



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL ANXIETY, SCHOOL INSECURITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL BEING OF UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between social anxiety, school insecurity and psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study consists 12,000 university undergraduates that are in 200 level from the two known public universities in the State in 2025/2026 academic session. The sample of this study comprised of 1000 respondents from the five faculties from both Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University respectively using simple random sampling technique. Three instruments were used for the data collection. These were School Insecurity Questionnaire (SIQ), Social Anxiety Questionnaire (SAQ) and Psychological Wellbeing Questionnaire (PWBQ). The instruments were subjected to face validation. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha. The result gave coefficient values of 0.67 for School Insecurity Questionnaire, 0.75 for Social Anxiety Questionnaire and 0.75 for Psychological Well Being Questionnaire. The data were collected by the researchers with the help of research assistants who were properly briefed on how to administer the instrument. The completed copies of questionnaire were collected on the spot. Data analysis was done thus: research questions was answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant using multiple linear regression. The findings of the study revealed that social anxiety has a weak relationship with psychological wellbeing of



university undergraduates in Anambra State. That school insecurity has a weak relationship with psychological wellbeing of university undergraduates in Anambra State. The findings of the study indicated that social anxiety and school insecurity had significant weak joint relationship with psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra state. Base on the findings the study recommended, among others, university management, educational psychologists and counselors should create mental health programmes and strategies for undergraduates to cope with psychological challenges.

Keywords: School Insecurity, Social Anxiety, Psychological Well Being

Introduction

The state students' well-being has been a critical issue in higher education everywhere in the world. Psychological well-being is a growing issue of universal concern emerging in the entire academic realms particularly in Nigerian Universities. University education is a significant life transition and students need to adjust to several new social, cultural and academic demands. Psychological well-being of students can be affected by several factors including transition to a different pedagogy and tools and techniques for learning, relational support, and education environment. Especially where the course structure is rigorous and intensive, requiring students to attain a breadth of personal and professional skills through in-class and extracurricular activities in limited time (Shirin, qangee12021).

However, psychological well-being is a construct that has been widely studied in the field of psychology, often confused with constructs such as quality of life or mental health; this study in recent decades registers a definition, which indicates that it is the evaluation that the person makes of his life, in specific areas such as work, family, personal and partner. And an affective evaluation related to the frequency and intensity of positive and negative emotions. Psychological well-being is simultaneously the absence of the crippling elements of the human experience – depression, anxiety, anger, fear – and the presence of enabling ones – positive emotions, meaning, healthy relationships, environmental mastery, engagement, self-actualization. Psychological wellbeing is above and beyond the absence of psychological ill-being and it considers a broader spectrum of constructs than what is traditionally conceived of as happiness (González et al, 2020).

Psychological wellbeing includes the absence of disorders, such as major depression or schizophrenia. An individual suffering from mental disorders can hardly experience psychological wellbeing. However, absence of those disorders does not guaranty psychological flourishing. Psychological well-being is a broad concept that encompasses a condition of prosperity and thriving, rather than only the absence of mental health illnesses. Numerous variables, including heredity, environment, experiences in life, and personal decisions, might have an impact on it. Achieving and sustaining psychological well-being frequently calls for self awareness, personal development, and the creation of appropriate coping mechanisms to deal with stress and obstacles in life (Matsayi, 2023). But one of the major effects of negative psychological well-being among university undergraduate students is a decreased academic performance and motivation. It can also lead to increased stress, anxiety and depression, social isolation and decreased social connections (Parker, 2021).



The far-reaching effects of negative psychological well-being on undergraduates' academic, personal, and social lives emphasizes the need of addressing psychological well-being in order to promote overall well-being and success. While informing strategies for supporting undergraduates' mental health, academic success, and career development; Dwyer (2022) highlighted the need for comprehensive support services and psychological well-being improvements to foster a positive university experience. Hence, the researchers observed that there are other factors that seem to predict psychological well-being among undergraduate students in the university. These factors may include school insecurity and social anxiety.

School insecurity can in a nutshell be considered as a state in which the school is unsafe or insecure. American Psychological Association (2013); Jenkins, (2021) reported that insecurity is multifaceted. It pertains to an overall sense of uncertainty or anxiety about your worth, abilities, skills, and value as a person, conveying the message that you are at risk or in danger of something or someone. Insecurity of school is a state of an emotional problem, a state of being in disturbance due to the feeling of tension, strain and conflict together with other consequences of tension, for example nervousness.

