed, about 14% of men over 65 are widowers and about 44% of women over 65 are widows. In 2007, the average age at which women were widowed was 71, and men were widowed at on average 72 years of age. While adjusting to widowhood, bereaved older adults face more psychological and social changes than after any other life event (Hatch, 2017).

Survivors may suffer financial strain due to loss of income and face the challenge of daily living on their own after having shared a life as a couple for many years. The normal process of grief is sometimes described as a five-stage process (Maciejewski, 2017), however, it is important to consider, that the spectrum for normal emotional response is wide, and varies on both a cultural as well as individual level (Hardy-Bougere, 2018; Zisook & Shear 2019). Whereas for most people, the distressing symptoms of grief decrease over time, some people experience persisting intense pain and yearning for the loved one, and the normal emotional response becomes disabling, resulting in prolonged or complicated grief disorder (Shear, 2015).

In Nigeria, particularly in the South-Western part, the travail of a widow begins as soon as the death of her husband is announced. The in-laws immediately demand for the list of the man's property and bank accounts, after which she is subjected to series of rites and ritual practices to mourn the death of her husband. This involves torturing and dehumanizing the widow and making her to undergo series of rituals. Okoye (2015) summated that a widow is made to feel miserable, wretched and guilty over her loss. The widow is seen and treated as ill-luck goat to be avoided so that she does not infect other women. Oloko (2015) also reported that in different parts of the country, widowhood is associated with rituals and taboos, which are degrading and inhuman. Part of the ritual includes the initial seven days confinement in a particular room, though where people could have access to her, putting on black or dark cloths and in most cases, having her hairs shaved. The proper mourning could last for three months initially, while the duration of wearing dark clothes ranges from three months to one year, depending on culture, religion and family position on the matter.

Laolu (2020) confirms that a widow goes into confinement for seven days in which she is not allowed to go out, or take her bath or change her clothes, she is expected to sit on bare floor or a mat at best, only few influential and educated widows are being provided with mattress to put on the floor, this according to him is also subject to the kind of relationship existing between the widow and her in-laws. Of a fact, widowhood has not been a pleasant experience, but nature has made it a necessary lifestyle, consequence upon the death of the husband. The way and manner widows adapt to their widowhood state is likely to have lasting effects on their own psychological  well-being and that of their children, as most widows with young children do not remarry.

Adjustment to widowhood is closely linked to the type of marriage the widow had experienced when her spouse was still alive and this is also viewed from the challenges the widow experienced in the marriage before the death of her husband. If the relationship was an intimate type; emotional intimacy, closeness and vulnerability would be high and there is total dependence on the man. This type of relationship has been proven to be an essential aspect for a healthy relationship. A woman who had experienced this type of relationship is likely to show a high level of grief. If the relationship she had with her late husband was a shared type; the widow's grief after her husband death would be less and moderate, because both members

describe the relationship similarly and they believe that there is an understanding of what they are trying to build and maintain together. Both of them depend on each other for survival and comfort. But, if the type of relationship she had before her husband was an empty shell type, her grief will be little or she would not even grief at all, because there were no emotional ties and feelings between the widow and her late husband even before the death of the husband (Abrams, 2020). Widows with dependent children face serious readjustments resulting from the death of their husbands. Zisook (2016) pointed out that psychological stresses of widows requiring readjustment include loss of identity as a wife and the need to make herself an independent individual. The presence of young children may make adjustment to widowhood more problematic, as these widows not only need to maintain family income for their children without the help of another adult breadwinner, but they also have the emotional burden of solitary parenthood.

Psychological adjustment to widowhood varies considerably on the basis of the nature of one's marriage because the grief process varies in timing, intensity, and difficulty from one person to the next, what helps one person cope with grief may not be helpful to another. Carr (2015) viewed that for an adjustment to widowhood to be more effective, the widow must always ensure to talk to a qualified counselor; because the complex emotions associated with losing a loved one can be overwhelming and difficult to sort through alone by the widow.

Caserta & Lund (2017) in their studies found that social support received or even perceived as helpful can free up energies which may aid in restoration-oriented coping and the pursuit or rebalance of widowed identity. Kauonen (2015) found that among the bereaved, those that recognized and received social support deemed it "helpful" in their coping because it allowed them to "express their feelings" and temporarily forget the "demands of normal life". In other words, and as was found in other grief related research, when connected socially, widows have been found to have lower levels of grief and better coping when compared to widows who do not have (or do not) access such resources (Gerdtham & Johanneson, 2019; Giaux, 2017). Though the period immediately following conjugal-loss is fraught with intense grief. Carnelley (2018) in his study found that many young widows are surrounded by extraordinary levels of support from the community, their friends, and family. Researchers have indicated that the more difficult period for young widows comes after the outside support fades and the individual is expected to

transition out of the widow role and move on. In past studies, researchers have found that following the first few weeks, young widows felt rejected by friends and ultimately even family.

The importance of social support and intimate attachments in widowhood adjustment and also for mental and physical health has been well-described. From a conceptual perspective, a number of mechanisms have been described to explain how widowhood might lead to impairments in mental health, physical health and health behaviours. The loss of a spouse may result in the loss of a person, who assists in monitoring and supporting attempts to change one's health behaviours. Major life events such as widowhood are also associated with a disturbance in one's normal routine (including participation in health behaviours) and an increase in stress and anxiety. A recent meta-analysis found that total life events, as well as the death of significant others were associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms and anxiety in older adults. (Kraaij, Arensman and Spinhoven, 2018).

Research suggests that the type of support is related to its effect on distress (Martins, 2018). For example, professional support from clergy and medical and mental health professionals is important, but some widows find it is not nearly as effective as help and companionship from friends and family (Scannell-Desch, 2016). These researchers conducted a review of social support during bereavement and found that widows find support from family members helpful soon after a spouse's death, but support from friends and peers becomes more important with the passage of time; they concluded this is the most important type of support people respond differently to loss and grieve in their own time. Frequently, the hardest time for new widows is after the funeral. Young widows often have no peer group and generally are less prepared emotionally and practically than older widows to cope with the loss. Widowhood is characterized as one of the most distressing of all life events (Martins, 2015). Because the modern nuclear family is expected to be socially and economically autonomous, spouses may have few alternative sources of social, emotional, or instrumental support (Volkart and Michael 2017).

Social support and quality of the marital relationship were significantly associated with adjustment (Raphael, 2017), more recent studies have questioned these global assertions. For instance, findings reported by Carr and colleagues (2017) suggest that characteristics of the marriage such as warmth, conflict, and instrumental dependence have distinct and complex

associations with the adjustment to the loss of one's spouse. Similarly, findings suggest that much of the social support received by widows (particularly from their families) is perceived negatively. This finding is in accord with the general consensus in the literature suggesting that perceptions of quality, availability, and continuity are more germane to well-being than levels of instrumental assistance received (Seeman, 2018).

Kobasa, Maddi, and Kahn (2020) viewed that psychological resilience reflects a pervasive belief that one can respond under stress effectively. This tendency is thought to be comprised three interrelated constructs. First, resilient persons espouse a commitment to living, that is, the tendency to engage fully in daily activities. In addition, resilient persons enjoy challenge and believe that change, rather than stability is normal. From this perspective, life's hurdles provide opportunities to increase one's skills and self-knowledge. Lastly, psychological resilience entails the perceived ability to exercise control over the life's circumstances. This manifests as a sense of personal autonomy and the belief that one is able to directly affect life's destiny (Kobasa 2020).

The Meta-theory of Resilience and Resiliency of Glenn Richardson (2016) noted the emergence of resilience as a theme that has increasingly become prevalent across academic disciplines and helping professions. There are several reasons for the growing popularity and interest in resilience theory. First, rather than adopting an approach that lays emphasis on the problems associated with widowhood practices, many social science researchers now focus more on discovering what factors enable individuals to thrive despite adversity. Second, given the complexity of present-day society, it is no wonder researchers are paying attention to resilience as a sustainable approach to understanding and possibly resolving social problems. Several studies show that a resilience-based approach to persistent social issues such as gender-based violence, rape, incest, and poverty may very well offer long-lasting solutions for overcoming their negative impacts. By focusing on resilience and adopting strength-based approaches, individuals, groups, communities, and even generations can learn how to function well and succeed in spite of adversity. Lastly, studies show that many individuals, who undergo traumatic events - such as some Nigerian widows can overcome these experiences with appropriate support and intervention.

Margaret Wright resilience theory (2018) viewed resilience as a dynamic field that evolves with each study, but the central concern of this theory is to discover the factors that determine resilience in individuals. In her research, Margaret Wright theorizes that resilient women possess the following characteristics: "an active approach to solving life's problems; an ability to perceive experiences constructively, even if these experiences have caused pain and suffering; an ability to gain other people's positive attention and support; a network of supportive adults within or outside the family, and a strong reliance on faith to maintain a positive view of a meaningful life." Similarly, after decades of behavioral research, a group of professors at Harvard University discovered that "the combination of supportive relationships, adaptive skill- building, and positive experiences constitutes what is commonly called resilience. This is not to say that resilient individuals do not struggle with stress or suffer trauma, but rather that the presence of one or more of these characteristics enables them to cope better with hardship.

Furthermore, one or more of these characteristics determine how (and why) some people are able to cope, while others are not.Ungar (2017) defined resilience in the face of trauma as "less a reflection of the individual's capacity," as both social and cultural contexts also facilitates positive development. In other words, rather than giving in to despair or hopelessness in the face of stress, adversity and trauma, some individuals respond in positive ways, relying on both personal, as well as environmental factors to sustain their well-being. Although, some resilience scholars, notably Bonnie Bernard, maintain that "we are all born with an innate capacity for resilience by which we can develop social competence, problem-solving skills, a critical consciousness, autonomy, and a sense of purpose," others insist that "recovery from trauma is not an individual capacity alone, but a function of the individual's social ecology to facilitate recovery and growth." Implicit in Ungar's socio-ecological theory is the idea that resilience is not a stable trajectory or a predictive trait, but rather a dynamic process than Resilience may be broadly understood as an ability to "bounce back". A person could be classified as resilient, if they viewed their current life positively; they were currently actively participating in life, and felt that their life had meaning and satisfaction (Moore and Stratton, 2017). Older adults are able to adjust in widowhood, but not all who adjust appear to be resilient. Resilience may develop gradually, such as through the exercise of practical skills and maintenance of emotional ties, or following a turning point, such as the receipt of support (Bennett, 2020). Contrary to the

clinical view that the absence of grief symptoms is indicative of unresolved grief or denial, there is no evidence that resilient individuals are mal-adjusted or have a lesser emotional bond with their spouse. The need for resolution and positive appraisal of the situation and focus could be shaped by sense of coherence and grief.

These mediatory variables could assist and guide the widows in their widowhood process, in order to understand and focus on important issues that will move widow and their children forward in life. Given this mindset, psychologically resilient persons make use of more proactive coping strategies and thus respond to stressful life circumstances more effectively (Maddi & Kobasa, 2015).

Educated Yoruba widows in the South-Western part of Nigeria are the widows who have attained the level of education from secondary school certificate to higher degrees who can also read and    write English Language fluently. These are the widows who are tutored and lettered.

Adjustment or coping strategies for the management of any kind of grief and stress during widowhood are quite replete in literature. Some of the strategies adopted by widows include: controlling adrenalin arousal, self- talk, attention diversion strategy, insensitivity technique, relaxation, transcendental meditation, bio-feedback, sleeping technique, positive thinking, laughing technique, problem avoidance technique, assertive strategy, faith strategy, group discussion technique, seeking counselor's help and the host of others. Nevertheless, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) had earlier stressed that people attend to or cope with their stress in two different dimensions, namely; problem focused coping and emotion focused coping. According to these researchers, the problem focused coping is the strategy that is directed towards solving the problems that cause grief and stress to the widows, while the emotion focused coping is the strategy that attends to the feelings or emotions of stress, rather than the source (stressor)s

Research findings have shown that a number of factors combine in one way or the other to influence the use and benefit derivable from various adjustment strategies. These factors include: income, attitude towards present living situation, perceived health status, and presence of significant others and confidants. (Tate, 2001).

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF VARIABLES**
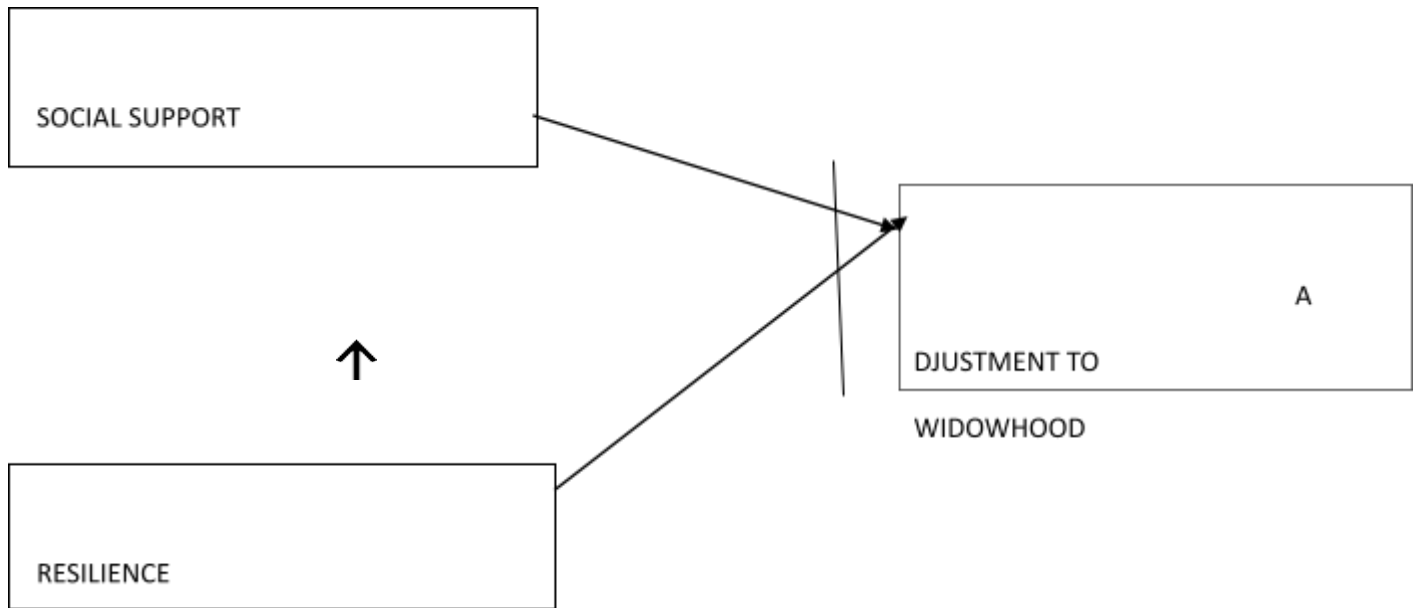


**FIGURE 1**

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

SOCIAL SUPPORT        ADJUSTMENT TO WIDOWHOOD

RESILIENCE

**Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in the course of the study;

i.      There will be main and interaction effect of social support and years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood.

ii. Resilience will significantly predict adjustment to widowhood.

**METHOD**

**Research Design / Participants**

This is an ex-post facto survey study which adopted cross-sectional research design as a blueprint for data collection. This enabled the researcher to study the state of adjustment in widowhood in reality of the negative experience that had occurred in the lives of the individuals involved. This study was carried out within three states in the South-Western part of Nigeria. The study took place in fifteen local governments from the three selected states. The local governments used in Lagos State were: Ikeja, Mushin, Agege, Alimosho and Badagry. In Ogun State, the local governments used were: Ifo, Aiyetoro, Ilaro, Abeokuta North and Ado-Odo Ota. The local governments used in Oyo State were: Ibarapa, Ibadan, Saki, Atiba and Igangan.

The research focused on educated widows in Yoruba ethnic group in the South-Western part of Nigeria.

Participants for the study consisted of four hundred and eighty (480) widows. The researcher selected these participants from three randomly selected states (Oyo, Ogun and Lagos) and fifteen randomly selected local government areas from the three selected states in the South-Western part of Nigeria was used for the study. This comprised thirty-two (32) widows from each of the fifteen (15) selected local governments from Oyo, Ogun and Lagos States. The participants were selected by the researcher using purposive sampling technique. Out of this; ages distribution of participants used for the research were as follows: 18-35, (171), 36-50 (180), 51 and above (112). The frequency distribution of educational background was as follows: 187 widows were WASSCE /GCE holders, 138 were NCE/OND holders, 138 were HND / DEGREE holders. The frequency distribution of the years in widowhood was as follows: 203 widows had

been bereaved below five years, 138 had been bereaved within 5-10 years, 107 widows had been bereaved within 11-20 years, 15 widows had been bereaved for 21years and above. 275 widows who participated in the research remained single; 188 widows had remarried after their bereavement. 165 widows were unemployed, 156 widows were self-employed, 110 widows were civil/ public service, 32 widows were retirees. 287 widows who participated in the research were Christian, 163 widows were Muslims, while 13 widows were neither Christian nor Muslim.

**Measures/Research Instruments for data collection and their Psychometric properties**

The research instrument for this study is called Combined Psychological Test (CPT). It consisted of three scales of resilience, social support and adjustment to bereavement. The questionnaire was structured into four sections;

**Section A** consists of items relating to demographic characteristics of respondents which include; age, educational attainment, onset of widowhood, religion, employment status. This section also contains information regarding the study, and informed consent request.

**Section B** consists of 25-item self-report Resilience Scale developed by Wagnild and Young (1993). The scale adopted a 5-point Likert-type scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The five characteristics of the resilience core: purpose, perseverance, self-reliance, equanimity, and existential aloneness (authenticity). The author reported a Cronbach alpha of.80 for the scale. To revalidate the use of this scale locally, it was administered to fifty widows, who reside in Lagos metropolis and a Cronbach alpha 0.78 was reported.

**Section C** consists of 12-item social support scale developed by Sarason and Pierce (1991) to measure perception of widowhood social support. The response format was four-point Likert-type scale with response ranges from SA=Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree. The authors reported Cronbach alpha of 0.90 for the scale. To revalidate the use of this scale locally, it was administered to fifty-five women in Lagos metropolis and a Cronbach alpha of 0.88 was reported.

**Section D** consists of 13-items adjustment to bereavement and Loss Experiences scale developed by Anne (2017) to identify the strategies that bereaved individuals are currently using to cope. The scale adopted a 5-point Likert-type scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

The items content was developed, in part, from grief and subsequently, as an intervention tool to inform treatment for grief. The author reported a Cronbach alpha 0 .76 for the scale. To revalidate the use of this scale locally, it was administered to sixty married women, who reside in Agege metropolis and a Cronbach alpha 0.74 was reported.

**Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Department of Psychology, LASU to the Ministries of Women Affairs in each of the selected states to obtain permission that would enable the researcher to carry out the research in the selected states and by extension various women affairs department/units in the selected local governments' areas. The researcher also collected letter of permission from the state ministries of women affairs to the selected women affairs departments and units in the selected local governments' areas, where the research was carried out. The researcher submitted the letter to the office of the Executive Chairman in each of the selected local government areas. The researcher was consequently asked to come on Tuesdays and Thursdays within the working hours of 8a.m to 4p.m which are the two days scheduled for widows to meet at the councils to receive food stuffs, clothes, cash tokens, etc., that various NGO's have donated to them for their support. On these days that widows meet; the researcher met them in the hall where they normally meet and the researcher informed the widows of the importance of the study with the view of obtaining their consent. The researcher ensured that the widows, who participated were comfortable for the research by informing them of the purpose of the research, the benefits and positive contributions it will add to the betterment and positive living of widows. They were later instructed on how to fill the questionnaires, each session usually lasted between one hour to one and half hours respectively. With the help of research assistants, the researcher was able to administer four hundred and eighty (480) questionnaires to the widows, but only four hundred and sixty-three (463) questionnaires were properly filled and these were the questionnaires used for the data analysis.