The causes of insecurity, especially in school environment, are very much and noticeable. Insecurity in schools may be caused by either internal or external factors. The fact that a school is not attacked by external forces does not always signify that the internal security of the school is good enough to eliminate all anxiety and fear of harm in school environment. The greater part of insecurity is the occurrence of various crimes and other violent activities in schools. Educational administrators have a lot to do in order to protect their schools and ensure a relatively threat free environment. It should be noted, however, that effective learning of students can only be achieved in a secured and conducive learning environment that will necessitate emotional stability. The academic success of students depends largely on their emotional stability. Insecure learning environment puts the university students' behavior and also impede learning (Dibia & Obi, 2022). Thus, there is a need to overcome these security challenges by the university undergraduate for efficient and effective learning as well as balance personality becomes fundamental. Based on the foregoing, therefore, this study seeks to situate the relatedness of school insecurity together with social anxiety to psychological well being of university undergraduates.

The American Psychological Association (2022) defines social anxiety as "an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure". It is also viewed as a cognitive and affective experience that is triggered by the perception of possible evaluation by others. Social anxiety is the fear of being judged and evaluated negatively by other people, leading to feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, self-consciousness, embarrassment, humiliation, and depression (Thomas, 2024).

Indeed, it is in man's nature to always strive for a psychological well being for an optimal achievement in one's endeavour. It is an obvious fact that things and even humans thrive more in a conducive atmosphere as well as in situations of calmness and tranquility. Thus, there are certain things that must come into play for one to enjoy such psychological well being, if not the reverse would be the case, especially among university undergraduates. Hence, university undergraduates with negative psychological well-being may be more vulnerable to problems such as stress, hopelessness, delinquency, psychopathology, and substance abuse. Also the effective learning of students can only be achieved in a secured and conducive learning environment that will



necessitate emotional stability. Insecure learning environment puts the university students' behavior and also impede learning. Pursuing a degree in a public university can be demanding, and students may experience pressure and social anxiety from high workload and academic stress as they strive to meet academic deadlines, examinations, and coursework. Hence, students may experience difficulties with their relationships with family, friends, and partners as a result of social anxiety which can negatively affect their psychological wellbeing. Thus, this unsatisfactory state of affair prompted the researchers to investigate the relationship between social anxiety, school insecurity and psychological well being of university undergraduates in Anambra State

Statement of the Problem

Psychological well being is a condition that helps one to achieve one's aims or accomplish whatever one strives to accomplish. This is because it is a state in which one enjoys peace of mind and has not much to be worried about. It is a state in which one maintains a balance or equilibrium in one's life. But then, one who is in a state of mental illness emanating from school insecurity and social anxiety or having some psychological imbalance cannot attain to one's goals. School insecurity and Social anxiety are being considered as some of the factors that pose hindrance in one way or the other to the attainment of psychological well-being. Insecurity in school is really a great threat to university undergraduates. The current insecurity of school as well as social anxiety in Nigerian schools and more especially in Anambra State to have coherent mental alertness, effective teaching and learning, and a peaceful atmosphere pose more or less some problems to psychological well being. As an offshoot of the foregoing, therefore, this study examined the relationship between social anxiety, school insecurity on psychological well being of university undergraduates in Anambra State

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- 1) What is the relationship between social anxiety and psychological well being among university undergraduates in Anambra State?
- 2) What is the relationship between school insecurity and psychological well being among university undergraduates in Anambra State?
- 3) What is the joint relationship between school insecurity, social anxiety on psychological well being of university undergraduates in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.5level of significance:

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between social anxiety and psychological well being among university undergraduates in Anambra State.
- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between school insecurity and psychological well being among university undergraduates in Anambra State.
- H₀₃: There is no significant joint relationship between social anxiety, school insecurity on psychological well being of university undergraduates in Anambra State.



Method

The study adopted correlational research design. Area of the study is Anambra state. The population of the study consists of 12,000 university undergraduates that are registered at the time in 200 level from the two known public universities in the State. From the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University were 5,426 university undergraduates and from the Nnamdi Azikiwe University were 6,574 university undergraduates. These data was collected from the school registrars in both schools for the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample of this study comprised of 1000 respondents from the five faculties from both the State and the Federal universities respectively. It is important to mention that the faculties were randomly chosen from the two universities using simple random sampling research technique. Thus, the five faculties from both universities are as follows: the Faculty of Education, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Health Science & Technology, and the Faculty of pharmaceutical. 500 undergraduates were selected from each school using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was three self-structured questionnaires titled first, School Insecurity Questionnaire (SIQ), second, Social Anxiety Questionnaire (SAQ); third Psychological Well-being Questionnaire (PWBQ). The School Insecurity Questionnaire (SIQ) was adapted from Ojukwu, (1917). The Social Anxiety Questionnaires (SAQ) was also adapted from Jefferies and Ungar in the year 2020. The Psychological Well-being Questionnaire (PWBQ) was adapted from Ryff, and Keyes, (1995). The question on the three instruments were adapted and are made up of 40 items eliciting information from the respondents and was structured using 4-point scale weighed as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). The instrument were validated by three experts from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. To test the reliability of the instrument, the researcher conducted a test using 27 university undergraduates from a state university outside the area of this study, namely Enugu State. The reliability of the instrument was tested and analyzed using Cronbach’s Alpha to find the reliability and it yielded a value of 0.75 for social anxiety, 0.67 for school insecurity and 0.75 for psychological well. This value show that the instrument is sufficiently reliable. The data collected were analyzed using thus: research questions 1 and 2 were answered using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation, while research question 3 was answered using multiple linear regression while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant using multiple linear regression in order ascertain whether social anxiety and school insecurity have relationship with psychological well-being.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between social anxiety and psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson’s Correlation between Social Anxiety Scores and Psychological Well-being Scores