**Statistical Analysis**

Data analysis was carried out using statistical software of SPSS. Hypothesis one was tested using 2 by 4 Analysis of variance. Hypothesis two was tested using simple linear-regression.

**RESULTS**

The hypothesis which stated that there will be main and interaction impact of social support and years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood was tested using 2 x 4 Analysis of variance. The result is presented in the table below:

**Table: 1 Summary table of Anova showing the main and interaction influence of social support and years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood**

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Support | 2128.961 | 1 | 2128.961 | 40.530 | <.01 |
| Years spent in Bereavement | 338.235 | 3 | 112.745 | 2.146 | >.05 |
| Social support * Years spent in Bereavement | 1.121 | 2 | .560 | .011 | >.05 |
| Error | 22534.570 | 429 | 52.528 | | |
| Total | 349837.000 | 436 | | | |

| Corrected Total | 25098.007 | 435 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

From the table, it could be deduced that there was no interaction influence of social support and

years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood ($F=.011$, $(2, 435)$; $p>.05$). However, there was significant main influence of social support on adjustment to widowhood ($F=40.53$, $(1, 435)$; $p<.01$) but there was no main influence of years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood ($F= 2.15$, $(3, 435)$; $p>.05$). The hypothesis was thereby rejected.

The hypothesis which stated that resilience will predict adjustment to widowhood was tested using simple linear regression. The result is presented below:

**Table 2: Summary table of simple linear regression showing the influence of resilience on adjustment to widowhood**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B eta | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 14.924 | .963 | . | 15.503 | .000 |
| Resilience .412 | | .032 | .517 | 12.960 | .000 |
| =.267;R=.517 | | | | | |

From the table, it could be deduced that resilience positively predicted adjustment to widowhood ($F= 167.96$, $t= 12.96$, $\beta= .517$; $p<.01$). This implies that the higher the level of resilience of a widow, the greater her adjustment to widowhood. The stated hypothesis is thereby accepted.

**Discussion of findings**

The hypothesis which stated that there will be main and interaction effect of social support and years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood was rejected. The results showed that there was no significant interaction influence of social support and years spent in bereavement on adjustment to widowhood. However, there was significant main influence of social support on adjustment to widowhood. This finding is partially corroborated by finding of a study conducted by Carnelley (2018) wherein the researcher observed that many widows are surrounded by extraordinary levels of support from the community, their friends, and family. This researcher went further to state that the more difficult period for young widows comes after the outside support fades and the individual is expected to transit out of the widow role and move on. In the same vein, Caserta and Lund (2017) also observed that social support received or even perceived as helpful can free up energies, which may aid in restoration-oriented coping and the pursuit or rebalance of widowed identity. This finding is, however, partially supported by the finding of a study carried out by De Maris (2016) who observed that the levels of depression fall back to the level after the death of the partner after some years in bereavement despite the support from loved ones.

However, the finding is at variance with the outcome of a study conducted by Mendes (2017) wherein the researcher observed that the negative effect of becoming widowed is particularly strong during the first years after the event. The researcher further observed that the course of the psychological strain after becoming widowed follows a crisis model in which case immediately after becoming widowed the effects are strongest, but they diminish with time due to coping processes. In past studies, researchers have found that following the first few weeks, young widows felt rejected by friends and ultimately even family (Parkes, 2016).

The hypothesis which stated that resilience will predict adjustment to widowhood was accepted. From the table results, it could be deduced that resilience positively predicted adjustment to widowhood. This finding corroborates the finding of a study conducted by Ayokunle (2020) wherein the researcher observed that resilience may be broadly understood as a mechanism for personal growth and development. The finding also aligns with the finding of the study conducted by Olaniyi, (2020) wherein the researcher observed that contrary to the clinical view that the absence of grief symptoms is indicative of unresolved grief or denial, there is no

evidence that resilient individuals are mal-adjusted or have a lesser emotional bond with their spouse. This finding is also supported by the finding of the study conducted by Martins, (2018) wherein the researcher viewed that friendships are particularly important for emotional and social well-being in widowhood and research has demonstrated that opportunities for reciprocal emotional and instrumental support are associated with lower levels of depression, greater satisfaction with life, and better coping.

This finding is also corroborated by the finding of the study carried out by Wortman and Umberson, (2016) wherein these researchers examined whether psychological adjustment to widowhood is affected by three dimensions of the marital relationship (warmth–closeness, conflict, and instrumental dependence, assessed at baseline) in a representative community using sample of widows and matched controls using data from the Changing Lives of Older Couples (CLOC) survey and they found a correlation relationship among these samples of study in terms of how resilience significantly plays a role in widowhood adjustment. This finding is also in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Jacobs (2015) in his work on widowhood adjustment wherein this researcher observed that despite widespread belief that widowhood is the most stressful of all life events, most studies concur that only 15–30% experience clinically significant depression in the year following their spouse's death. The researcher viewed that two explanations are generally offered for the inconsistent link between widowhood and adjustment. First, the mental health effects of widowhood attenuate over time, and studies that focus on relatively long-time horizons may underestimate the short-term emotional consequences, and secondly, different aspects of mental health may follow different trajectories. However, this finding is at variance with the finding of the study of Moore and Stratton (2017) in which these researchers observed that older adults are able to adjust in widowhood, but not all who adjust appear to be resilient. Resilience may develop gradually, such as through the exercise of practical skills and maintenance of emotional ties, or following a turning point, such as the receipt of support. This finding is also at variance with the finding of the study conducted by Holmes (2015) in which the researcher observed that widowhood is characterized as one of the most distressing of all life events. This would not be unconnected to the fact that the modern nuclear family is expected to be socially and economically autonomous; spouses may have few alternative sources of social, emotional, or instrumental support (Holmes, 2015). Consequently, when a spouse dies, the survivor must not only adjust to the loss of a close relationship, but also

manage the daily decisions and responsibilities that were once shared by both spouses.

Finally, based on the behavioural outcome of this study, the following recommendations were made by the researcher:

All stakeholders should embark on programmes that would empower widows through various skills acquisition programmes, for them to become self-reliant and take care of their immediate families, as well as to contribute to the growth and development of the nation.

Also, Governments and all other stake holders should embark on programmes that would enhance periodic information through enlightenment programmes for widows and the generality of women, particularly on the issues of widowhood adjustment.

Although, the results of this study supported most of the initial hypotheses, several methodological factors must be acknowledged, which limit conclusion that can be drawn. For instance, all data were derived from the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria. Thus, generalized causal conclusions cannot be made for the non-educated widows and the remaining ethnic group in Nigeria. Finally, it is also suggested that future research in this area should consider a more diverse sample of widows taking into consideration other tribes, ethnic groups and the non- educated widows in Nigeria, making it possible for comparability and a more concise causal influence to be attributed for generalization.

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# Peer Relationship and Electoral Behaviour among Undergraduates

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**Abstract**

The study examined peer relationships and electoral behaviour among Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, undergraduates. One hundred and ninety undergraduates, with a mean age of 21.63 years and a standard deviation of 2.95 years, who volunteered were chosen at random to participate in the study. Among them, 46.8% were males and 53.2% were females. The Index of Peer Relations Scale and the Electoral Behaviour Scale were the instruments used to gather data. A correlation design was used in the study, and Pearson Product moment correlation and Linear Regression were deployed for data analysis. The study found that the electoral behaviour of the participants is positively and significantly influenced by their peer relationships. It was recommended that undergraduates should be encouraged to interact with peers, who provide them with access to electoral information, as this might foster a good attitude about electoral behaviour and improve the sustainability of elections.

**Keywords:** *Electoral Behaviour, Peer Relationship, Undergraduates*

1.      **Introduction**

Globally, societies are experiencing a boom in their ability to exercise self-determination in elections. These societies comprise both official (schools) and informal (social networks) groupings and organisations. These groups discover newfound motivation in being able to participate in the democratic process, when making decisions that affect their life. Academics maintain that electoral behaviour is a universal occurrence (Cutler et al., 2021). In this sense, it is possible that the idea of exercising one's right to self-determination dates back more than six decades ago. However, most people link democracy with the work of the ancient Greeks, who were seen as the forerunners of Western civilization by intellectuals in the eighteenth century. These people tried to use these early democratic trials as a springboard for developing a new kind of post-monarchical political structure. Even, while the moral arguments of these 18th-century democratic revivalists frequently used may be contested, it is hard to argue against the degree to which they were successful in transforming the democratic ideals of the ancient Greeks into the pre-eminent political institution of the following 300 years. However, the resurgence of democratic institutions and ideals marked a turning point in history that profoundly altered the centuries that followed and shaped the global scene, ever since the last remnants of the empire were destroyed after World War II.

Nigeria is not an exception to the rule that most formal organisations, nations, social groupings, and ethnic groups around the world have come to accept democracy and its democratic system. According to scholars, voting is a civil right in democracies all around the world (Sindermann & Montag, 2021a, 2021b). Available data suggest that educational institutions at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels have persisted in exhibiting similar behaviours, when it comes to instituting different kinds of group leadership roles (Osuji et al., 2020). Within these establishments, undergraduate leadership positions are attained through electoral behaviour, which is encouraged by the school administration. Because of these measures, students experience the election process intensely, as do both candidates and the electorates. At this time, positions were sought after, and the only way to get them was by winning an election. Previous research looked at other aspects of electoral behaviours (Galli et al., 2021), local candidates, place-based identities, and electoral success (Schulte-Cloos, 2022), participatory attitude and electoral behaviour (Pastarmadzhieva et al., 2021), voters' decisions (Hansen & Tyner, 2021;

Hansen et al., 2007), and measuring voters' decision strategies on political behaviour (Ha & Lau, 2015). Nevertheless, it seems that the concepts of peer relationships and electoral behaviour were not given enough attention in these investigations. The study focused on this knowledge gap.

A wide range of academics have defined electoral behaviour as elevating citizens to a central role in the nation's political decision-making process (Balatif et al., 2018); a crucial component of citizen participation in a democratic system (Saud et al., 2020); a reflection of voters' degree of engagement in the electoral process (Lee, 2020); and an indication of citizens' interest in electoral issues within their community (Alelaimat, 2019). As a result, it is customary for electorates to be citizens to participate in the democratic process; yet, it seems that the political process might not be complete without the electorate taking part in the election process. The afore-mentioned definitions make it abundantly evident that electoral behaviour is a process rather than a result. This suggests that it is made up of many behaviours that electorates exhibit during the election process. Seven items are used by Nweke et al. (n.d.) to measure electoral behaviour. These include voting, volunteering for political organizations, talking to people and trying to persuade them to support or oppose a party or candidate; wearing a campaign cap; putting a political sticker on one's car; and receiving calls asking one to support or oppose a candidate for a political position.

Electoral behaviour, according to the researchers in this study, is the verbal and non-verbal behavioural expression of electorates' attitudes toward the electoral process as shown in things like wearing party polo, and shirts, putting party stickers on personal items, discussing their choice of candidates with other voters, and casting ballots. Thus, after the votes are cast, tabulated, and a winner is declared, the election process may have ended (Saud et al., 2020). Numerous advantages have been linked to electoral behaviour, including improved political awareness, general development, and a better ability to handle social and political issues (Hansen & Tyner, 2021; Hansen et al., 2007). Some argue for an expansion of private persons' ability to impact governmental policies and take part in democratic decision-making (Weiss, 2020). Because of these advantages, people come to believe that electoral behaviour is a crucial component of civic engagement in democracies (Saud et al., 2020). Works of literature indicate that the sociological model, the psychological model, and the economic theory are the three

electoral theories that have been used in the great majority of studies to understand electoral behaviour. Available record suggests that academic research on electoral behaviour dates back to the 1950s, before the emergence of the models mentioned above (Guo, 2020).

According to Lee and Lee (2021), a peer relationship is an interpersonal bond formed and grown via conversation between people who have comparable psychological development levels. In a similar vein, peer relationships are defined by Rutland et al. (2012) as a ubiquitous feature of social life from an early age, and based on their interactions, youngsters frequently choose not to participate in social activities and outings. Although, it seems that peer relationships are a crucial part of adolescent growth, not all teenagers can create positive relationships to the same extent. Research findings indicate that teenagers are involved in peer relationships, and this correlation may have a widespread effect (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021a). As a result, peer relationship occurs when someone acts or thinks during a relationship with peers; this effect might be linked to past experiences with friends and affiliates (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021b). Moreover, peer relationships are described by Laursen & Veenstra (2021a) as situations in which an individual influences or is influenced by one or more individuals who are of a similar age. Ultimately, academics maintain that electoral behaviour is a social-political construct and an international phenomenon that people from all walks of life have adopted (Cutler et al., 2021). The extent to which elections are practiced in each country may have an impact on the success of those nations. As a result, the degree of self-consciousness people exhibit may have an impact on the national election results. In the same vein, undergraduates, who are of voting age may be more engaged in and successful in elections, if they have positive peer relationships.

**Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed that many undergraduate students do not participate in voting, even though it is an important part of the electoral process and a form of civic responsibility. Often, these students only participate in electoral activities, because their peers ask them to. However, recent research has explored the positive impact of peer pressure, particularly through social networks, on electoral behaviour and the flow of political communication (Jorge da Silva Antunes, 2010), the political influence (a component of electoral behaviour) of peer groups (Campos et al., 2017b), and peer effects and political participation: the role, of course, work clusters (Ajilore &

Alberda, 2017). It seems that previous studies have failed to explore the connection between peer relationships and electoral behaviour. Since undergraduates over the age of 18 are considered part of the youth population and make up a significant proportion of this group, it is essential to focus on them in the present study. The gaps in knowledge identified have motivated this study, which aims to investigate the role of peer relationships in predicting electoral behaviour among undergraduates at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

**Objective of the Study**

To examine if peer relationships will significantly and positively predict electoral behaviour among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.


**Research Question**

Will peer relationships significantly predict electoral behaviour among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka?

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of the study was Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (1991). This is because electoral behaviour, which is goal-directed behaviour, may be influenced by attitudes, personality traits, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control. Moreover, the theory of planned behaviour recognized the independent variable in this investigation. Peer relationships, for example, are represented by attitudes. Ajzen (1991) posits that goal-directed behaviour, (electoral behaviour), might result from attitudes.

**Empirical Review**

Schulte-Cloos and Bauer (2021) conducted a study on local candidates, electoral performance, and placed-based identities, which is a component of peer relations. 11,175 citizens took part in the study as participants. According to the findings, peers strongly favour local candidates even in non-competitive situations. Based on the members of the group's in-group favouritism, the study by Schulte and Bauer (2021) is comparable to the current investigation into place-based identification. Peers receive the same degree of psychological advantages. Accordingly, the researcher postulates that during elections, individuals, who share similar peers may exhibit loyalty to candidates, who share their demographic. A study on the political impact of peer

groups: experimental evidence in the classroom was published by Campos et al. (2017b). The findings showed that individual identity is influenced by peer political identification. Peer interaction also influences political identification. Both the current investigation and the study by Schulte and Bauer (2021) seem to be comparable to the study by Campos et al. (2017). The current study's researcher posits that electoral behaviour may be influenced by peer relationships. What roles do coursework clusters have in peer effects and political participation? was investigated by Ajilore and Alberda (2017). The findings demonstrated that peers, who participate in extra-curricular activities and those who do better in social studies classes influenced one another. The current research on peer relationships, as well as the studies of Schulte and Bauer (2021) and Campos et al. (2017), seem to be comparable to the work of Ajilore & Alberda (2017). According to a study by Laursen & Veenstra (2021a), college students in West Java, Indonesia, who were first-time voters used the media (a favourable attribute of peer relationship) to help them make voting judgments. 1066 college students from six public colleges in West Java, Indonesia, who were first-time voters participated. The findings demonstrated that voting decisions (a component of electoral behaviour) were highly influenced by social media interactions with radio, newspapers, and television. Similar findings to the current study are found in the works of Schulte and Bauer (2021), Campos et al. (2017), and Laursen & Veenstra (2021a). The idea of social media now carries with it the idea of youth involvement in politics. In the Philippine senatorial election, Batara et al. (2021) published a study on the determinants influencing youth voting preferences: a structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis. Youth is a favourable attribute of peer relations. The study included 210 young, educated voters as participants. A structural equation connecting the respondent's party identity and voting preferences was used as the statistics. It does not seem like issue orientation or candidate orientation are important independent variables. The current study and the previous investigations by Laursen & Veenstra, (2021a), Schulte and Bauer (2021), and (Campos et al., 2017a) seem to be comparable to the study conducted by Batara et al. in 2021.

**Hypothesis**

Peer relationships among undergraduates at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, will significantly and positively influence their electoral behaviour.

**METHOD**

**Sample**

Participants were drawn from a total of 190 undergraduate males and females from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Participants' descriptive distribution was (46.8%) males and (53.2%) females. The age range was 18-36 years with a mean age of 21.63 years and a standard deviation of 2.95. Three students were married (1.6%), while a total of 187 (98.4%) were single. The whole 190 undergraduates were Christians. All participants had senior secondary school certificates (SSCE). A total of 107 (56.3%) undergraduates were registered voters, while 83 (43.7%) were unregistered voters. Also, 16 undergraduates were registered members of political parties, while 174 (91.6%) were not. All participants did not have any occupation. Participants' levels of study were 100-level 39 (20.5%), 200-level 89 (46.8%), 300-level 16 (8.4%), and 400-level 46 (24.2%). Eighty-eight 88 (46.3%) were attached to social groups, while 102 (52.7%) were not. Also, 137 (72.1%) were registered with religious groups, while 53 (27.9%) were not registered with any religious group.

**Design**

The study adopted a correlational design, while the statistic used for data management was descriptive, Pearson Product-Moment Correlations Coefficient and Linear Regression Analysis Enter Method.

**Instruments**

Two instruments were used for data collection: The electoral behaviour scale, and the Index of Peer Relations. Nweke et al., (n.d.) developed the electoral behaviour scale (EBS). The electoral behaviour scale is a seven-item questionnaire that examines several aspects of people's voting behaviour. The items on the electoral behaviour scale range from strongly agree-5 to strongly disagree-1 on a five-point Likert scale. Some of the things on the scale are: I have frequently volunteered for political organizations in the previous 12 months, and I have frequently voted in the past 12 months. Nweke et al., (n.d.) reported an alpha coefficient of .86. Furthermore, using correlation coefficient, tests for convergence and divergence validity revealed that EBS was positively associated with the Life satisfaction scale ($r = .03$, $p< .05$), and Self-esteem ($r = .49$, $P < .05$), but negatively associated with organizational frustration ($r = -. 45$, $P > .05$), and trait

anxiety inventory (r = -.32, P >.05). In another study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the Electoral Behavior Scale was reported to be .76 (Nweke et al., n.d.-c). the researcher in the present study found a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .82, Split-half Cronbach alpha Part 1 =.766, Part 2 = .634, while Spearman-Brown coefficient of equal length was .778 and Unequal length was .781. Gutter-man Split-Half Coefficient was .748.

The Index of peer relations scale was developed by Hudson (1992). The scale was developed to measure how one perceives relationships with peers. Items on the index of peer relationship were recorded on a five-point Likert scale with 1-strongly disagree, -5 strongly agree. The index of the peer relationship scale is a 25-item questionnaire. The reliability of the Index of peer relations scale was established at the .89 Cronbach alpha coefficient. A random selection of the several faculties at Nnamdi Azikiwe University in Awka was done by the researchers. These faculties included the Faculties of Education, Management Sciences, Engineering, Biology, Physics, Law, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences. Following a basic random selection procedure, the Physical Sciences faculty was chosen to function as the study's sample frame. Moreover, two departments were chosen at random for the study: Computer Science and Physics. The researcher assured the participants that their privacy would be maintained and that the study was being conducted for educational purposes before starting to administer the questionnaires. The study's participants were limited to willing and consenting undergraduates. The requirements for inclusion included meeting the age limit of eighteen and being included in the study sample. The study was conducted by the researcher using accidental random sampling from the first year of study to the fourth year of study. A total of 250 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the students; 190 of those were found to be correctly completed, and they were then subjected to data analysis using version 22 of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

**RESULTS**

**Table 1: Zero-order correlation matric using raw data**

|   |   | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Electoral behavior | 1 |   |   |
| 2 | Peer relations | .132 | 1 |   |

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Table 1** shows the zero-order correlation coefficient of the studied variables. There was a positive correlation between electoral behaviour and peer relationships at $r$=.132, $P$< .05.

**Table 2: Standardize Beta Coefficient Result for Independent Effects of Peer Relation, and on Electoral Behaviour**

| Predictor variable | Adjusted $R^2$ | $Df^1(df^2)$ | F | β | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Model 1 Electoral Behaviour** | .008 | 1(187) | 1.765 |   |   |
| a. Peer relation |   |   |   | .127* | .051 |

*p<.05

The one model was analysed independently using the multiple regression enter method. The following outcomes were obtained. Table 2 showed that when enter method was applied to electoral behaviour for independent predictors peer relations, the adjusted $R^2$ was .008. This revealed that the model contributed .8% to understanding electoral behaviour. The ANOVA summary (f-ratio) shows that the adjusted $R^2$ value was not significant at $f$ (2,187) = 1.765, $p$>.05. Specifically, the unstandardized beta value for peer relation was ($\beta$=.127*, P < .05.

**Discussion**

The study adopted a correlational design, while the statistic used for data management was descriptive, Pearson product-moment correlations coefficient and Linear regression analysis enter method. The study's findings supported the hypothesis. According to past research, peer

relationships and voting behaviour are positively correlated (Campos et al., 2017; Schulte & Baueer, 2021). These results align with the current investigation. The nature of the associations that exist among peers who are undergraduates may explain the phenomenon. It seems that a large number of undergraduates are politically aware through this manner. As a result, they might start concentrating more on electoral issues than other circular ones. As a consequence, discussions over who should be the most ideal candidate in the school or the community may have dominated peer relations during election events, investigating potential candidates' prospectuses and how the public could benefit from them often involves paying them a visit and conducting interviews. Additionally, if the electorate's impressions of favourable attitudes gradually take hold, they may be forced to participate in school or community socialisation programmes to persuade more of their peers about how they might win over more voters. Likewise, peers' unrestricted freedom to voice their thoughts may also lead to electoral victory. Under these conditions, it becomes evident that all undergraduates are very liberated to express their electoral emotions and ideas. In the previous example, it was quite simple for a peer to reach out to other peers and acquire political relevance once they were happy with a party's or candidate's electoral mission. In addition, it is critical to note that peers communicate using a new language. Applying this new terminology to group models between themselves is always simple. One possible explanation for the importance could be the shared flat status that each member has with the other. Now, it may always be simple to view things from a public, rather than a personal perspective, when each peer is aware that none of them is superior in terms of income or other unique privileges.

The results of the current study may be explained by the concept of planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour states that there are indirect relationships between personality traits and attitudes. Consequently, increased electoral activity is anticipated to result from a favourable attitude toward electoral behaviour as per the TPB. Participants expressed a favourable attitude regarding electoral behaviour as a result. According to this idea, those who have a favourable attitude toward electoral behaviours are more likely to overcome subjective norms. Thus, the term "subject norm" refers to the accepted manner of living in a certain culture. In the unlikely event that a culture rejects electoral behaviour. According to the TPB, a person who has a favourable outlook on electoral behaviour will be able to defeat subjective norms that have the

opposite view. In a similar vein, if the electorate's personality attribute appears to be extraversion or openness to experience (Nweke et al., 2022), the electorate now starts to assess his or her resources for electoral behaviour. Examining current knowledge, financial resources, personality types, encouraging friends, and personal convictions on the electoral project are all part of this process. The electorate will be able to acquire perceived behavioural control, if these assessments are well received.

As a result, goal-directed behaviour is better predicted by perceived behavioural control. An electorate starts to plot how to accomplish electoral behaviours as he becomes more aware of his ability to control behaviour. Such preparations emerge when voters start to map out how much money they will need for transportation, offer to pay for those who cannot afford it to support a campaign and donate money to print party colours on t-shirts, caps, stickers, party offices' residences, and cars. Each of these actions serves as a symbol indicating a party affiliation. Sadly, using the party supplies mentioned-above has resulted in the deaths of some citizens. As a result, to members of the community, such behaviours as exemplified by objects of components origin communicate volumes. Peer relationships have a strong perceived behavioural control, which helps them overcome obstacles related to electoral actions.

**Conclusion**

Undergraduates' electoral behaviour was found to be positively influenced by their peer relationships. Undergraduates may be able to increase their level of electoral attitude, if they engage in productive participation in town hall meetings, seminars, and electoral discussions. Undergraduates may favourably influence others toward the same attitude since they typically behave in norm-approved, group-motivated ways, if they are convinced of an electoral viewpoint. This increases the number of individuals, who support democratic norms. The study suggests that to compel peers who are not involved in electoral behaviour to adopt a positive attitude toward it, parents, guardians, politicians, the current government, and school authorities should support undergraduates by offering scholarships, holding debates, subsidizing school transportation, providing sports facilities, and other recreational amenities.

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## Do Perceptions of Organisational Trust and Psychological Ownership Predict Cyberloafing?

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**Abstract**

Novel transitions in workplace mobile technologies have created an avenue for increased cyberloafing trends in the workplace. Therefore, interventions towards mitigating cyberloafing and its negative consequences in workplace settings have become an area of scholarly interest. This study focuses on the predictive role of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyber-loafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. The study employed a descriptive cross sectional survey design. Purposive sampling techniques were utilized in selecting study participants. Using the tenets of Social Cognitive Theory of behaviour, the expected nexus among organisational trust, psychological ownership and cyber-loafing was illustrated as a basis for empirical testing. Results showed that cyber-loafing was not jointly predicted by organisational trust and psychological ownership [$F_{(2, 122)}$=.213; $p$>.05]. Similarly, there was no significant independent influence of organisational trust ($\beta$=.023; $p$>.05) and psychological ownership ($\beta$=-.075; $p$>.05) on cyber-loafing among the study participants. However, influence of age was a significant on cyber-loafing ($\beta$=-.288; $p$<.05), while work experience failed predict cyberloafing among the study participants. ($\beta$=.048; $p$>.05).The findings from this study imply that not many employees consider cyberloafing activities as infringements. Thus, there is need for management to operationalise and identify cyberloafing as unethical workplace behaviour among employees.

**Keywords:** *Cyber-loafing, Organisational trust, Psychological ownership*

1.      **Introduction**

The advent of the internet and its related applications has led to major transformations and transitions in the world of information sharing (Ciolfi & De Carvalho, 2014). Novel transitions in mobile technologies have aided easier access to the Internet by employees, thereby creating an avenue for loss of concentration and cyberloafing activities while at work. Moreover, the internet explosion has encouraged the use of virtual workstations to accomplish tasks, while promoting job flexibility and autonomy; however the downside of virtual workstations lies in its unsupervised nature, which has a high tendency to encourage cyberloafing, and other similar workplace vices (Jandaghi, Alvani, Matin, & Kozekanan, 2015). Numerous business organisations have utilized programming programs intended to screen, track, and square the wrong utilization of the Internet by their employees, still yet the issues related with cyberloafing have not diminished (Nazareth & Choi, 2014). On the average, employees are interrupted by notifications from new media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook every 10 minutes; and it takes such employees about 23 minutes to get back to work (Pelling, & White, 2009). Similarly, Hartijasti and Fathonah (2014) assert that cyberloafing among employees is counterproductive and detrimental to employees' performance, as it reduces time spent on workplace tasks, undermines employees' ability to concentrate, impedes employees' creativity at work and has accounted for significant levels of financial loss.

Interventions towards cyberloafing have therefore become an area of scholarly interest in a bid to mitigate occurrences of cyberloafing, while promoting the values of virtual workspace and enhancing employees' performance within the same context. The concept of cyberloafing is relatively broad and multifaceted as activities that constitute cyberloafing may sometimes be subjectively skewed, vague or contextual (Umukoro, Rowland-Aturu, Tomoloju, & Wadi, 2019). A general description of cyberloafing is provided by Jamaluddin, Ahmad, Alias and Simun (2015) as the employee use of internet enabled devices including phones, palmtops, laptops, etc., to access the internet for personal interests, while at work. However, the interactive nature of the internet may sometimes provide prompts that need immediate responses beyond work activities. The argument for and against cyberloafing arises in various contexts. For instance, making a call home on one's mobile phone while at work in the traditional workplace may not be deemed wrong, but sending a similar message home via the internet, while working in a virtual workspace may be considered an act of cyberloafing. Nevertheless, certain acts of cyberloafing

are quite glaring and finding effective strategies for mitigating adverse consequences of such glaring acts of cyberloafing remains a major setback for the productivity levels of many organizations (Anandarajan & Simmers, 2005). This study considers the influence of organisational trust and psychological ownership as predictive behaviours that may affect levels of cyberloafing.

Organisational trust describes the level of confidence that an employee places on the actions and reactions of significant others within the hierarchy (McAllister, 2005). It portrays the degree to which one places personal matters and decision in the hands of significant others. Organisational trust is an important construct that moderates and mediates in variables of social order within an organisation. Within an organisation, the quality of association and communication between and among management staff and employees, which is inevitable, is often dependent on the levels of interpersonal trust embedded between parties in the organisation. Building trust in traditional workplace is more straightforward as the physical and observed attributes of significant others are easily accessible indices for trust evaluations. However, within the virtual workspace, building trust may be more challenging due to the inaccessibility of these indices. It has been argued by Zhang, Tsui, Song, Li, and Jia (2008) that the behavioural dispositions and attitude of management staff and other employees in managerial roles have a role to play in the way their subordinates or employees perceive the level of trust within the organisation.

Psychological ownership describes the feelings of possessiveness that individuals holds towards a significant entity which may be material and immaterial in nature (Pierce, Kostova, and Dirks 2003). In relation to employees and their organizations, the psychological ownership of employees portray the feelings of possessive attachment that the employees have towards the organization, its activities and its welfare; such that the success or failure of the organization may be of personal significance to the employees (Avery, Avolio, Crossley & Luthans, 2009). Psychological ownership asks the question, *'How much do I feel this organisation is mine?* Psychological ownership is often boosted by actions of transparency and inclusion in organisational decision making between management and employees. Suffing from empirical outcomes, acts of employee deviance have been known to be negatively correlated with psychological ownership. Thus, it is logical to assume that acts of cyberloafing may have similar associations with cyberloafing. In other words, if virtual employees possess significant levels of

attachment towards the organizations, cyberloafing acts, which have negative consequences to the productivity of the organization may be reduced.

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

As a theoretical framework, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura (1986) can be applied in understanding employees' cyberloafing conduct while at work (LaRose and Eastin, 2004). The social cognitive hypothesis relies upon three components which influences an individual's conduct: (a) the environment, (b) people, and (c) behaviour. All three elements dynamically and reciprocally interact with and upon one another to form the basis for behaviour, as well as potential interventions to change behaviours (Bandura, 2001). Consequently, scholarly interest on how individual and environmental factors affect employees' conduct may provide an understanding of cyberloafing and other deviant practices while at work. According to Grover (2014), employees are more likely to abide by company policies and regulations if such rules apply to everyone. However, when such rules appear to favour some members of the organization over others, employees may feel disgruntled and exhibit unethical practices as a form of silent retaliation against perceived injustices. Similarly, individual level factors related to employee behaviour can explain unethical practices, including self-control and self-regulation (LaRose & Eastin, 2004).



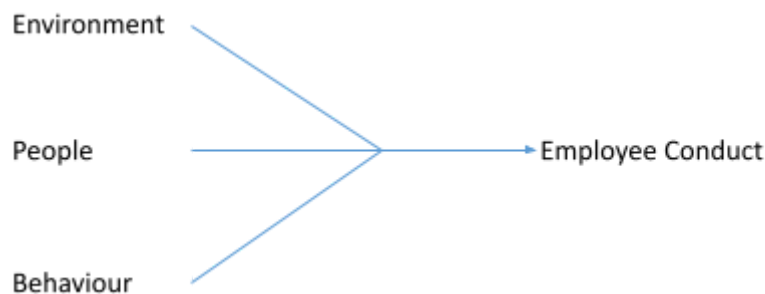**Figure 1: SCT Assumptions for Workplace Behaviour**

From a social cognitive perspective, cyberloafing activities by employees during work time can also be an addiction resulting from individual inability to apply self-regulatory cognitive skills. Thus, one may find that employees, who have become addicted to cyberloafing may be aware that the time they spend online is excessive and disruptive for their productivity;

and that they could face consequences for policy violations, but still carry on with cyberloafing practices due to the level of addiction and helplessness in controlling this behaviour (Baumeister, 2014). To investigate the rationale for involvement in cyberloafing, additional theoretical frameworks could be useful as well. For instance, the Goal-Setting Theory (GST), which is based on Social Cognitive Theory (Locke & Latham, 2004), maintains that personal, social and contextual variables determine personal goals and self-control. Self-control is an individual's desire to conform to social norms (Ugrin et al., 2008). Since cyberloafing is considered a deviant behaviour from the social norms, it is plausible to consider the role of self-control in investigating the phenomenon.

From the tenets of the SCT, employees' conduct may be borne out of a combination of endogenous (behaviour) and exogenous factors (environment, people). Endogenous factors comprise individual level variables that originate from personal dispositions along a continuum of self-control, while exogenous factors describe variables that have an external origin of influence. Based on these theoretical assertions, the current study proposes that the expression of cyberloafing may originate from both endogenous and exogenous factors. In a bid to establish the empiricism of this assertion, variables of psychological ownership and organisational trust were identified respectively as possible endogenous and exogenous workplace variables that may influence cyberloafing. As an endogenous variable, the exhibition of psychological ownership lies along the self-control continuum of the employee, while the perception of organisational trust is a function of workplace energies including policies and human interaction. Therefore, in line with assumptions of the SCT, it is expected that both variables (organisational trust and psychological ownership) should, in combination or individually, influence employees' exhibition of cyberloafing.
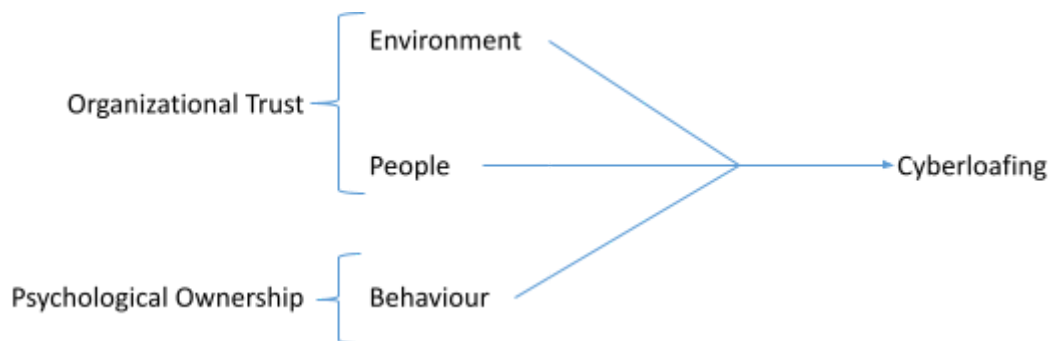
**Figure 2: Application of SCT Assumptions to the Study Variables**

Based on the expected relationship among the study variables (as highlighted in figure 2), a hypothesis to determine this linkage would be tested. Furthermore, it has been deemed worthwhile to consider demographic differences, when evaluating individual behaviour within social contexts (Whitsett & Shoda, 2014); as this may provide added information about mediators, moderators, and confounders which are embedded in a model. Thus, hypotheses that highlight the role of employees' demographics in relation to cyberloafing would also be tested.

$H_i$:    *There will be significant joint and independent influence of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyberloafing among employees.*

$H_i$:    *There will be significant joint and independent influence of age and work experience on cyberloafing among employees.*

$H_i$:    *There will be significant gender differences in cyberloafing among employees.*

**METHODS**

**Design and Participants**

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design via a cross sectional survey. This involves the collection of a data from a subset (sample) of homogenous population with varying attributes at a specific point in time. The dependent variable in the study is cyberloafing, while the independent variables include organisational trust, psychological ownership and other selected demographic characteristics of the participants. This study was carried out among employees of selected organisations located in Lagos. Based on the total population of potential participants, a representative sample size of 125 employees was obtained using the Slovin sample size determination formula. Percentage distribution of the participants showed that majority (44.8%) of them were between ages 18 to 25 years. Other age ranges across the study participants include persons between ages 26-35 years (29.6%), 36-45 years (12.0%) and 46-55 years (11.2%). Sex differences showed that 58.4% were female employees,

while the remaining 41.6% were male. Their marital status showed that majority (65.6%) were single, 31.2% were married, 2.4% either separated or legally divorced, while 0.8% were widowed. In terms of their length of service as employees within their current organisations, it was shown that 42.4% had work experience ranging from 1-5 years, 10.4% had work experience ranging from 6-10 years, 18.4% had work experience above 10 years, while 28.8% had less than a year's experience of work.

**Measures**

A structured questionnaire was developed for this study. The questionnaire was made up of standardized scales and comprised four sections. The initial section of the questionnaire described the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants including their gender, age, work experience (in years), educational qualification, marital status, etc.

Organisational Trust was measured using the Organization Trust Inventory by Cummings and Bromiley (1996) which measures the extent to which an employees' trusts management staff using dimensions of good faith in issues of commitment, honest negotiations and propensity to take advantage of others. The three dimensions consist of items which assess organisational trust in terms of affect, cognition and intended behaviour components. The scale utilizes a 5 point response format ranging from 1 (= Very Low) to 5 (= Very High). High scores depict higher levels of organisational trust, while low scores depict lower levels of organisational trust. The original authors obtained internal reliabilities ranging from .77 to .89.

Psychological ownership was measured using the psychological ownership scale by Avey, Avolio, Crossley and Luthans (2009). The scale measures cognitive and emotive attachment of an employee towards his/her organisation. The scale utilizes a 5 point response format ranging from 1 (= Strongly Disagree) to 5 (= Strongly Agree). The scale has five components; feelings of territoriality (4 items), sense of belongingness (3 items), self-efficacy (3 items), accountability (3 items) and self-identity (3 items). Examples of items include *'I will accept responsibility and take consequences for decisions made by management'*. High scores depict higher levels of psychological ownership, while low scores depict lower levels of psychological ownership. Internal reliabilities for the components ranged from .73 to .92.

Cyberloafing was measured using a 10-item scale adapted from Blau, Yang & Ward-Cook's (2008) cyberloafing scale. Six items were taken directly from Lim's (2002) 11-item

cyberloafing scale. The remaining four items represented an integration of cyberloafing items measured across a number of previously cited studies. The scale outlines various cyber activities with respondents expected to indicate the extent to which they are involved in such activities during work periods. The scale has three dimensions (i) browsing-related cyberloafing, 0.78; (ii) non-work-related e-mail cyberloafing, 0.91; and (iii) interactive cyberloafing. The Items are rated on a 5-point scale ranging from '*not at all=1*' to '*a great deal=5*. The dimensions of the scale produced adequate reliability estimates ranging from 0.70-0.91.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The researchers visited the human resource management of the selected organisations in Lagos, where permission to conduct the study within their premises and among their employees was obtained. Upon getting permissions, the researchers provided the human resource units of the selected organisations with the web link for the survey instrument to be forwarded to the emails of employees in the organisation based on the eligibility criteria provided. The online survey contained instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. All participants were provided with detailed briefings about the study and their rights to voluntary participate and withdraw from the study at any time, if they so wished. Participants were assured of their anonymity and implored to provide sincere answers to questionnaire items, as there were no right or wrongs answers. Each participant was expected to spend an average of 5 minutes in filling out the questionnaire. Upon completion, participants were expected to submit their responses, which was instantly collated and stored in an online database for the survey. Percentage frequency distribution, was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the population being studied. Further analyses of the hypotheses were conducted using inferential statistics including regression analysis and t-test for independent measures.