Variables		Social Anxiety Scores	Psychological Well-being Scores	Remark
Social Anxiety Scores	r	1	0.21	Weak Positive Relationship
	N	909	909	



Table 1 showed that the Pearson's correlation between social anxiety and psychological wellbeing scores was 0.21. This indicated that there was a weak positive relationship between the two variables. This implies that social anxiety has a weak relationship with psychological well-being of universities undergraduates in Anambra State.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between school insecurity and psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between School Insecurity Scores and Psychological Well-being Scores of University Undergraduates

Variables		School Insecurity Scores	Psychological Well-being Scores	Remark
School Insecurity Scores	r	1	0.27	Weak Positive Relationship
	N	909	909	

The Pearson's correlation between school insecurity and psychological wellbeing scores displayed in Table 1 yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.27. This indicated that there was a weak positive relationship between the two variables. This suggested that school insecurity has a weak relationship with psychological well-being of universities undergraduates in Anambra state.

Research Question 3

What is the joint relationship between social anxiety, school insecurity on psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra State?

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis between Social Anxiety Scores, School Insecurity Scores on Psychological Wellbeing Scores of University Undergraduates

Predictors	outcome	R	R ²	Remark
School Insecurity Scores	Psychological well-being	0.32	.10	Weak Relationship
Social Anxiety Scores				

The multiple regression displayed in table 3 shows that the regression of psychological well-being scores on social anxiety and school insecurity scores yielded a multiple regression R of 0.32. This implies that two variables were jointly a weak correlate of psychological well-being among undergraduates of universities in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between social anxiety and psychological well-being among undergraduates in Anambra State.

Table 4: Significance of Pearson's Correlation between Social Anxiety and Psychological Well-being

Variables	Social Anxiety Scores		Psychological Well-being Scores	p-value	Decision
Social Anxiety Scores	r	1	0.21	.000	Significant
	N	909	909		



As shown in Table 4, there was a significant weak positive relationship between social anxiety and psychological well-being among university undergraduates in Anambra State, $R = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between school insecurity and psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra State.

Table 5 Significance of Pearson's Correlation between School Insecurity Scores and Psychological Well-being Scores among University Undergraduates

Variables		School Insecurity Scores	Psychological Well-being Scores	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
School Insecurity Scores	R	1	0.27	.000	Significant
	N	909	909		

Table 5 showed there was a significant weak positive relationship between school insecurity and psychological well-being among university undergraduates in Anambra state, $R = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant joint relationship between school insecurity and social anxiety on psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra State.

Table 6: Significance of Multiple Regression Analysis with Social Anxiety Scores and School Insecurity Scores on Psychological Wellbeing Scores of University Undergraduates

Predictors	outcome	R	R^2	<i>p</i> -value	Decision
School Insecurity Scores	Psychological well-being	0.32	.10	.000	Significant
Social Anxiety Scores					

The results displayed in Table 6 showed that social anxiety and school insecurity had significant weak joint relationship with psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra state, $R = 0.32$, $p < 0.05$, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Conclusion

In view of data analysis and interpretation of the results, the following conclusions were drawn. That social anxiety was a weak correlate of psychological well being among university undergraduates in Anambra State. That school insecurity had weak relationship with psychological well being of university undergraduates in Anambra State. That social anxiety and school insecurity were jointly a weak relationship with psychological well being of university undergraduates in Anambra State. That there was a significant weak positive relationship between school insecurity and psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra state. That there was a significant weak positive relationship between social anxiety and psychological well-being among university undergraduates in Anambra State. That social anxiety and school



insecurity had significant weak joint relationship with psychological well-being of university undergraduates in Anambra state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University management, educational psychologists and counselors should create mental health programmes and strategies for undergraduates to cope with psychological challenges.
2. University management should create organizations, clubs that would offer workshops on communication, skill proficiency and conflict resolutions for undergraduates.
3. Student Affairs Unit should develop online platforms for the male and female undergraduates to connect and share experiences.
4. The University authorities should provide more security apparatus in schools for both male and female students.
5. Students should be adequately enlightened during orientations about school challenges.

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