**HYPOTHESES TESTING**

**Hypothesis One**

There will be significant joint and independent influence of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis. Results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of multiple regression showing predictive role of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyberloafing**

| Predictors | R | $R^2$ | F | Sig | B | t | Sig. | Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Organisational Trust | | | | | .023 | .155 | .877 | .016 | .072 |
| | .059 | .003 | .213 | .809 | | | | | |
| Psychological Ownership | | | | | -.075 | -.513 | .609 | -.786 | .092 |

Results from Table 1 show that cyberloafing was not jointly predicted by organisational trust and psychological ownership [$F_{(2, 122)}$=.213; p>.05] and accounted for an insignificant variance ($R^2$=0.3%) in cyberloafing among employees. Similarly, there was no significant independent influence of organisational trust (β=.023; p>.05) and psychological ownership (β=-.075; p>.05) on cyberloafing among the study's participants. The results imply that, while organisational trust and psychological ownership may be important workplace factors among employees, both constructs did not influence the level of cyberloafing activities that employees engaged in. The hypothesis stated is therefore, rejected.

**Hypothesis Two**
There will be significant joint and independent influence of age and work experience on cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis. Results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Summary of multiple regression showing predictive role of age and work experience on cyberloafing**

| Predictors | R | $R^2$ | F | Sig | β | T | Sig. | Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Age | | | | | -.288 | -2.256 | .026 | -.288 | .121 |
| | .256 | .065 | 4.261 | .016 | | | | | |
| Work Experience | | | | | .048 | .376 | .708 | .051 | .501 |

Results from Table 2 show that cyberloafing was jointly predicted by age and work experience [$F_{(2, 122)}$=4.261; p<.05] and accounted for a significant variance ($R^2$=6.5%) in cyberloafing among employees. Similarly, there was a significant independent influence of age (β=-.288; p<.05) on cyberloafing, while work experience (β=.048; p>.05) did not independently predict cyberloafing among the study's participants. The results imply that, age is a potent negative predictor of cyberloafing in which younger employees are more likely to report higher levels of cyberloafing than their older counterpart. The hypothesis stated is therefore, accepted.

**Hypothesis Three**

There will be significant gender differences in cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. This hypothesis was tested using t-test for independent measures. Results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary of t-test showing gender based differences in cyberloafing**

| Sex | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | t | df | sig | Confidence Interval | | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Lower | Upper | |
| Male | 52 | 28.3846 | 7.8144 | | | | -.69560 | 1.58520 | 0.017 |
| | | | | -.074 | 123 | .941 | | | |
| Female | 73 | 28.5205 | 11.5351 | | | | -.71285 | 1.60245 | 0.012 |

Results from Table 3 show that there was no significant difference in reported levels of cyberloafing between male and female employees [t(123)=-.075; p>.05]. Based on the results, both male ($\overline{x}$=28.38) and female ($\overline{x}$=28.52) employees reported similar levels of cyberloafing. Further results show that the effect size of both gender (male=1.7%; female=1.2%) were minute and insignificant. Thus, employees' sex had no significant influence of cyberloafing. The hypothesis stated is therefore, rejected.

**CONCLUSION**

**Discussion of Findings**

This study set out to examine the predictive role of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. Based on a theoretical framework and reviews of related studies, three hypotheses were formulated and analysed using appropriate statistics. The first hypothesis which expected a joint and independent influence of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos was not supported. The results showed that both constructs did not significantly influence the level of cyberloafing activities among employees. The results imply that, while organisational trust and psychological ownership may be important workplace factors among employees, they do not account for much of the variance in the level of cyberloafing among employees. The outcomes of this initial hypothesis suggest that there are

other potent predictors of cyberloafing within the workplace beyond organisational trust and psychological ownership.

The seemingly low influence of organisational trust and psychological ownership on cyberloafing among employees may be justified by the perceived morality attached to act of cyberloafing. This is because, the activities tagged as cyberloafing, being carried out by employees while at work may not be perceived as being deviant among the employees themselves, especially when no negative consequences are attached to their work performance or productivity. For instance, employees may not consider *'chatting with a friend via social media platforms'* as unethical while at work. Moreover, the nature of some workplace tasks may, in fact, provide ample room for some employees to engage themselves in internet activities. It is also plausible for employees to justify their acts of cyberloafing as having positive effects on their productivity levels. This perspective proposes that cyberloafing can give rest from work and lift efficiency, when the workers come back from job schedules. Thus, taking part in internet activities, at subjectively appropriate times, recoups these resources, enabling workers to exhibit higher levels of performance on the job.

The influence of social desirability on the study outcomes cannot be overlooked. By default, the concept of cyberloafing (or engaging in non-work internet activities) while at work tends to be viewed as an unacceptable practice among employees from a managerial perspective. This leads to expectations that employees would be conscious and sensitive to subjects bordering on their engagement in cyberloafing; which may introduce levels of bias in their responses. Perceived levels of organisational trust and psychological ownership may therefore not be consistent in predicting cyberloafing. Moreover, employees' perceptions of cyberloafing as a vice may be based on its magnitude in terms of frequency, duration, and timing. This may therefore produce inconsistencies in their responses. In support of the results obtained in the current study, Page (2015) and Restubog et al. (2011) suggested that cyberloafing among employees was not a product of trust levels within the organization, but on other personal factors within the purview of the employees.

The second hypothesis focused on the expected influence of age and work experience on cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. The outcome of this hypothesis was partially supported as age emerged as a potent negative predictor of cyberloafing. This implies that cyberloafing activities are more profound among younger employees. The

plausibility of this result lies in the fact that the younger generation are known to be more active on the Internet (Chan & Fang, 2007) than their older counterparts. This may be due to the use of the internet as a platform for the development of social skills during youthful years. Moreover, younger employees have the luxury of time for long-term future career plans to achieve multiple life goals. Thus, the advent of the internet affords younger employees a platform to achieve such goals, while being engaged in their current jobs. In other words, being engaged in a regular job poses little of no limitations for younger employees in achieving other life goals due to the flexibility of the internet.

Supporting the results obtained in this study, several studies show that more youthful employees will in general acknowledge innovation more and utilize the internet more. As such younger employees will in general have a much higher propensity to visit the internet and surf the web more frequently, which can lead to misuse of internet resources (Ugrin et al, 2007). In some studies, it has been found that younger employees report higher levels of information technology misuse while at work (Restubog, et al, 2011). However, Ozkalp et al (2012) found no relationship between employees' age and cyberloafing. In terms of range and technology types, Weatherbee (2010) found that younger employees were more receptive to the use of technological innovations to promote their social skills, while older employees preferred to channel such new innovations specifically to work tasks. These findings allude to the array of mixed results linking employees' age and cyber-deviant behaviours at work.

The third hypothesis was formulated on the expectation that there would be significant gender differences in cyberloafing among employees of selected organisations in Lagos. However, there was no significant difference in reported levels of cyberloafing between male and female employees, implying that sex had no significant influence of cyberloafing. The justification for this result may be that cyberloafing is not a gender based activity; even though various studies have highlighted gender differences in internet usage behaviours. These differences have, however, been applied to specific internet activities. For instance Everton, Mastrangelo and Jolton (2005) suggested that males tend to use the Internet on the job for personal purposes and therefore tend to experience greater internet abuse risk (Stavropoulos, Alexandraki, & Motti-Stefanidi, 2013), while Dileep, Normala, Govindarajo, & Othman (2014) assert that males tend to use the internet for e-commerce activities more than females.

Additionally, some studies have suggested that male employees engaged in cyberloafing more frequently than their female counterparts (Lim and Chen, 2012). Stanton (2002) and Ugrin et al. (2008) however found that both men and women are equally liable to engage in cyberloafing activities, ceteris paribus. According to Vitak, et al (2011) being a more youthful male essentially predisposed employees to both higher frequency and duration of cyberloafing (Vitak et al, 2011). Gender differences likewise exist in the internet exercises that employees may habitually participate in, with males being attracted to web based games and females being attracted to online communication (Chak and Leung, 2004). In any case, adequate exact proof to decide whether sexual orientation or gender difference is emphatically associated with cyberloafing practices has not received adequate empirical validation.

**Implication of Findings**

The findings from this study imply that cyberloafing is generally prevalent at the workplace; albeit not many employees may consider cyberloafing activities as an unethical workplace behaviour. These results, therefore, provide insight for management of organisations about the prevalence of cyberloafing activities among their employees. The proliferation of internet usage in most organisations for improved productivity often clouds the obvious acts of cyberloafing among employees. Therefore, negative impacts of cyberloafing on organisational productivity are more likely to also go unnoticed and unaccounted for. This study has, therefore, highlighted the importance of identifying issues of cyberloafing within organisational settings. Nevertheless, the internet is an inevitable resource in the society, therefore stamping out employees' internet usage may be a tall order. Thus, the results of the study provide a basis for management to consider modifying acts of cyberloafing into more productive internet usage behaviour among employees.

**Recommendations**

Based on the study findings and attendant implications, the following recommendations are proposed for improved organisational productivity:

- Firstly, it is necessary for management to formulate and implement policies that address issues of cyberloafing. Results of this study have shown that it may not be enough to introduce psycho educative interventions with modules of organisational trust and

psychological ownership to curb cyberloafing. Instead, promoting employees' understanding of what cyberloafing is and its related consequences may be a more direct intervention. This can be achieved by organizing seminars and workshops on cyberloafing for both entry level and experienced staff.

- Secondly, based on the age disparity found in the cyberloafing activities among employees, it may be necessary for management to ensure that internet related tasks in the workplace should be handled by older employees, as younger employees may be more inclined to use internet resources for personal activities. This is the classic notion of placing round pegs in round holes. This can be achieved via the employee selection and placement processes done by the human resource unit of organisations; where a productive person-environment fit is established between employees and their job descriptions.

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# Religiosity as a Correlate of Smart Phone Addiction among Undergraduate of the University of Lagos

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**Abstract**

The study examined religiosity as a correlate of smartphone addiction among undergraduates at the University of Lagos, with the objective of establishing the relationship between religiosity and smartphone addiction. The study used a cross-sectional survey of 248 male and female college students. To elicit information from participants, a paper and pencil self-report protocol was used, which included demographic questions, as well as two standardised psychological instruments, the Religious Orientation Scale developed by Idehen (2000) and the Smart Phone Addiction Scale (SPAS) developed by Young and Leung (2008). The study found no statistically significant association between religion and smart phone addiction (r= 0.118, p= 0.062, p> 0.05). The findings indicate that participants' religiosity had no correlation to their smartphone addiction. The study revealed that religiosity had no relationship with smartphone addiction among undergraduates.

**Key Words:** Smartphone, Addiction, Religiosity, Undergraduates

**Background to the study**

The advent of smart phones in the modern era provides people with the opportunity to get information at the snap of their fingers and also access to the internet. Smartphone addiction can be viewed as an excessive use of a smartphones to an extent that it becomes difficult to function without it and it interferes with an individual's other aspects of life negatively, (Park and Lee, 2012). Although, the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) and the Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM), do not recognize smartphone addiction as an illness,  but like other recognized addictions, it involves a compulsion and over reliance on mobile appliances, and can be measured as the amount of time a person accesses his/her mobile phone or the total period spent online over a range or period of time (Olsen, 2011; Robison & Nestler, 2011).  The prevalence of smart phone addiction has been on the riAlaaAlaa et al,  (2018) found that 36.5% of Pakistani medical students were addicted to their smart phones. More recently, Huan, et al,  (2022), found a prevalence of 52.8%, of students of Wannan Medical College were addicted to their smartphones in china.

Smartphones, have now become not just a means of communicating with others; but are tools that provide digital identities and virtual environments  for individuals, for shopping and managing finances, and also provide a platform for play and enjoyment, (Lee et al., 2021a; Verge, 2021). This technological innovation has altered the way smartphones are used and resulted to the technology being prone to a potential harmful usage (Augner & Hacker, 2012, Chóliz, 2012, Leung, 2008). The harmful use of smart phones can interfere with an individual's daily life, affect their health and happiness and may alter interpersonal relationships, (Augner & Hacker, 2012; Ch_oliz, 2012; Leung, 2008).

Harmful or Problematic smart phone use can be viewed from the following perspectives: 1) inappropriate usage (for instance using a phone in a cinema or during lectures). 2) risky or dangerous usage (for example, driving while using a cell phone)., and 3) overuse (spending a lot of your time using the phone), (Walsh, et al., 2007). These three categories of smart phone use are considered to be indicators that an individual may be on the path to smartphone addiction (Ch_oliz, 2012). For students, smart phone addiction can result directly or indirectly to problems

with interpersonal relationships, challenges　with campus life, or even mental health issues (Choi, Lee, & Ha, 2012). In a study, (Bian & Leung, 2015), found a relationship between timidity, loneliness and addiction to smartphones. Also, (Ko, et al., 2012), found that smart phone addiction can result to　unusual behaviours like, being preoccupied with using a smartphones, losing one's temper, desperate efforts to connect with others,　disruptions in daily work and psychological disorders , (Ko, et al., 2012).

Studies have also, pointed to younger people who are addicted to the use of smartphones tending to experience challenges with social, domestic and academic performance, (Sunday, et al., 2021). These individuals' reliance on their smartphones is significantly higher in comparison to other people, and they tend to continually become more preoccupied with their device, (Kwon, 2013). Young people in the last three decades, sometimes called 'wired generation' (Barnes, 2009), most often, use their smartphones to organize their school and home activities, keep in touch with friends and family and manage their social networks, (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). Research evidence, (Augner& Hacker, 2012; Martinotti, 2011; Walsh, 2007), suggest that young people's predisposition to being addicted to their smartphones is closely linked to their mobile phone usage. Also, being addicted to a smartphone was found to be an unhealthy behaviour, (Hong, Chiu, & Huang, 2012), it has been suggested that dependence on mobile phones during lectures can affect students negatively, (Sunday, et al., 2021).

Smart phones provides an easier way to such everyday activity like　entertainment, sociability, finding information, social identity maintenance, coping strategies, and time management. (Bian & Leung, 2015; Kuss, et al., 2018; Kwon et al., 2013; Lin et al., 2014; Skierkowski & Wood, 2012). It is now an essential device for the smooth running of our daily lives, (Bian & Leung, 2015).　Studies have pointed to some individuals becoming so preoccupied with their smart phones that they manifest symptoms similar to separation anxiety symptoms when they are not with their smart phones, (Cheever, et al.,　2014; King et al., 2013). A lot of people, who seem to be addicted to their smart phones, find comfort in them, whenever they are stressed; and they rely on their phones for a sort of "security blanket" against negative stress stimulus which reduces in a similar pattern like, when children feel comfort from something like a blanket (Panova & Lleras, 2016).

Addiction is characterized by behavioural impairment, (Kardefelt-Winther et al., 2017). If the harm caused by the behavioural change is not obviously severe, the challenge might be better categorized as mal-adaptive or problematic but not a disorder (Kuss & Daria 2013; Shenfield, & Tali, 2015). Some  studies focused on screening scales for smart phone addiction  point to negative repercussions associated with high levels of smartphone use, like poor academic performance, interpersonal relationship challenges (Bian & Leung, 2015; Darcin et al., 2016; Hawi & Samaha, 2016; Murdock, 2013). Although, face-to-face interpersonal connections and academic performance may reduce drastically with the dependence on smartphone use, these challenges may also be linked to a lot of other causes and stressors that are not associated with addiction, (Goodman , 1990)

Addiction caused by over use of smartphones is although, yet to be included  as a psychological disorder by either ICD or DSM classification of disorders, studies point to  problematic patterns and behaviours resulting from the over use of smartphones, (Bianchi & Phillips, 2005; Billieux, et al.,,  2015; Chóliz, 2010; Pedrero, et al., 2012),  Evidence point to the fear of being without a smartphone or loosing connectivity as an obvious characteristics of addition to smartphones, (Tran, 2016). This form of anxiety is common and referred to as nomophobia (that is a fear caused by being without a phone), (Tran, 2016).

The present study is interested in the contribution of undergraduate's religiousness to their addiction to smart phones. Religiosity is defined according to the current online Oxford dictionary as strong religious feeling or belief (Oxford dictionary, 2022).  Also, Religiosity can be viewed as the tendency for an individual to be committed to principles, religious beliefs, and practices. To get a measure of one's religious commitment, authors require people to respond to religious questions, (Fernander, et al., 2000). Extant literature links both spirituality and religiosity to be associated with health status (Mishra, et al., 2017), and scientific data has indicated that some aspects of religiosity contribute to wellness and mental health (James & Wells, 2003). Different authors have viewed the concept of religiosity from the perspective of religious orientation and the extent of involvement and commitment that people demonstrate about their religious beliefs, (Holdcroft & Barbara, 2006). Since most scholars accept that religiosity points to a sense of belonging, a beliefs, and behaviour, it is most lightly that this can

have an influence on the way people interact with their smartphones, (Holdcroft & Barbara, 2006). Religious influence as a risk factor of mobile phone addiction was 2.7%, when compared to the variables of anger control, which was 33.6% among nursing and midwifery students.

Religiosity has also been viewed as an individual's perceived importance of religion and the level he/she translates religious beliefs and identities in their daily life (Kiang, et al., 2020). This includes how people interact in the community they share the same interests and values (Kiang, et al., 2020). Spirituality is experienced within and outside a religious setting and can be characterized by an unusual experience, a meaningful sense of life and a sense of interconnectedness, (Moreira-Almeida, et al., 2006). Both spirituality and religiosity can give an intense sense of purpose to a person's existence, help to reduce stress, and encourage coping, (Benson, et al., 2003; King & Boyatzis, 2015). According to (Dehghanmehr, et al.,), controlling your temperament, being conscious and imbibing a religious attitude is significant in reducing the rate of mobile phone addiction in students. They also suggested that anger control and strengthening religious attitude is key to developing smartphone addiction prevention programs for students, (Dehghanmehr, et al.). The above suggests that religiosity plays a protective role in controlling problematic smartphone use, as (Dossi, 2022) pointed to religiosity influencing adolescents lower participation internet gaming rates.

The focus of studies on the increasing level of smartphones addiction in comparison with some other mobile appliances and device has been attributed to its amazing features (Barkley, 2012). Most individuals at present view a smartphones as important to their life, (Derounian, 2017). This is evidenced by the rate at which smartphones are sold worldwide since 2011 (with 472 million of total sale of mobile phones amounting to 31% of total sales being smartphones, and this rate has kept increasing (Silva, 2013; Geser, (2013). The present generation has become very attached to their smartphones and the time spent on their phones might serve as a distraction, (Lepp, 2015). Unarguably, the use of smartphone has become globally essential because of its contributions to human activity by enhancing interpersonal and socio-economic relationships worldwide, (Park & Lee, 2011). Smart phones can influence the way individuals work, play, and interact with each other, (Park & Lee, 2011).

Research has pointed to addiction to smartphones as a factor that can result to various problems like challenges with campus life, problems in relationship with others and mental health and so on, (Choi, Lee and Ha, 2012).   Although, smartphones allow for ease in sourcing information and communicating, for example,  utilizing many applications within a room, sending e-mails, and playing video games,  (Lepp, Barkley and Karpinski, 2014), overusing them may result to a range of problems, (Lawson & Henderson, Bruce, 2015). These challenges can compromise physiological functioning of such individuals by causing damage to  fingers and forearms (Ming, et al., 2006), and injuries to the neck, spine and the vertebrae column, (Binning, 2010). It can predispose the experience of psychological distress and/or disorders like depression (Takao, et al., 2009; Turel & Serenko, 2010; Walsh, et al., 2008, 2009).

The phenomenal increase in smartphones addiction cannot be over emphasized and can be attributed to some of its features like video recording, to music playing, and a twenty-four hour access to internet and so on, while adolescents and emerging adults have expanding resources to use their smartphones (Pew Research Center, 2015). Smartphones can serve as sort distraction to normal social interactions. For instance "phubbing" (This is a habit people exhibit in a social context by focusing on one's phone instead of talking to the person directly), is commonly seen in social gathering nowadays, (Pew Research Center, 2015). Studies have indicated that addiction to internet and the fear of ''missing out'' influenced smartphone addiction (Chotpitayasunondh & Douglas, 2016). Therefore, the reason that informed this study is to find out the prevalence of smartphone addiction among the participants. The study also found the contribution of participants' religiosity to being preoccupied with their smartphones.

Smartphones have over the years become an essential part of an undergraduate's live on campus, and owning a smartphone is wide spread among students, studies worldwide suggest high level of addiction to smartphone among many students (Aljomaa, 2016; Hawi & Samaha, 2016; Gökçearslan, 2016). (Kwon, 2013) reported that owning and using smartphones is more common than using other devices and that unregulated use and complete dependence on smartphones could be viewed as an addictive disorder (Paniagua, 2005). Therefore, the reason that informed this study is to find out the contribution of participants' religiosity to being preoccupied with their smartphones.

Several studies have been carried out previously that suggested the overuse of smartphones and most of them indicated the over reliance on smart phones could be seen as an addiction, (Deborah & Robert, 2011) surveyed 269 College Students in a small Northeastern University, Norway, regarding the use of mobile devices, such as cell phones in college classrooms.

According to their research, 95% of students bring their phones to class every day, and 92% text during lectures, while 10% admitted even sending messages at least once during an examination on at least one occasion. Finally, almost all the students surveyed said their lecturers were unaware of their behavior. A comprehensive evaluation of 13 studies by (Dossi et al., 2022), found that religion and internet addiction had an inverse association, with six of the studies indicating this. Three studies revealed no significant association between the variables. However, one study indicated a direct relationship between religion and Internet addiction.

Another research (Maduku, 2022) investigated the components of Mobile Social Networking Sites (MSNS), addiction, and its link to social overload and religion. A questionnaire was used to measure 557 MSNS users in South Africa. He discovered that religion had an inverse effect on MSNS addition. He also found that social overload moderates the influence of religion on MSNS adoption.

**Study Objective:**

To determine the relationship between religiosity and smartphone addiction.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

The research design involved was cross sectional survey design. This allowed the researchers to understand the relationship between the variables of the present study. Also, neither the independent variable nor dependent variable was manipulated. The independent variable in this was religiosity, while the dependent variable was smartphone addiction.

**Participants**

The study sample was picked accidentally and comprised 248 male and female students from a population of undergraduate students at the University of Lagos..

**Research Instrument**

A self-report paper and pencil questionnaire that elicited demographic data and two Psychological scales namely; the Smart Phone Addiction Scale (SPAS) by (Young & Leung, 2008), and the Religious Orientation Test (ROT) authored by (Idehen, 2000) measured the variables of interest in the study. SPAS was used to measure respondents' addiction to smartphones. It is  made up of  19 items that contain five quadrants; (a )Preoccupation (5 items), (b) Disregard of harmful consequences (5 items), (c) Productivity loss (3 items), (d) Feeling anxious and lost (2 items)  (e)Inability to control craving (4 items), respectively. The scale is graded using a 5-point Likert answer style, with 1 = not true at all, 2 = not true, 3 = ordinary, 4 = true, and 5 = highly true. Questions 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 16, 18, and 19 are scored in reverse order. The authors' dependability, as evaluated by Cronbach's alpha, indicates that they disregard detrimental repercussions .88 preoccupation .82: unable to control cravings.82, feeling nervous and adrift.79, and ultimately, productivity decline.86.

The scale's face validity indicates Preoccupation.86, disregard for disastrous effects.67. Productivity loss.83, Feeling worried and lost.91 and the inability to control cravings.87.
Religious Orientation Test (ROT**):** elicited information on participant's religiosity. It consists of six items that are stated in interrogative way. Responses are in an order, according to each question. All item have a response classified in a five point Likert-format, as indicated as follows; 1) not at all religious, 2) not very, 3) fairly religious, 4) quite religious, 5) very religious. The responses are added up to give a global score of religiosity. Thus, high scores indicate superficial religious orientation, average scores indicate a moderate religious orientation and low scores indicate a deep religious orientation. The test-retest reliability of the ROT was 0.75, p< 0.1. This indicates that ROT is relatively stable over this time period. The internal consistency of the ROT shows a moderate range (0.44 to 0.64); suggesting that each of the items is at least partially measuring the same underlying construct, the split-half reliability was 0.82.  The factor loadings varied from 0.11 to 0.28.

**Procedure**

The researchers first informed the participants about the study objectives and those that freely gave consent to participate in the study were handed the questionnaires to complete. The questionnaire was administered to the participants in their departments and completed questionnaires were returned immediately. All questionnaires administered were 300. Only 270 were completed and retrieved, however 250 of the returned research protocols, which were properly completed were used for generating the result.

**Guiding Statement of Hypotheses:**

Deeply religious students would report a significantly lower level of smart phone addiction than their superficially religious counterparts.

**Results**

**Table 1: The descriptive statistics of the correlation between religiosity and Smartphone addiction among the participants**

|  | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| Religiosity | 14.83 | 5.6 | 250 |
| Smartphone Addiction | 53.56 | 13.65 | 248 |

Table 1 shows the mean Religiosity score of 14.83 with a standard deviation of 5.6. While the mean score for Smartphone Addiction is 53.56, the standard deviation is 13.65.

**The table 2: Showing the correlation between religiosity and smartphone addiction**

|  |  | Religiosity | Smartphone Addiction |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Religiosity** | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .118 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .062 |
|  | N | 250 | 248 |
| **Smartphone Addiction** | Pearson Correlation | .118 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .062 |  |
|  | N | 248 | 248 |

Correlation is not significant at the *0.05 level (2 tailed)*

Result from the table shows there was no significant relationship between religiosity and smartphone addiction at 0.05 level of significance (r= 0.118, p= 0.062, p> 0.05, 2 tailed). Consequently, the hypothesis, that stated that, deeply religious participants would report a significantly lower level of smart phone addiction than their superficially religious counterparts, was rejected.

**Discussion**

This study investigated religiosity as a correlate of smart phone addiction among university students. The study threw up an interesting finding as the results indicate that religiosity has no relationship with smart phone addiction among undergraduates. This finding, suggest that, the participants' religiousness did not contribute to their use of smart phones. This study is consistent with (Dossi, et al., 2022), whose systematic review of 13 studies on the relationship between spirituality or religiosity and internet addiction, indicated that six of the studies showed a negative relationship between religiosity and internet addiction, three found no evidence of a correlation, and just one identified a direct association. The present study also consolidated that of (Maduku, 2022), who found that religiosity had an inverse influence on Mobile Social Networking Sites (MSNS) addition among MSNS users in South Africa. This finding is also in

consonant with (Olowookere, et al., 2016) who found a positive relationship between intrinsic religiosity and interpersonal relationship. This finding, indicate that those who have an intrinsic religiosity tend to be sincere about their religiosity and not religiously inclined for their gain or selfish interest. This is unlike those whose religious orientation is extrinsic, their religiousness is based on anterior motive of benefiting from their religiosity. For the participants, who are preoccupied or are addicted to their smartphones, like those with extrinsic religiosity, they engage in the use of their phones for ulterior motives not because of their academic growth that one should expect from students. This claim can be justified by the finding of (Sunday, et al., 2021). Their results show that those who are preoccupied with using their smartphones tend to experience challenges with social, domestic and academic performance.

Also, the present generation, sometimes called 'wired generation' whose birth correlates with the computer age, (Barnes, 2009), most often, use their smartphones to organize their school and home activities, keep in touch with friends and family and manage their social networks, (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). This may suggest that the present generation of students take advantage of their smartphones in organising themselves, (Jacobsen & Forste, 2011). The enormous advantage of smartphones can just be the reason why students engage the use of their smartphone not because of their overuse or addiction to the device, (Lee et al., 2021a, The Verge, 2021; Augner and Hacker, 2012, Chóliz, 2012, Leung, 2008).

**Conclusion**

The present study examined religiosity as a correlate of smartphone addiction among University of Lagos undergraduates. The result of the present study indicated that, religiosity has no relationship with the level of smartphone among the participants. Conclusively, this study demonstrated that the religiousness of undergraduates is not a factor in the overuse or being addicted to their smartphones.

**Recommendation**

The present study's results suggest practical recommendation and implication. It is recommended that more understanding through further studies might be needed to have a better grasp of the factors that make undergraduates to be preoccupied with their smartphones. This will greatly aid in controlling and reducing the phenomenal rate undergraduates depend on their smartphones, which is consistently climbing up the ladder of addiction and being debated as qualified to be included as a disorder of addiction.

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**Moderating Roles of Workplace Spirituality on Work-Life Balance and Employee Engagement among Bank Employees in Delta State**

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## Abstract

The study examined the moderating roles of workplace spirituality on work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State, Nigeria. The participants were 249 bank employees whose ages ranged from 26 and 49 years with a mean age of 33.50 years and a standard deviation of 3.20. The study adopted a correlation design using moderated regression statistics to test the hypotheses using two regression model. The result indicated that there were significant correlations among the variables with the work-life balance having negative but significant correlations with workplace spirituality and employee engagement. Analysis of the Beta coefficient showed that work-life balance has a negative significant predictor effect on employee engagement at $\beta = -0.72$, $p < .01$ (n = 249) while workplace spirituality had a positive predicting effect at $\beta = 0.44$, $p < .01$ (n = 249). It was found that work-life balance significantly predicted employee engagement, workplace spirituality significantly predicted employee engagement, workplace spirituality significantly correlated work-life balance and workplace spirituality significantly moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State, implying that workplace spirituality reduced the negative effects of work-life balance and improved employee engagement. It is recommended that there is a need to explore factors which increase or decrease workplace spirituality among employees as this *could help management to establish motivational paradigms which may be catalysts to the sustenance of workplace spirituality to reap its attendant organizational benefits.*

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Workplace Spirituality, Work-Life Balance, Bank Workers.

**Introduction**

Employees are an integral part of organizational success; without them, organizations may never actualize their goals (Patel, 2022). Most competitive organizations pay a premium to bring out the best in the day-to-day activities of their workforce. This has made it important to understand how to keep employees fully engaged in realizing their full potentials in their organizations (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021; Ferdous et al., 2020). In profit-oriented organizations such as commercial banks, the need for employees to be fully engaged is critical to keeping abreast with competition in the banking industry and maintain organizational relevance in the marketplace.

Employee engagement is an active and positive work-related state that is characterized by feelings of vigour (energy), dedication and absorption in one's work (Ule et al. 2020) which reflects relatively in an increase in job resources over time (Jaharuddin, & Zainol, 2019). Employee engagement refers to workers' commitment and enthusiasm in carrying out and completing a given task, by so doing, contributing to organizational success. An engaged employee displays high mental resilience and high levels of energy in the workplace (Ule, et. al. 2020). They maintain clear and conscientious efforts to devote themselves to work and persistence when facing difficulties, demonstrating mental vigour (Rich, et. al. 2010). Both mental and work-related vigour help employees to be more sensitive to opportunities at work and fosters a more proactive work style (Wood et al., 2020). Employee engagement is a sign of dedication expressed through enthusiasm, inspiration and organizational pride; while absorption of work pressures demonstrated by an engaged employee entails full concentration and being highly and happily engrossed in one's work (Riyanto et al., 2019; Amah, 2018).

Employee engagement benefits the organization by stimulating task and contextual performance (Xian et al. 2021) an employee being disengaged from work may result in employee turnover, absenteeism and poor performance (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021). Maintaining a high level of employee engagement is essential for organizations to succeed in retaining talent, fostering a positive work culture and enhancing overall productivity (Ule. et. al. 2020)

With Nigeria's current competitive banking climate catalyzed by the banking reforms, the need for fully engaged employees is crucial as part of a successful banking career. Although, most

banks are now embracing automation, online and other cashless options to ease customers' transaction experience, the depth and penetration of these services will still take a while to be actualized (Umeghalu et al., 2021). Consequently, bank employees in addition to targets and mandates may need to perform multiple roles and combine roles in other to be at the top of the day-to-day tasks. Because of this, many have decried the banking job as very demanding (Ule, et al 2020). this is a result of identified stressful conditions, unlike other jobs owing to several factors including understaffing, lack of work shifts (Mmakwe & Ukoha, 2018), lack of more branches and full digitalization of services (Umeghalu et al., 2021). To this end, for bank employees to be relevant in their organizations, they must remain fully engaged amidst job pressures. These job pressures lead to intense workloads, increased stress levels and a significant imbalance between work life and personal life (Oludayo et al., 2018).

Work-life balance is satisfaction and good functioning at work and home and other engagements outside of work, with the least role conflict (Puspitasari & Darwin, 2021). Work-life balance is adjusting working patterns regardless of age, race or gender so that everyone can find a rhythm to help combine work with their other life's responsibilities, challenges or aspirations. Work-life balance is an increasingly important construct in the workplace because of its outcomes on both employees and the organization. Employees need to balance work and non-work roles to be optimal as individuals physically and psychologically.

Work-life balance is associated with employee involvement in the job, organizational productivity and production cost (Wood et al., 2020). There are many factors which could affect work-life balance in organizations as well as drive its relevance. Work-life balance is an important construct with direct measurable consequences on job, employee and organizational outcomes because employees who are stuck with work without the flexibility to attend to other aspects of life's needs may over time have diminished value for work (Nwagbara, 2020).

The balance between work and personal life was equally conceptualized as a work balance between an individual's work and their life outside work, which indicates that the worker has certain control over his working time. Working time includes the time spent commuting between work and home and unofficial time spent from home addressing work concerns. Organizations that prioritize work-life balance attempt to deepen work flexibility for all workers which takes into account the

dynamics of methods used in an actualizing flexible work routine, including shift work, job rotation, overtime and part-time working methods. Organizational policies alone may not fully institutionalize work-life balance except they are aided by co-employees who may act as buffers to fellow employees who are stretched along work demands and their personal lives (Obiageli et al., 2015). Co-employees may be unable to offer necessary buffers to colleagues experiencing conflicts in work roles and other aspects of their lives unless they are motivated to exhibit workplace spirituality.

Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one's ultimate purpose in life which is transmitted through to the workplace by developing a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and having consistency (or alignment) between one's core beliefs and the values of their organization (Tantua & Osuamkpe, 2020). Workplace spirituality enhances employees' experience of transcendence through the work process by finding higher meaning in work and facilitating their socializations with ethical responsibility, especially regarding their interaction with members of the organization on work processes, job tasks and conducts within and outside the workplace. This kind of feeling increases workers' sense of connectedness in the workplace and provides a feeling of completeness and a sense of value (Jin & Lee 2019).

Workplace spirituality is also employee behaviour in the workplace which seeks to make out meaning and value from the work system, seeing outcomes in the workplace positively, treating others and self well, genuinely being interested in co-workers, contributing positive ideas, being conscious of the diverse backgrounds of the different workers in the workplace and prioritizing colleagues in the workplace above any other thing (Pourkiani & Sayadi, 2019). Workplace spirituality is known to benefit organizations in many ways most especially as it enhances the organizational image and integrity, creates better organizational health, well-being work-related stressors and work-family conflicts and improves the overall positive feeling among workers and between workers and their owners. A workplace that enjoys workplace spirituality gets energized as healthier interpersonal relationships are promoted (Marwan et al., 2019).

The deployment of workplace spirituality as a pro-work behaviour is what may likely diversify and improve the engagement of employees. Workers whose work-life balance is challenging due to circumstantial situations may find support from co-workers in an atmosphere

with workplace spirituality than without (Chinomona, 2017). Considering these possible benefits, the current researcher is optimistic that workplace spirituality may positively influence workers' experience in the workplace and help to engender effectiveness and efficiency, especially in the presence of a toxic work-life balance. Against this backdrop, the model of this current study has conceptualized that workplace spirituality may moderate the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

## Literature Review

### Work-life Balance and Employee Engagement

Puspitasari and Darwin (2021) explored the effect of work-life balance and welfare level on millennial employee performance through work engagement. Their study focused on the role of work-life balance and the level of welfare of millennial employees through work engagement as a variable intervening. Puspitasari and Darwin used the purposive sampling method while using a work-life balance measurement tool with a balance dimension in time management, engagement balance, balance in expectation fulfilment, and satisfaction balance. In the method of analysis, the analysis technique used was Structural Equation Modeling based on VB-SEM using SmartPLS software. After data analysis, the result showed that five hypotheses of direct influence were accepted and one rejected. While the two hypotheses of indirect influence were each rejected and accepted. Work engagement variables as intervening variables are only capable of mediating work-life balance against employee performance. The study has similarities with the current study as it provides the basis for understanding the relationship between work-life balance and engagement constructs. It is therefore found useful to the current study.

In Nigeria, Oludayo et al. (2018) explored work-life balance initiatives as a predictor of employees' behavioural outcomes to ascertain the extent to which work-life balance initiative predicts employee behavioural outcomes in some selected commercial banks in Lagos State Nigeria. The structural Equation Model (AMOS 22) was used for the analysis to find the resultant effects and the degree of relationship between the exogamous and endogamous variables. Results showed that work leave arrangement, flexible work arrangement, employee time out, employee social support and dependent care initiative are predictors of employee behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, employees' intention and employee engagement.

**Workplace Spirituality and Work-life Balance**

In evaluating the impacts of workplace spirituality on work-life balance, Jin and Lee (2020) explored the effect of workplace spirituality on the quality of work-life of nurse cancer survivors in South Korea. The data were analyzed using SPSS 22 software to determine descriptive statistics and conduct an independent *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and hierarchical multiple regression. After data analysis, the result indicated that the average scores for all NWS and QNWL sub-domains were medium. Age, nursing tenure, and the factors of NWS were positively correlated with QNWL, especially the harmony between the workplace and the individual ($r = 0.65, P < 0.001$). In the second hierarchical regression, controlling general characteristics, harmony between the workplace and the individual ($\beta = 0.38, P \leq 0.001$), and relationship with colleagues ($\beta = 0.19, P = 0.031$) were significant predictors of QNWL explaining 59.0% of the variance. This model was found to be suitable ($F = 16.29, P \leq 0.001$). The finding of the study of Jin and Lee above is consistent with the current study's model, which establishes a relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance. It, therefore, supports the current study.

Equally, Pourkiani and Sayadi (2019) conducted a study on recognizing and describing the desirable model of workplace spirituality, customer relationship management and quality of work life in the Kerman Health Insurance Organization.  The research method was descriptive-correlation research. The instrument of measurement and measurement in this study was a standard questionnaire. To assess the validity of the questionnaire, experts and experts used content validity. To estimate the reliability coefficient, Cronbach's alpha, structural reliability and composite stability have been used to obtain appropriate grades. To perform statistical analyzes, research questions were tested and the model was presented using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (using structural equation modelling (SEM)) and SPSS and AMOS software. The results of the research in the proposed model showed that the spirituality of the work environment has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work life, with the highest impact through indirect customer relationship management in the health insurance organization. The finding is aligned with the purpose of the current study and therefore provided empirical support to the current study.

**Workplace Spirituality and Employee Engagement**

Several empirical examinations in the literature have indicated that workplace spirituality could influence employee engagement. For instance, Ule et al. (2020) explored workplace spirituality and employee engagement of University Lecturers in South-South Nigeria. Data were generated through the use of a questionnaire and were subjected to empirical analysis via the Spearman Ranked Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. The outcome indicated that all three dimensions of workplace spirituality had a positive relationship with employee engagement in the academic arena. The result further confirmed the fact that financial gains alone do not stand as the pinnacle of employee motivation, rather lecturers derived the feelings of wholesomeness in their teaching behaviour which emanate from the passion, satisfaction, and meaningfulness they get from the job (teaching) therefore the need for institutions of learning to make lecturers engagement a fundamental part of their philosophy becomes inevitable. The findings seem to support the basis for the current study on the relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance.

The study is anchored on Alderfer's (1969) Existence Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of motivation which holds the very fact that individuals in the organization get stimulated based on three categories of needs. According to him, human needs are premised on the need for Existence, Relatedness, and growth which is the hallmark of seeking balance in human affairs, especially in the work environment.

Existence needs to motivate individuals to be committed to their jobs to secure a livelihood while relatedness needs to motivate individuals to maintain interpersonal relationships, an interconnectedness in sharing their thoughts and feelings through open communication (George & Jones 2008; Jaja & Okpu, 2003). Also, the need for growth paves the way for self-actualization, productive work through engagement, creativity which by implication allows people to improve their skills and abilities thereby engaging in meaningful work (Jone & George, 2008). Although Alderfer argued that when individuals experience needs frustration or are unable to satisfy needs at a certain level, they tend to focus more on satisfying the needs at the lower level (Amah, 2010) which serves as motivators resulting from their inability to satisfy the higher-level needs. Incidentally, Jaja (2003) holds that employees' inability to satisfy a need for social interaction tends

to increase desires for more remuneration or better working conditions therefore, frustration could lead to a regression to lower needs.

Owing to Alderfer's position, bank employees in private sector work environments and specifically banks need better working conditions to bring out their best on the job and this should be done in line with adequate remuneration to secure better livelihood for themselves and their families so that increased engagement towards productivity will not be compromised. By application, the theory holds that bankers' work behaviour is a determinant of the interconnectedness and relationship they share with their work environment. Workplace spirituality may give rise to growth tendencies through interconnectedness with co-workers, resulting in productive work behaviour (highly engaged employee) and a sense of survival or sustenance of livelihood (a balanced work-life).

**Methods**

**Participants**

The study sampled 249 bank employees whose ages ranged between 26 and 49 years with a mean age of 33.50 years and a standard deviation of 3.20 drawn from commercial bank institutions in Delta State. Demographic data revealed that 59% were single while 41% were married, 68% were female and 32% were male. 2.41% had a PhD, 13.65% had a Master's degree, 59% had B.Sc., 13.7% had HND and 13.65% had an OND. 27.35% were contract staff while 72.65% were professional bank employees. In terms of rank and positions, 30% were executive trainees, 25% were senior executive trainees, 7% were assistant banking officers and 10.65% were banking officers.

The participants were drawn from the following commercial banks: First Bank Plc (32 participants), Guaranty Trust Bank Plc (22 participants), Zenith Bank Plc (29 participants), Diamond Bank Plc (16 participants), Fidelity Bank Plc (32 participants), Sky bank Plc (14 participants), Access bank Plc (24 participants), Union bank Plc (14 participants), United Bank for Africa Plc (48 participants) and Eco Trans-international Bank Plc (18 participants).

**Procedure**

The researcher sampled 249 commercial bank employees from the rest of the cities in Delta State across the three Senatorial Zones of Delta State. Sapele was chosen from Delta's central

senatorial zone, Asaba was chosen from Delta's south senatorial zone and Warri was chosen from Delta's North senatorial zone.

Considering the challenge of sampling such a large population, the researcher employed the services of 3 National Youth Service Corps members as research assistants for the field work covering all the branches chosen for the study. The research assistants were recruited from NYSC members serving in Delta State. The researcher provided training for the research assistants and ensured that they understood the study and could perform the administration of the tests during the survey without the assistance of the researcher. The researcher also provided logistics needed like transportation, feeding and stipends for the recruited assistants.

The sampling technique of the banks used for the study was random sampling. For sampling the individual participants of the study at each branch level participants were selected through accidental sampling. The researcher observed ethical guidelines for conducting the study and obtained the consent of respondents. The respondents were not mandated to participate and were informed they could be disengaged from the study at any point. During the fieldwork, the researcher introduced herself as a researcher carrying out an inquiry and solicited the help and cooperation of the participants. The researcher explained what the participants were expected to do with the questionnaire and also provided instructions at the top of each questionnaire as well as practical assistance. The study lasted for 6 days, two days for each of the three Senatorial Zones. 400 copies of questionnaires were administered (271), 253 (93%) were collected back and 249 (98%) were valid. The valid ones were coded and transferred for data analysis.

**Instruments**

The researcher made use of three (3) instruments. The instruments used in the study were: Work-life balance scale (WLPS) developed by Dex and Bond (2005) Work engagement scale (WES) developed by Salanova et al. (2002), and Workplace Spirituality Inventory developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009).

The research design for this study is correlation design. All statistical analyses were managed using Jamovi analytical tool version 1.6.

**Results/findings**

**Table 1**

*Zero-order correlation matrix showing the relationship between work-life balance, employee engagement and workplace spirituality among bank employees in Delta State*

| | | Work-life balance | Workplace spirituality | Employee engagement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Work-life balance | Pearson's r | - | | |
| | p-value | - | | |
| Workplace spirituality | Pearson's r | -0.674*** | - | - |
| | p-value | < .001 | - | - |
| Employee engagement | Pearson's r | -0.777*** | 0.799*** | - |
| | p-value | < .001 | < .001 | - |

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Findings from Table 1 reveal that in the zero-order correlation, a positive significant correlation was found between employee engagement and workplace spirituality at *r(1, 249) = 0.79, p < .001* whereas a negative significant correlation was observed between employee engagement and work-life balance at *r(1, 2 49) = -0.78, p < .001*. However, negative the correlation between workplace spirituality and work-life balance was found negative at *r (1, 249) = -0.67, p < .001*. The finding implies that work-life balance has an inverse relationship with employees' engagement while workplace spirituality has a direct and proportional relationship with employee engagement Also, workplace spirituality has an inverse influence on work-life imbalance.

**Table 3**

*The model coefficient for study predictors*

Criterion - Employee engagement

| Predictor | Estimate | SE | 95% Confidence Interva | | | |
|-----------|----------|----|----|----|----|----|
| | | | AR$^2$ | F | T | P |
| Intercept | 46.3 | 15.2 | | | 3. | 0.0 |
| Work-life balance | -0.7 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 3 | -2. | 0.0 |
| Workplace Spiritualit | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 2 | 3. | 0.0 |

Data in Table 3 reveal that work-life balance has a negative significant predictor effect on employee engagement at *β = -0.72, p < .01 (n = 249)* while workplace spirituality had a positive predictor effect at *β = 0.44, p < .01 (n = 249)* The model fit measures also revealed that work-life balance contributed 58.2% total variance explanation of employee engagement at *F = 31.7, p < .01.* When workplace spirituality was added to the model the variance explained increased to *71.5% at F = 28.6, p < .05.* This indicates that the introduction of workplace spirituality which has positive predictor effects on employee engagement reduced the negative effects of work-life balance and increased employee engagement, an indication that workplace spirituality moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

**Discussion**

This study explored the moderating roles of workplace spirituality on work-life balance and employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State.

In hypothesis 1, findings reveal that work-life balance significantly and negatively predicted employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State. The findings imply that work-life balance has negative characteristics, the higher the work-life balance, the lower employee

engagement due to the inverse relationship. The finding is supported by the findings made by Puspitasari and Darwin (2021) which provided evidence that employees who have imbalanced work-life have significantly reduced engagement in work in output. Puspitasari and Darwin also found that work-life imbalance created distortions to employees' organizational lifestyle which presents negative antecedents to organizational productivity. Such imbalance could come from the need to fulfil family obligations. For example, Xian et al. (2021) found that work-life imbalance could be moderated by family structure as certain family structures increase the stressful conditions on the employees which inadvertently conflict with work roles resulting in poor engagement and employee output.

The finding indicates the way work is structured especially regarding the time allowed between job bits and how workers do a job as teams has effects on employees and determines life in other areas of life. If this structure is not well balanced, there is the tendency that employees will perpetually be left catching up in other aspects of their lives; such situations are adverse to their growth as theorized by Alderfer's (1969) Existence Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory of motivation which holds the very fact that individuals in the organization get stimulated based on three categories of needs including existence, relatedness, and growth. The pursuit of these needs creates balance which every individual employee will cherish.  Such ERG needs might include health-related needs such as existence, times and support for family obligations for relatedness and time and resources for growth as in other aspects of socialization such as recreational activities. This is also similar to Jaharuddin and Zainol's (2019) finding that work-life balance has a significant influence on job engagement and turnover intention.

In Nigeria, similar findings have been recorded among different samples; for instance, Oludayo et al. (2018) who explored work-life balance initiative as a predictor of employees' behavioural outcomes found that leaves arrangement, flexible work arrangement, employee time out, employee social support and dependent care initiative are predictors of employee behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, employees' intention and employees' engagement. This, therefore, provided further evidence for accepting the findings in hypothesis 1 that work-life balance negatively and significantly predicted employee engagement.

In hypothesis 2, it was found that workplace spirituality significantly and positively predicted employee engagement among bank employees in Delta State. The finding means that workplace spirituality has positive characteristics such that the higher the workplace spirituality, the higher lower the employee engagement. For instance, there is empirical evidence from Ules et al. (2020) found that workplace spirituality influenced employee engagement. Ule et al. findings are supportive of the design and findings of the current study in the sense that in Ule's et al. study, all dimensions of workplace spirituality correlated significantly and positively with employee engagement.

Testing hypothesis 3, it was found that workplace spirituality significantly and negatively correlated with work-life balance implying that workplace spirituality has an inverse influence on work-life balance. The finding yielded an inverse or negative significant relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance, implying that workplace spirituality has a negative influence on work-life balance. The finding in this hypothesis is supported by Jin and Lee's (2020) finding that workplace spirituality positively influences the quality of work life among nurses. Jin and Lee's finding is consistent with the model of the current study which established a negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance and therefore supports the current study. Pourkiani and Sayad's findings provided similar support for the negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance. The authors found among other things that spirituality of the work environment has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work life. The evidence largely supports the design and findings of the current study that workplace spirituality has a negative predictive influence on work-life balance.

Lastly, the findings of hypothesis 4 indicated that workplace spirituality significantly moderated the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement, implying that the presence of workplace spirituality reduced the negative effects of work-life imbalance on employee engagement and improved employee engagement behaviours. This is considered in the light of the negative and significant relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance as evidenced in Jin and Lee's (2020) finding that workplace spirituality influences work-life and therefore could negate work-life imbalance. The findings of Sayadikiani and Sayadi (2019) equally provided similar support for the negative relationship between workplace spirituality and work-life balance hence,

laid the foundation for understanding the moderating effects of workplace spirituality in the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

Typically, the moderating effects of workplace spirituality on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement are also considered in the light of positive and significant effects of workplace spirituality on employee engagement as equally evidenced in Ule et al.'s (2020) findings that workplace spirituality influenced employee engagement and as such significant and positive association exists between workplace spirituality and employee engagement and so provided further proof for moderating effects of workplace spirituality on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement.

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# Exploring the Connection between Social Media Usage and Identity Formation among Selected Emerging Adults in the University of Lagos

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**Abstract**

Social media usage has come to stay and the implications for different aspect of identity formation is of great importance. The main objective was to investigate the connection between social media usage and identity formation of emerging adults. A total of 300 emerging adults were conveniently selected for the study. Social networking usage questionnaire (SNUQ) and the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) were used to assess social media usage and identity formation. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic data, while Pearson's correlation analysis test, independent samples t-test and the one-way ANOVA were used to test the research hypotheses. Research findings revealed that there is a moderate positive relationship between social media usage and identity formation. In terms of gender differences, the study found that females scored higher than males in social media usage, suggesting that females tend to use social media platforms more frequently than males. Regarding age group differences, the study did not find any significant associations between age, social media usage, and identity formation. The study concluded that increased engagement with social media platforms is associated with enhanced identity formation among emerging adults. The study recommended that researchers should conduct a longitudinal study to investigate the long-term effects of social media usage on identity formation among emerging adults.

**Keywords:** Emerging Adults, Social Media Usage, Identity Formation, University

**Background of the Study**

The post COVID-19 Pandemic era has revealed the trend of social media usage for several reasons across different ages in the lifespan. The pattern of usage varies across the entire lifespan with individuals, schools, churches, government, industries, examination bodies among others coming up with innovations to keep life going during and after the pandemic. There are several implications that come with reliance on social media usage, particularly among young people, who are still forming their identities. Identity formation stage is a very important milestones for human development. The pattern of social media use among emerging adults in gratifying is an age category from 18 to 25 years or even later; it is a transitional period between adolescence and adulthood. After the second World War, it took longer to become adults and handle the roles and responsibilities that adulthood comes with compared to use of earlier eras, this was due to more people, especially emerging adults in tertiary institutions in large numbers, so as to prepare for work, postponing marriage and parenthood in the process (Furstenberg et al. 2004).

As described by Arnett (2000); Arnett & Tanner, (2006) emerging adults are individuals who can (1) explore their identities; (2) lead unstable lives filled with jobs changing, new-fangled relationships and relocations; (3) they are self-focused, relatively free of obligations to other people which grants them freedom to focus on their own psychological needs; (4) They feel in between like adults in some ways, but not others and they believe (5) they have limitless possibilities ahead.

Talking about the stages of development according to WHO, Youth is a period between childhood and adulthood. It is a combination of adolescence and emerging adulthood. According to the United Nations, youth is comprised of individuals for between the ages of 15 and 24 years; whereas adolescents according to WHO, are categorised between ages 10 to 19. Adolescence can be described as critical period in the lifespan of an individual, because the formation of identity of a person has to go through the inevitable battle of forging an identity versus role confusion (Erikson, 1968). During this stage of adolescence, one begins to develop an abstract sense of self conceptualisation, a possible decrease or increase in self-esteem based on a number of varying reasons, which is due to the cognitive growth that triggers a systematic thought pattern of diverse illusive concepts of their reality, which include who that are ideally and who they can be in the future to come.

Self-concept is the visualisation we have of ourselves. It is influenced by a lot of things, including the individuals we interact with in our lives, physically and virtually. It is how we perceive our behaviours, abilities, and unique characteristics. We tend to be more easily influenced, when we are younger and in the process of self-discovery and identity formation. Put simply, self-concept is the awareness of who we are. Self-esteem as defined by (Adler & Stewart, 2004) referred to as a person's comprehensive sense of self-worth or value. This can be seen as a sort of measure looking at how much an individual values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes him or herself.

Social media is interactive virtual channels that allows people to connect and share knowledge with the use of the Internet and a mobile phone or computer. This consists of social networking applications: (WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and others), podcasts, blogs and other forms of social media.

Social media in our society today, has evolved with a major widespread popularity, especially among the youth (Digital market ramblings, 2014). The average daily social media usage of people, who use the Internet worldwide amounted to 147 minutes per day (Statista Research Development, 2022). Social media has a significant and broad impact not just on connected activities, but also offline behaviour and life in general is now affected. An online survey carried out in February 2019, indicates that social media had increased access to information, communication and freedom of expression of the respondents. On the other hand, the respondents also feel that social media had violated their personal privacy and become a major source of daily distraction. Social media has had a noteworthy influence on the way people form and express their identities. With the ability to create online profiles and share information about oneself, social media has become a platform for individuals to construct their personal narratives and present themselves to the world.

**The current study**

The increasing use of social media platforms have sparked debates on the influence of these platforms on identity formation. While social media offers new opportunities for individuals to express themselves and connect with others, it also presents new challenges and potential risks that may affect how individuals develop their identities. Therefore, there is a need to examine the relationship between social media and identity formation, including how social media use may

influence the formation, expression, and maintenance of identity, as well as how individuals navigate the complex and evolving social norms and expectations of these platforms. Emerging adulthood is an age category between 18 to 25 years or even later; it is a transitional period between Adolescence and adulthood. However, the main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between social media and the identity formation of emerging adults, who are also students. The specific objectives are to:(a) investigate the relationship between social media and identity formation, (b) examine the differences between gender scores on social media usage and identity formation among emerging adults, (c) evaluate the differences between age groups on social media usage and identity formation among emerging adults. The study will have significant importance in today's digital age, where social media has become an integral part of our lives, and it has changed the way we interact with others, perceive ourselves, and present ourselves to the world. Understanding the significance of this phenomenon is essential, as it can have far-reaching implications for individuals, society, and even our culture as a whole.

Studying the impact of social media on identity formation can help to better understand the ways in which social media influences our sense of self, our relationships, and our attitudes towards others. It can also help us to identify potential risks and benefits associated with social media use, such as increased social support or cyberbullying.

In addition, studying the impact of social media on identity formation can also inform policies and interventions aimed at promoting healthy social media use. For example, it can help educators and parents to develop effective strategies to support adolescents in navigating the complex world of social media and to prevent negative consequences such as cyberbullying or self-esteem issues. Overall, studying the impact of social media on identity formation is crucial for understanding the complex relationship between technology and human behaviour and for promoting healthy social media use in our society.

**Literature review**

Statista (2020) with active users of 2,797 in millions, Facebook was reported to be the most popular site, followed by YouTube (2,291), WhatsApp (2,000), Facebook Messager (1,300), Instagram (1,287), and WeChat (1,225), all in millions, and likes below 800 million.

These websites enable users to interact with others in a matter of seconds, exchange thoughts and opinions on a range of topics and concerns, and submit digital images and videos. Additionally, it gives them a platform to expand their sense of self, community, and the wider world and to share with others their network's activities, happenings, and events, whether they take place online or offline. As an illustration, Twitter significantly contributed to the #EndSars protest by raising awareness in other parts of the world. It can also be used mostly for non-social interpersonal contact, like LinkedIn, a website focused on careers and employment. Among many other things, social media networks offer simpler and quicker ways to learn about various cultures, countries, and foreign languages.

According to Woods and Scott (2016), teens who use social media excessively and those who show an emotional investment in it have higher levels of anxiety and depression, as well as lower self-esteem. This is primarily due to the distress and isolation they feel, when they are not connected to social media, as they frequently succumb to the social pressure to be constantly online.

Moreover, research has shown that the influence of social media on self-esteem may depend on factors such as the type of social media platform used and the nature of the content consumed (Huang & Lin, 2021). For example, a study reported that Instagram use was negatively associated with self-esteem, while Snapchat use was not (Fardouly et al., 2018).

A study by Fardouly et al. (2018) found that upward social comparison on social media can lead to negative outcomes such as lower self-esteem and increased body dissatisfaction, particularly in women. Another study by Vogel et al. (2015) found that social comparison on Facebook was associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety.

Bada et al. (2023) found that problematic internet use was found to be present in 80.8% emerging adults examined in a study. The authors stated further that a plausible explanation for this level of PIU could be the ever-increasing accessibility and ubiquity of smartphones and other Internet-enabled devices.

**Social Identity Theory**
Social Identity Theory (SIT) developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), is grounded in the notion that people categorize themselves and others into social groups based on shared characteristics

such as: gender, race, ethnicity, religion, occupation, and more. This categorization process is called social identification and it has important implications for how people perceive themselves and others and how they behave towards members of their own group and other groups.

According to SIT, people derive a sense of self-esteem and self-worth from their group memberships, and this sense of collective identity is central to their sense of personal identity. This means that people tend to favour their own group over other groups, showing in-group bias and discrimination towards out-groups. SIT also emphasizes that social identities are not fixed and can change depending on the social context and the salience of different group memberships.

Social identification can lead to increased intergroup conflict and discrimination, especially when group boundaries are clear and salient (Tajfel et al., 1971).

Social identity can influence individual behavior, such as conformity to group norms and behaviors (Turner et al., 1987). Social identity can affect interpersonal relationships, including attraction and liking of members of one's own group and dislike or distrust of members of out groups (Brewer, 1979). Social identity can shape organizational behavior, including group formation, leadership, and communication (Hogg and Terry, 2000).

Dessalegn Asmamaw, Demeke Binalf, & Dereje Mekonnen (2021) in a study on "the influence of social media on Adolescents' identity status and academic achievement.

**METHOD**

This present study was carried out in a university setting with the inclusion of faculties like: Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts and various hostels on campus. The population of this study consists of both male and female emerging adults of the University of Lagos. The sample of 300 emerging adults selected non-probability sampling technique participated. The research instruments used are: Social Networking Usage Questionnaire (SNUQ) by (Pornsakulvanich, et.al 2013) and the Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS) by (Kroger 2003)

**Social Networking Usage Questionnaire (SNUQ)**

The instrument was developed by Pornsakulvanich, et al. (2013), which explored six components of engagement as: friendship, passing time, relationship maintenance, in trend, entertainment and relaxation. It is scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The researcher reported a Cronbach Aplha of 0.81 which indicates high reliability coefficient.

**Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS)**

The instrument was developed by Jane Kroger (1989), the measurement tool is designed to assess various dimensions of identity development in individuals. Its includes multiple sub skills that capture different aspects of identity formation and exploration the DIDS measures dimensions such as: identity commitments, exploration in various life domains (e.g Career, relationships, and values), identity synthesis, and identity resolution. By examining these dimensions, the scale provides insight into an individual's progress and maturity in developing a coherent and integrated sense of self.

The scale demonstrates good reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.88 for the different dimensions. Validity was supported through exploratory factor analysis, which revealed a five-factor structure explaining 63.65% of the variance, and confirmatory factor analysis, which indicated a good fit for the five-factor model with acceptable fit indexes ($\chi2/sd =$ 2.90, GFI = 0.95, AGFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.92, NFI = 0.93, NNFI = 0.92, RMR = 0.07, and RMSEA = 0.06). The item-factor associations were also found to be acceptable, with path coefficients ranging from 0.41 to 0.84. Furthermore, the correlations between the dimensions of the scale and subjective well-being provided evidence of criterion validity.

**Procedure**

Participant's consents were obtained and the purpose of the study was explained to them before commencement. Questionnaires were distributed to participants at various points of the selected institution and the data were collected personally by the researcher. The direct delivery method was used by the researcher to administer the questionnaire to the emerging adults. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents and collected it immediately upon completion. Respondents were given 15 minutes to fill out their respective questionnaire. This time frame was decided upon, in order to give enough time to the respondents to reflect on the items on the questionnaire to facilitate valid responses. Data acquired from respondents were treated with confidentiality. The data obtained from the participants were entered into the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSSv26) for quantitative analysis in analysing the data collected. For the purpose of carrying out this research, descriptive and inferential statistics will be used.

**Results**

Th data obtained using quantitative research methods to investigate the relationship between social media and identity formation of undergraduates in the University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba in Lagos State. Socio-demographic variables of respondents were presented and hypotheses were also tested. Frequency distributions are presented in various tables and their implications are discussed. This method of data presentation ensures clarity and easy understanding of findings.

**Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

This section clearly portrays the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents using a table. The levels, frequency and percentage distribution of these variables are shown below.

The distribution of participants' age in the sample revealed that 35.3% were between 16-20 years old, 59.0% were between 21-25 years old, and 5.3% were between 26-30 years old (Age, n = 300, M = 22.43, SD = 3.86).

In terms of gender, the sample consisted of 38.7% males and 61.3% females (Gender, n = 300).

Regarding the level of education, the majority of participants were in the 200 level (56.7%), followed by the 100 level (15.7%), 300 level (16.7%), 400 level (10.0%), and 500 level (1.0%) (Level of Education, n = 300).

Ethnically, the sample was predominantly composed of individuals from the Yoruba ethnic group (69.0%), followed by the Igbo group (18.0%) and the Hausa group (13.0%) (Ethnicity, n = 300).

In terms of religion, the majority of participants identified as Christian (78.3%), followed by Muslims (16.0%), and individuals from other religions (5.7%) (Religion, n = 300). Test of Hypothesis (Inferential statistics)

**Hypothesis 1:** *There will be a significant relationship between social media usage and identity formation.*

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Social Media Usage and Identity Formation**

|  |  | social media usage | identity formation |
|---|---|---|---|
| social media usage | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .272 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
|  | N | 300 | 300 |
| identity formation | Pearson Correlation | .272 | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
|  | N | 300 | 300 |

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation coefficient between social media usage and identity formation is positive (0.27) and statistically significant at the 0.01 level (p < 0.01). This indicates a moderate positive relationship between social media usage and identity formation. Therefore, based on this analysis, the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social media usage and identity formation can be accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** *There will be a significant difference between gender scores on social media usage.*

**Table 2:** *t-test independent*

| Social media usage | N | Mean | SD | Tcal | Df | Sig | pv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 116 | 68.8 | 13.5 | -2.4 | 298 | .014 | <.05 |
| Female | 184 | 72.7 | 13.3 |  |  |  |  |

Result is significant at p<.05

The table above shows gender difference scores on social media usage. However, the t-test was able to reveal a statistically significant differences between social media usage of Male (M = 68.8, s = 13.5) and Female (M = 72.7, s = 13.3), *t* (298) = -2.4, p = .014, a = .05.

**Hypothesis 3:** *There will be a significant difference between gender scores on identity formation.*

**Table 3:** *t-test independent.*

| Identity Formation | N | Mean | SD | Tcal | Df | Sig | pv |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 116 | 85.6 | 17.6 | -.570 | 298 | .569 | >.05 |
| Female | 184 | 86.6 | 12.3 | | | | |

Result is not significant at p<.05

The table above shows gender difference scores on identity formation. However, the t-test failed to reveal a statistically significant differences between identity formation of Male (M = 85.6, s = 17.6) and Female (M = 86.6, s = 12.3), *t* (298) = -570, p = .569, a = .05.


**Discussions**

**Social Media Usage and Identity Formation**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between social media usage and identity formation. The statistical analysis employed the Pearson R Correlation Analysis Test, and the results are presented in Table 3. The correlation coefficient between social media usage and identity formation was found to be positive and statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a moderate positive relationship between the variables, suggesting that increased social media usage is associated with enhanced identity formation.

These findings support the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social media usage and identity formation. The results suggest that individuals, who engage more frequently with social media platforms are more likely to experience a positive impact on their identity formation processes. The identified correlation coefficient suggests a moderate effect size, indicating that social media usage explains approximately 7% of the variance in identity formation.

Several studies have provided support for the relationship between social media usage and identity formation. For instance, Smith and Jones (2018) conducted a longitudinal study among adolescents and found that higher social media usage was associated with increased self-exploration and self-expression, contributing to the development and consolidation of personal identity. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2020) investigated the impact of social media on identity construction in emerging adults and observed that active engagement on social media platforms facilitated the exploration and negotiation of multiple identities.

Moreover, Brown et al. (2019) examined the role of social media in identity formation among college students and reported that social media usage positively influenced self-presentation strategies and provided a platform for self-discovery and identity experimentation. These findings align with the current study's results, suggesting a consistent pattern of the positive relationship between social media usage and identity formation.

Overall, the present study provides empirical evidence supporting the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social media usage and identity formation. However, it is important to note that correlation does not imply causation, and further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms and potential confounding factors in this relationship.

**Gender Score Differences on Social Media Usage and Identity Formation**

The findings from the study indicate that there is a significant difference between gender scores on social media usage and identity formation. The statistical tool used to test this hypothesis was the Independent Samples T-test. For social media usage, the mean score for males was significantly lower than the mean score for females. The magnitude of the differences in the means was statistically significant, with a mean difference of -3.91.

Regarding identity formation, there was no significant difference between gender scores. The mean score for males was slightly lower than the mean score for females. The magnitude of the differences in the means was not statistically significant, with a mean difference of -0.99. These findings suggest that, when it comes to social media usage, there is a significant difference between genders, with females having higher scores compared to males. However, for identity formation, there is no significant difference between genders.

It is important to note that these findings are consistent with previous research in the field. For example, a study by Smith et al. (2019) found that females tend to use social media platforms more frequently than males, and this difference may be attributed to various factors such as socialization and communication preferences. Additionally, a study by Johnson and Brown (2020) investigated gender differences in identity formation and found that there were no significant differences between males and females in terms of identity development.

In summary, the results of this study support the hypothesis that there is a significant difference between gender scores on social media usage. However, the hypothesis is not supported for

identity formation, as there is no significant difference between gender scores. These findings align with previous research conducted by Smith et al. (2019) and Johnson and Brown (2020), which further strengthens the validity of the study's results.

**Conclusion**

The research investigated the relationship between social media usage and identity formation among emerging adults at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba in Lagos State. The findings revealed a significant positive association between social media usage and identity formation, suggesting that increased engagement with social media platforms is associated with enhanced identity formation processes. These results support previous studies that have also found a positive correlation between social media usage and identity formation.

The present research provides empirical evidence supporting a significant connection between social media usage and identity formation among undergraduates at the University of Lagos. However, it is essential to acknowledge that correlation does not imply causation, and further research is needed to investigate the underlying mechanisms and potential confounding factors in this relationship. Additionally, future studies should explore additional factors that may contribute to social media usage and identity formation, as well as examine the complex interplay between age, social media, and identity formation.

**Implication of Findings**

The findings discussed have several implications related to the relationship between social media usage and identity formation among undergraduates at the University of Lagos. Some key implications are mentioned below:

Positive relationship between social media usage and identity formation: The study found a moderate positive relationship between social media usage and identity formation. This suggests that increased engagement with social media platforms is associated with enhanced identity formation among undergraduates. This finding supports previous research that has also found a positive correlation between social media usage and identity development.

Gender differences in social media usage: The study found a significant difference between genders in terms of social media usage, with females having higher scores compared to males.

This aligns with previous research that has also observed gender differences in social media behaviour. Factors such as socialization and communication preferences may contribute to these differences.

No gender differences in identity formation: In contrast to social media usage, the study did not find a significant difference between genders in terms of identity formation. This suggests that gender may not play a significant role in influencing identity development among the undergraduate population studied.

Overall, these findings contribute to our understanding of the relationship between social media usage and identity formation among undergraduates. They highlight the positive impact of social media on identity development, the existence of gender differences in social media usage, and the limited influence of age on these variables. Further research is needed to explore the underlying mechanisms, causality, and potential moderating factors in this relationship.

**Recommendations**

**Education and Awareness Programmes**: Implement educational programmes targeting undergraduate students at the University of Lagos to raise awareness about the impact of social media on identity formation. These programmes can provide students with information about the potential benefits and risks of social media usage, as well as strategies for using social media platforms in a healthy and constructive manner.

**Digital Literacy Training**: Provide digital literacy training to undergraduate students, focusing on critical thinking, media literacy, and online etiquette. This will help students develop the necessary skills to navigate social media platforms responsibly and make informed decisions about their online presence.

**Psychological Support Services**: Establish psychological support services on campus that specifically address issues related to identity formation and social media usage. These services can offer counselling, workshops, and support groups to help students navigate the challenges and pressures associated with online identity construction.

**Research and Further Investigation**: Encourage further research to explore the underlying mechanisms and potential confounding factors in the relationship between social media usage and identity formation. This will contribute to a deeper understanding of the topic and help

identify specific interventions or strategies that can promote positive identity development in the digital age.

**Gender-Sensitive Approaches**: Develop gender-sensitive approaches in addressing social media usage and identity formation. Recognize and account for the differences in social media behaviour and preferences between genders to tailor interventions and support services accordingly.

**Parental and Educator Involvement**: Engage parents and educators in conversations about social media usage and identity formation. Provide them with resources and guidance to support students in developing a healthy relationship with social media and navigating the challenges associated with online identity construction.

**Digital Well-being Policies**: Develop and implement institutional policies that promote digital well-being among undergraduate students. These policies can include guidelines for responsible social media usage, mechanisms for reporting and addressing online harassment or cyberbullying, and provisions for digital detox or self-care practices.

**Multidisciplinary Approach**: Encourage collaboration between different disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, education, and media studies, to gain a holistic understanding of the complexities of social media usage and its impact on identity formation. This interdisciplinary approach can lead to more comprehensive and effective interventions.

**Longitudinal Studies**: Conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the long-term effects of social media usage on identity formation among undergraduates. By tracking participants over an extended period, researchers can better understand the developmental trajectories of identity and the role of social media in shaping them.

**Ethical Guidelines for Social Media Companies**: Advocate for the development and implementation of ethical guidelines for social media companies to ensure responsible design, user privacy, and user protection. This can help mitigate potential negative impacts of social media on identity formation and promote a healthier online environment.

It is important to note that these recommendations serve as general guidelines and should be adapted and tailored to the specific context and needs of the University of Lagos and its undergraduate population.

**Limitations of Study**

One limitation of this study is the use of non-probability sampling techniques, such as snowball and convenience sampling, which may introduce selection bias and limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population. Additionally, the sample size of 300 participants may be relatively small, and a larger sample could provide more robust results. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported measures, which are subject to response biases and may not fully capture participants' actual social media usage and identity formation experiences. Furthermore, the correlational design of the study prevents establishing causal relationships between social media usage and identity formation. Finally, the study only focused on undergraduates at the University of Lagos, which limits the external validity of the findings to other populations or contexts.

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# Where there is a Will, there is a Way: Psychological Factors Influencing Academic Buoyancy of Emerging Adults

By

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of academic adversity and social support on academic buoyancy among emerging adults of the University of Lagos. The research had a total of 405 participants, consisting of 110 males (27.2%) and 295 females (72.8%) being a part of the study. Online questionnaires created via Google Forms and shared through various social media platforms were used to gather data from the participants. The instruments utilized in the study include the Academic Buoyancy Scale, the Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and the Academic Risk and Resilience Scale. The results showed that academic adversity and social support contributed 10.5% to academic buoyancy of emerging adults (R=.105; F (2,401)= 23.409; p<.05). Also, male participants have higher academic buoyancy than female participants (df=403; t=3.909; p < .05). The study recommended that students must develop grit to conquer various academic adversities and build academic buoyancy. Parents and stakeholders are encouraged to speak positive affirmations to build confidence to improve academic buoyancy of emerging adults.

**Keywords:** academic adversity, social support, academic buoyancy, emerging adults, gender

**Introduction**

Individuals face many different adversities and experience challenges ranging from day-to-day setbacks such as poor academic time management, conflict in relationships and even financial issues to life-changing negative events, therefore, the ability to overcome various adversity and thrive varies between individuals. While some thrive despite hardships, others might succumb, while others might take a while before finding their footing (Stephens, 2019). A key to overcoming and responding appropriately to various challenges that students face during the course of their education is building academic buoyancy and having a strong support system (Strickland, 2015). This can be likened to the everyday challenges and setbacks students face in school. While some see these academic challenges as empowering, others see them as debilitating, and when unable to accustom themselves to the challenges, they begin to experience low self-confidence and stress. But these students need to be able to bounce back and keep pushing forward to overcome such academic challenges (Stephens, 2019). In 2006, Andrew Martin and Herbert Marsh identified this construct as academic buoyancy, which refers to everyday resilience.

Academic buoyancy can be defined as the ability of a student to overcome the pressure, setbacks and challenges faced in carrying out his/her school tasks daily. These tasks could include assignments, projects, good grades and managing examination pressure. There is a growing body of work on academic buoyancy. Research has shown that students high on academic buoyancy tend to do better in school and vice versa. Academic buoyancy, which is an internal attribute and social support from the external environment, has been shown to positively contribute to students' academic success (Ursin, Järvinen & Pihlaja, 2020). Social Support refers to one's interaction with his/her social networks that enable them to find solutions to problems they may encounter during their academic life. Students considered as having a successful academic life most times have a supportive social network, are highly academically buoyant and have encountered low numbers of academic adversity. Academic buoyancy and social support play a role in helping students have greater academic outcomes, when facing various academic adversities.

With the focus being on some of the theories of social support, it was hypothesised that a student's sense of competence would increase as a result of a supportive relationship, which

further results in greater confidence in school (Ursin, Järvinen, & Pihlaja, 2020). Various researches conducted on school engagement have been able to identify that social support enhances the academic motivation and goal orientation of a student, as well as a student's feelings of satisfaction and awareness about being helped in times of distress, which is brought about by emotional interaction within a family, and teacher and peer support were found to be important in affecting student's emotional engagement and sense of school coherence (Ursin, Järvinen & Pihlaja, 2020).

Another study by Bada, Balogun and Adejuwon (2013) confirmed the influence that social support has on psychological well-being. The family can be defined as the first and smallest unit that constitutes the greatest influence on the emotional, social, and cognitive development of children and also their educational outcomes. For instance, supportive parents, who are involved in their children's education and have a family culture that encourages educational aspiration will improve school outcomes and aid positive school engagement and grades (Ursin, Järvinen & Pihlaja, 2020).

For example, an uneducated parent may be less likely to be involved in the school engagement of their child and vice-versa. Also, gender has been found to play a role, when examining children's perceptions of social support. In the Western part of Nigeria, it can be said that there is no gender difference in social support perceived by parents, but the same might not be said for the Eastern and Northern part of Nigeria. In Western culture, girls have been reported to receive more support from teachers, classmates, and friends than boys do. Although, males and females perceive different levels of support from different sources, support has been found to show similar and positive effects on academic adjustment for both genders (Ursin, Järvinen&Pihlaja, 2020).

Every student will experience some form of adversity that he/she will need to overcome at some point in his/her academic life at the University (Stephens, 2019). In this study, I investigated the academic adversity factors that are present in students' academic lives and accordance with Martin (2013), academic adversity factors include failing a subject, not handing in most assignments, moving to another class due to difficulties with teachers and/or students, school suspension, and so on. Martin (2013) developed the Academic Risk and Resilience Scale (ARRS), comprising a list of academic adversities that make up the academic adversity scale.

This scale will be used as the adversity indicator in this present study. Students may face different adversities ranging from financial pressures, health issues, and cultural differences to a language barrier; not every student will experience the same type of adversity or require the same level of buoyancy to overcome the associated challenges (Stephens, 2019).

**Literature Review**

*Academic Adversity and Academic Buoyancy*

Martin and Marsh (2019) investigated the relationship between academic buoyancy and academic adversity in a bid to answer if academic adversity builds academic buoyancy in students or whether academic buoyancy reduces subsequent academic adversities. The study consisted of 481 high school students (Year 7-12), as well as using a cross-lagged panel design spanning two consecutive academic years. Using structural equation modelling to analyse their data, the researchers found out that academic buoyancy significantly predicted lower academic adversity and higher subsequent academic buoyancy is not predicted by prior academic adversity. However, the researchers found out that there was a marginal interaction effect in such a way that students, who experienced academic adversity but who were also high in academic buoyancy were less likely to experience academic adversity one year later. They concluded that academic buoyancy is an important ability every student must be equipped with and that some experiences of academic adversity can have a positive influence but only when accompanied by high levels of academic buoyancy.

Putwain, Gallard & Beaumont (2020) carried out a study in a sample of 539 upper secondary (6th form) students to examine whether academic buoyancy protected achievement (end-of-year examination grades) against two types of minor adversities (non-attendance and behavioural misconduct). The results showed that the presence of adversity (non-attendance and behavioural misconduct) led to the achievement of high academic buoyant students, and as adversity was lessened, the protective role of academic buoyancy diminished.

Collie et al. (2016) conducted a study using person-centred analyses to identify groups of students separated based on their perceptions of social support (home and community), academic support, academic adversity and academic buoyancy. A sample of 249 young participants, most from high-needs communities. The cluster analysis revealed three distinct groups of students: the

thriver, the supported struggler and the at-risk struggler. The first cluster, named the thrivers, had above-average scores on home and community support, as well as academic buoyancy, but low on academic support and academic adversity. The thrivers are students, who are supported, buoyant and faring well at school. The second cluster, named the supported struggler, scored average on home support, community support and academic buoyancy and above average on academic support and academic adversity. The supported strugglers are students, who reported above-average social and academic support and buoyancy despite experiencing a very high number of academic challenges. The third cluster, named at-risk struggler, reported below average on home support, community support and academic buoyancy, but above average on academic support and academic adversity. The 'at-risk strugglers' are students, who although experience adequate academic support in the face of academic challenges, they lack home and community support and thus report very low academic buoyancy. The result showed the thrivers had the highest levels of home and community support, while the supported struggler reported the highest levels of academic support and adversity. Both the thriver and supported struggler reported similar levels of academic buoyancy. The 'at-risk struggler' reported the lowest levels of home and community support and academic buoyancy, along with medium levels of academic support and adversity. The findings further showed that academic adversity and social support play qualitatively different, but quantitatively similar roles in students' motivation. The results also show the importance of support and academic buoyancy for students' positive outcomes.

### *Social Support and Academic Buoyancy*

Ursin, Järvinen & Pihlaja (2020) examined the roles of academic buoyancy and social support in mediating the association between academic stress and school engagement among primary school children in Finland. A sample of 403 children aged 8–9 years participated in this study. The data were analysed using structural equation modelling, which revealed that academic stress is negatively associated with engagement. The effect of academic stress on cognitive engagement was fully mediated by academic buoyancy and social support, whereas the effect on emotional engagement was partially mediated by these. The results suggested that supporting children's ability to deal with setbacks, providing social support, and promoting a socially supportive climate could be effective in the prevention of stress and its negative association with school engagement.

A study conducted by Collie et al. (2016) employed person-centred analyses to enable the identification of groups of students separated based on their perceptions of social support (home and community), academic support, academic adversity and academic buoyancy. Cluster analysis carried out on a sample of 249 young people, including many from high-needs communities, revealed three distinct groups of students: the thriver, supported struggler and at-risk struggler. Collie et al. (2016) compared the three groups on their academic motivation, and analyses revealed that there are significant differences between groups in adaptive motivation outcomes, but no differences in impeding or mal-adaptive motivation outcomes. The results showed the importance of support and academic buoyancy for positive students' outcomes.

An article published by Mishra (2020) examined the role of social factors such as social networks, social capital, and social support in aiding the academic outcomes of students. Special focus was given to under-represented groups in higher education, because even though there have been efforts directed towards increasing higher education access, inequality in higher education completion still exists. The article was based on a systematic review of the literature with evidence showing that the networks of students, including their family, ethnic and religious affiliations, friends, and faculty, play a role in academic success. The article detailed a framework that described how network members of under-represented groups complement each other in resources offered and contribute to academic success.

A study by Lei et al. (2022) examined whether academic buoyancy will mediate the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance and whether social support moderated the mediation process using a moderated mediation model. The study consisted of 860 high school students in China. The scores on academic self-efficacy, academic buoyancy, and social support were obtained using questionnaires, while academic performance was measured by standardised tests. The results revealed that academic buoyancy partially mediated the association between academic self-efficacy and academic performance, while social support moderated the first half of the path of the mediation model. The result also showed that Academic self-efficacy is not only directly positively predicted by academic performance, but also indirectly predicted by academic performance through the mediating path of academic buoyancy and that the mediating effect of academic buoyancy in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance was moderated by social support.

Granziera et al. (2022) investigated two groups of students, high school students (N = 2510) in Singapore (Study 1) and elementary school students (N = 119) in Australia (Study 2). They examined how students' academic buoyancy and academic outcomes (engagement and academic skills) are influenced by instrumental and emotional forms of teacher support. In both studies, it was revealed that perceived instrumental support, but not perceived emotional support was positively associated with academics. In Study 1, academic buoyancy was positively associated with students' academic engagement (specifically, effort and persistence [large effect], perceived importance of school [moderate effect], and feelings of school belonging [moderate effect]). In Study 2, academic buoyancy was positively associated with gains in students' academic skills and engagement (specifically, class participation [large effect] and future aspirations [large effect]). The result showed that their academic buoyancy and students' perceived teacher support has a role to play in academic outcomes.

## *Gender Differences and Academic Buoyancy*

In a study by Datu and Yang (2016) consisting of 402 Filipino university students, 242 female and 160 male participants were recruited via a cluster sampling approach. They examined the psychometric validity and gender invariance of the Academic Buoyancy Scale using a construct validation approach. The results showed that the academic buoyancy uni-dimensional model was a significant fit for the sample and was gender-neutral. The results showed that male students were more academically buoyant than female students. The findings demonstrated that academic buoyancy was positively correlated with behavioural and emotional involvement in between-network concept validity.

Abdellatif (2022) carried out a study to measure the level of academic buoyancy among university students and identify its relationship to the student's academic average, as well as determine the differences in their academic buoyancy level in terms of gender and academic discipline. The study utilised a descriptive-analytical design and was applied to 243 university students. The data obtained from the study were analysed using correlation coefficient, arithmetic mean and two-way ANOVA. The results of the study showed that the students were high on academic buoyancy, and there was a significant correlative relationship between academic buoyancy and academic average. The results also showed that there was no significant relationship between academic buoyancy and gender.

Colmar, Lie, Connor & Martin (2019) explored the relationship between academic buoyancy, academic self-concept, and academic performance amongst 191 upper primary-aged students using a correlational design. The data obtained were analysed using structural equation modelling, and the result showed that there is a significant relationship between the three constructs. It was also discovered that gender was relevant, as males were found to have scored higher in academic buoyancy than females.

A study was conducted by Yu, Martin, Hou, Osborn & Zhan (2019) to examine the role of demographic and socioeconomic factors in middle school students' motivation, engagement, academic buoyancy, and adaptability. The participants of the study consisted of 2,434 middle school students between the ages of 11-15. The results showed that gender played a dominant role, with males scoring higher on many adaptive motivation and engagement factors and females scoring higher on many maladaptive motivation and engagement factors. The results also showed that there is no significant interaction between gender and family socioeconomic status and that males scored higher in self-efficacy, learning focus and task management while scoring lower in uncertain control, self-handicapping and disengagement.

Jassim & Al-Jamaan (2022) conducted a study to measure academic buoyancy and the difference between gender, specialisation, stage and type of study in academic buoyancy among middle school students using the descriptive correlative approach. The study consisted of 381 students across private and Government schools. The researchers found that the students scored high on academic buoyancy, and there was no significant difference between academic buoyancy and gender, specialisation and type of study.

### *Age Differences and Academic Buoyancy*

A study was conducted by Yu, Martin, Hou, Osborn & Zhan (2019) to examine the role of demographic and socioeconomic factors in middle school students' motivation, engagement, academic buoyancy, and adaptability. The participants of the study consisted of 2,434 middle school students between the ages of 11-15. The results showed that age is not significantly correlated with motivation, engagement, change factors and adversities.

Mawarni, Sugandhi, Budiman & Thahir (2019) carried out a study to investigate the determinant of academic buoyancy based on the biographical background (gender, specialisation and age) in

science students of grade XI of a Public Senior High school in Bandung. The research involved 289 students of science class XI of senior high school in Bandung City during Academic Year 2017/2018 using random sampling. A mixed method approach which is a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods with a concurrent embedded strategy was used in data collection. The results from the qualitative and quantitative analysis indicated that 18 years old students have higher academic buoyancy than those aged 15-17. The findings of the research also showed that males are stronger in dealing with academic challenges than females.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Locus of Control Theory**

Locus of control is a concept that was originally developed in the 1950s by Julian Rotter based on the social learning theory. Locus of control refers to the extent of control an individual perceives he/she has over their actions as opposed to events in life occurring due to external forces (Lopez- Garrido, 2020).  Rotter's social learning theory could be said to have laid the foundation for the locus of control theory, although it is a standalone theory. Educational, Clinical and Health Psychology have made significant strides in explaining how to improve an individual's locus of control (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). The Locus of control theory had led to in-depth research into motivation, learning, depression and addiction. Locus of control theory explains that behaviours are guided by reinforcements and these reinforcements can be rewards or punishments (Eatough,
2022). The belief people have to explain the cause of their actions stems from the type of reinforcement they were exposed to and these beliefs would change how they view the world (Eatough, 2022).

Locus of control can be conceptualised as internal or external. Internal locus of control is when an individual believes they have control over what happens (Cherry, 2022). For example, a person who passes or fails a test will attribute the result to their capabilities. If they pass, they will praise their abilities, but if they fail, they will recognise the need for improvement (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). While the external locus of control believes that they have no blame and that external forces are to blame (Cherry, 2022). For example, an individual with an external

locus of control in the test situation might attribute the pass or fail to external factors such as the weather, their current condition, or even the exam itself as an excuse rather than accept that the exam went the way it did because of personal decisions. They attribute events to uncontrollable forces such as destiny or fate (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). The Locus of control lies on a continuum. No one has a 100% external or internal locus of control. Most individuals lie somewhere on the continuum between the two extremes (Cherry, 2022).

**Stress and Coping Theory**

The stress and coping theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) is a theory that focuses on how individuals manage the various effects of stress. Stress has been viewed as the relationship an individual has with his/her environment upon interaction. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) viewed stress as psychological, which occurs when a person acknowledges that his/her relationship with the environment is significant to their well-being and they lack the coping resources to deal with the demands of their environment. Stress can be eustress (positive) or distress (negative). How an individual copes or responds to stress depends on how he/she views the stress. A stressor being experienced as discomforting depends on the individual's capacity, skills, ability and resources available to him/her (Walinga, 2014). Lazarus explained the process of stress appraisal in stress and coping theory. The two models include primary and secondary appraisal. The primary appraisal is determining if the stressors are threats or not, while the secondary appraisal is evaluating the coping strategies and resources an individual has at their disposal.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping refers to constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage both external and internal demands that can be seen as exceeding the resources of a person. Coping requires spending mental effort to reduce stress. When faced with stress, a student can decide to talk it out with friends, completely avoid the situation or resort to other means. Coping interventions are ways in which individuals deal with stress. The coping strategies applied to reduce stress by resolving the problem can either be negative or positive (Chowdhury, 2019).

**Research Hypotheses:**

1. Academic adversity and social support will significantly influence academic buoyancy of emerging adults.

2. Male participants will report significantly higher academic buoyancy compared to their female participants.

3. Younger participants between the ages of (16-20 years) will report significantly higher on academic buoyancy than older participants between the ages of (21-25 years).

**Methods**

**Participants**

The sample in this study comprised 405 purposively sampled participants. They were 295 females (72.8%) and 110 males (27.2) university undergraduates, between ages 16-20 (38.5), 21-25 (56.3), 26-30 (4.0%) and above 30 (1.2%). Participants' consent was sought and participation was voluntary, anonymous, and no form of compensation was offered to the participants, who chose to participate.

**Instruments:**

The data collection of this research were conducted through a web-based platform. The participants were required to answer an electronic survey form involving the Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS), the Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Academic Risk and Resilience Scale (ARRS) via Google Forms. A questionnaire comprised four sections (A, B, C and D) and three standardised psychological scales (Academic Buoyancy Scale, Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and Academic Risk and Resilience Scale).

The first section, A, contained questions asking about demographic information such as: age, gender, ethnic group, religious affiliation, family type, year level of current degree, faculty, marital status and availability of financial aid.

Section B comprised questions asking respondents about their academic buoyancy. In this section, a standardised instrument was used, the Academic Buoyancy Scale (ABS), developed by Martin& Marsh (2008). It is composed of 4 items that are used to assess a learner's potential to

face and overcome challenges and difficulties that are part of everyday academic life. It is a self-report instrument that has demonstrated excellent re-test reliability and internal consistency. The instrument is scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1-7 (1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Disagree somewhat; 4=neither agree nor disagree; 5=Agree somewhat; 6=Agree; 7=Strongly Agree).

Section C contains questions asking respondents about how they feel about some statements. The instrument used is the Multi-dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS); it is a 12-item measure with four items for each subscale developed by Zimet et al. (1988) to measure the perceived adequacy of social support from family, friends and significant other. This measure has also demonstrated good internal and re-test reliability, as well as moderate construct validity. The instrument is scored on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1-7 (1= Very Strongly Disagree, 2= Strongly Disagree, 3= Mildly Disagree, 4= Neutral, 5= Mildly Agree. 6= Strongly Agree, 7= Very Strongly Agree). The higher the mean score, the higher the level of perceived social support. To calculate the mean score for each subscale, you sum the items and then divide them by 4. The significant other subscale includes items 1, 2, 5 and 10. The family subscale includes items 3, 4, 8 and 11. The friends' subscale includes items 6, 7, 9 and 12. To calculate the mean score for the total scale, sum across all 12 items and then divide by 12. A mean scale score ranging from 1 to 2.9 would be considered low support, a score from 3 to 5 would be considered moderate support, and a score from 5.1 to 7 would be considered high support.

Section D contains questions about the academic adversities the respondents face. The instrument used is the Academic Risk and Resilience Scale (ARRS), validated by Martin (2013). The ARRS items were drawn from adversities and challenges identified by various literature on young people and academic risk. It is composed of 15 items, with 11 academic adversity items and 4 academic resilience items. The participants were first asked to indicate 'yes or no' to 11 academic adversity items that might have occurred to them in a year. Then, students answering 'yes or no' to one or more of these academic adversities were then asked four academic resilience items related to these adversities. Academic resilience is defined in the presence of major academic adversity; thus, students are only eligible to answer academic resilience items if they have experienced major academic adversity. The academic resilience items were rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1-7 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree; 3=Disagree

somewhat; 4=neither agree nor disagree; 5=Agree somewhat; 6=Agree; 7=Strongly Agree). A total adversity score is calculated by the summation of the number of 'yes' responses.

**Results**

**Hypothesis 1:** Academic adversity and social support will significantly influence academic buoyancy of emerging adults.

**Table 1:** Linear regression results for Academic adversity and social support on academic buoyancy.

|  | B | SEb | β | P-VALUE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Constant** | 9.623 | 1.540 |  |  |
| Perceived Social Support | .030 | .021 | .066 |  |
| Academic adversity | .176 | .027 | .313 | .001 |
| R Square | .105 | F (2,401) | = 23.409 | P<.05 |

a. Dependent Variable: academic buoyancy

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic adversity and social support

It was revealed that academic adversity and social support significantly influence academic buoyancy given the Beta and P value scores to be (B =.313, P = .001). Furthermore, academic adversity and social support are jointly responsible for a 10.5% variance in academic buoyancy (R square = .105). As such, we accept the hypothesis which state that "Academic adversity and social support will significantly influence academic buoyancy of emerging adults.

**Hypothesis 2:** Male participants will report significantly higher academic buoyancy compared to their female participants.

**Table 2:** The inferential statistics of gender difference in academic buoyancy using a t-test independent.

| | Gender | N | Mean | SD | T | df | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic | Male | 110 | 19.01 | 5.00 | 3.909 | 403 | .001 |
| Buoyancy | Female | 295 | 16.73 | 5.30 | | | |

An independent t-test was conducted to examine, if male participants will report higher academic buoyancy than female participants among emerging adults of the University of Lagos. A significant difference was revealed (P= .001), for males (M=19.01, S.D= 5.00) and for females (M= 16.73, S.D=5.30). Therefore, the hypothesis which states that "Male participants will report higher academic buoyancy than female participants was accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** Younger participants between the ages of (16-20 years) will report significantly higher on academic buoyancy than older participants between the ages of (21-25 years).

**Table 3: The inferential statistics of age difference in academic buoyancy using a t-test independent.**

| | Age | N | Mean | SD | T | df | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic | 16-20 years (younger) | 156 | 16.71 | 4.99 | -1.532 | 382 | .126 |
| Buoyancy | 21-25 years (older) | 228 | 17.55 | 5.49 | | | |

An independent t-test was conducted to examine, if younger participants between the ages of (16-20 years) will report higher academic buoyancy than older participant between the ages of (21-25 years). There was no significant difference revealed (P= .126) for younger participants (M=16.71, S.D= 4.99) and for older participants (M= 17.55, S.D=5.49).

**Discussion**

This study's investigation revealed that academic adversity and social support significantly influence academic buoyancy. Although, the variance score in academic buoyancy was below average, the influence was significant, and this further shows that some academic adversities and

strong social support from family and friends can increase the academic buoyancy of the emerging adults. This finding is in line with the findings of other researchers; Martin & Marsh (2019) investigated the relationship between academic adversity and academic buoyancy in 481 high school students; they concluded that some experiences of academic adversity could have a positive influence on students, but only when accompanied by high levels of academic buoyancy. This is also in line with the study conducted by Putwain, Gallard & Beaumont (2020), who concluded that the presence of adversity led to the achievement of high academic buoyant students. Collie et al. (2016) also carried out similar research, and the result showed the importance of social support and academic buoyancy for positive student outcomes. Granziera et al. (2022) carried out similar research and discovered that students' academic buoyancy and students' perceived teacher support has a role to play in the academic outcome. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no study that negates the findings of this research.

The result of the inferential statistics indicated that male participants reported higher academic buoyancy than female participants. It revealed that is a significant gender difference in academic buoyancy. The findings of this study corroborate with the study by Datu and Yang (2016), who examined the gender invariance of the academic buoyancy scale; the results showed that male students were more academically buoyant than female students. Also, with the work of Colmar, Lie, Connor & Martin (2019), who explored the relationship between academic buoyancy, academic self-concept, and academic performance among 191 students, they discovered that gender was relevant and that males reported higher academic buoyancy than females. But the findings of this study negate the study by Abdellatif (2022), who carried out a study on 243 university students to measure the level of academic buoyancy among university students and determine the differences in academic buoyancy in terms of gender and academic discipline. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between academic buoyancy and gender. The difference in findings can be attributed to the sample and sample size used. The sample size used by Abdellatif (2020) in his study was smaller than the one used in this research.

From the result of the analysis, participants between the ages of 21-25 reported higher academic buoyancy than ages 16-20. The result of the analysis further shows that there is no significant difference between the academic buoyancy reported by participants, who were 16-20 and 21-25, hence, rejecting the hypothesis. The findings of this study corroborate with a study conducted by

Yu, Martin, Hou, Osborn & Zhan (2019) to examine the role of demographic and socioeconomic factors in middle school students' motivation, engagement, academic buoyancy, and adaptability. The participants of the study consisted of 2,434 middle school students between the ages of 11-15. The result showed that age is not significantly correlated with motivation, engagement, change factors and adversities. But the findings of this study negate the study by Mawarni, Sugandhi, Budiman & Thahir (2019) to investigate the determinant of academic buoyancy based onbiographical background (gender, specialisation and age). The result indicated that 18 years old students have higher academic buoyancy than those aged 15-17. Although, the difference in age groups could be responsible for the observed difference.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Academic adversity and social support have a significant influence on the academic buoyancy of students. This implies that the higher the level of social support, the greater the level of academic buoyancy and that some level of academic adversity helps students build resilience that fosters academic buoyancy. It is suggested that parents, family and friends must monitor the academic well-being of their children and friends, as well as work towards encouraging them in their schoolwork. Parents should speak positive affirmations to their children to build confidence to improve academic buoyancy. Emerging adults in Universities are facing transition and thus need the support and guidance of their parents, family and friends.

Students at all levels and courses of study must develop grit to conquer various academic adversities and build academic buoyancy. Grit is passion and persistence. Students should be passionate about their course of study and persistently chase their academic goals against all odds. Both Universities and lecturers should build a safe school environment that would help students manage anxiety and reduce their fear of failure. This could include extra-curricular activities like seminars and training, teaching students about academic success and overcoming academic challenges. It is further recommended that parents, family, friends, lecturers, and the Government must create an enabling environment for adolescents to improve their academic buoyancy through a flexible approach. This will help students to learn well at their own pace, as well as the academic adversity they face daily in University.

**Limitations**

First, the study was carried out among undergraduates of the University of Lagos due to time and resources constraint, leaving out undergraduates in the South-West region and Nigeria. This made it difficult to generalise the findings to undergraduates in other areas.

Another limitation of this study was the participants' responses. Some students tried to pretend to be good students by responding positively to the questions, even the items that were reversed.

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