
SOCIAL PHOBIA AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN DELTA STATE: IS EMOTIONAL MATURITY A DETERMINING FACTOR?

¹Amaha Christiana Ojochide, Dr. E.A. Oghounu² & Prof. R. I. Okorodudu³

^{1,2&3}Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

Abstract

This study examines the study examined the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State and investigated whether emotional maturity plays a determining role. Three research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted, with a sample of 600 undergraduates selected through a multistage sampling method from a population of 60,970. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Emotional Maturity and Social Phobia Questionnaire which was self-constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire was validated by experts in guidance and counselling, and tested for reliability using a pilot study analysed through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Principal Component Analysis and Rotated Factor loading confirmed the instrument's validity. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (Mean and standard deviation), Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine relationships, while simple and multiple regression analyses were employed to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that: Social phobia is moderately prevalent among university undergraduates in Delta State; emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State is generally low; and there is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State.

Keywords: Social Phobia, University Undergraduates, Emotional Maturity

INTRODUCTION

Social interactions play a fundamental role in shaping an individual's personal, academic, and professional development. However, for some individuals, social situations provoke intense fear and anxiety, leading to social phobia—a persistent fear of being judged, embarrassed, or negatively evaluated by others. Social phobia, also known as social anxiety disorder (SAD), can significantly impair students' academic performance, self-confidence, and overall well-being. Among university undergraduates, who are often required to engage in group discussions, public speaking, and collaborative learning, the presence of social phobia may hinder their ability to thrive in academic and social settings. Hence the to identify the factors that influence the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates

One critical factor that of interest in this study that may influence the prevalence and intensity of social phobia is emotional maturity. Emotional maturity refers to an individual's ability to regulate emotions, manage interpersonal relationships effectively, and navigate life's challenges with resilience and self-awareness. Emotional maturity, often interchangeably referred to as emotional intelligence or emotional competence, is a multifaceted psychological construct that encompasses a profound ability to navigate the intricate landscape of human emotions. Brackett and Salovey (2019) posit that it is not merely about recognizing and managing one's emotions, rather, it extends to understanding and effectively responding to the emotions of both one and others. At the very core of emotional maturity lies emotional awareness, a foundational aspect that sets the stage for a multitude of emotionally intelligent behaviors. It is the capacity to recognize and label one's emotions accurately and delve deeper into their nuances (Goleman2018). Emotionally mature individuals possess a finely tuned emotional radar that can distinguish between a spectrum of emotions – from overt joy and sadness to subtler shades like frustration, envy, or contentment. According to Wong and Law (2018) emotionally mature individuals recognize that emotions are not mere internal states but valuable signals that guide appropriate actions and adjustments in response to specific situations. Furthermore, they embrace a stance of self-acceptance and approach their emotions without judgment. Instead of condemning themselves for experiencing certain emotions, they greet these emotions with compassion and curiosity.

Emotional maturity refers to an individual's ability to understand, regulate, and express emotions in a balanced and constructive manner. It involves self-awareness, resilience, adaptability, and interpersonal skills that help individuals navigate social and emotional challenges effectively (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Among undergraduates, emotional maturity may play a significant role in shaping social interactions, coping with academic and peer-related stress, and overcoming social anxieties, including social phobia. Emotional maturity components such as self-control, stress management ability, appreciation, emotion expression capability, resilience, adaptability, and assertiveness may influence the severity and management of social phobia among undergraduates.

Self-control is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in the face of temptations and impulses (Baumeister et al., 2007). It allows individuals to resist emotional outbursts, make rational decisions, and maintain composure in social situations. Undergraduates with low self-control may struggle to regulate their fear responses in social settings, leading to avoidance behaviors and heightened anxiety. Conversely, students with high self-control can suppress irrational fears, engage in gradual exposure to social situations, and build confidence over time. Effective self-control reduces impulsive avoidance and enhances social engagement.

Stress management refers to the capacity to handle stress effectively by employing coping strategies such as relaxation techniques, cognitive restructuring, and problem-solving skills (Lazarus & Folkman, 2024). Social situations can be stress-inducing for undergraduates with social phobia. Those with poor stress management may experience heightened physiological responses such as rapid heartbeat and sweating, reinforcing avoidance behaviors. On the other hand, students who effectively manage stress through deep breathing, mindfulness, or cognitive reframing can reduce the impact of social anxiety and gradually improve their comfort in social interactions.

Appreciation involves recognizing and valuing positive experiences, relationships, and one's personal growth (Fredrickson, 2001). It fosters gratitude and optimism. Undergraduates who practice appreciation are more likely to focus on positive social interactions rather than fear negative judgment. A mindset of appreciation helps individuals shift from a fear-based perspective to one that values learning and connection, reducing the intensity of social anxiety. Those who lack appreciation may dwell on perceived negative social experiences, reinforcing avoidance behaviors.

Emotion expression capability refers to the ability to convey one's emotions effectively through verbal and non-verbal communication (Gross, 2002). A lack of emotion expression capability can contribute to social phobia, as individuals may struggle to communicate their thoughts and feelings, leading to social withdrawal. Undergraduates who can express emotions appropriately are more likely to engage in meaningful interactions, build supportive relationships, and seek help when experiencing anxiety. Improved emotional expression reduces social isolation and fosters confidence in communication.

Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, failures, or stressful experiences (Masten, 2001). Resilient undergraduates are more likely to persist in social situations despite initial discomfort. They view social failures as learning experiences rather than threats, making them more likely to overcome social fears. Conversely, individuals with low resilience may dwell on past negative social interactions, reinforcing avoidance and increasing social anxiety. Adaptability is the capacity to adjust to changing environments, expectations, and social contexts (Martin et al., 2013). Undergraduates with high adaptability can adjust their behaviors and attitudes to different social settings, reducing the likelihood of feeling overwhelmed in new situations. They are better at handling unexpected social interactions, which can prevent the onset of social phobia. In contrast, low adaptability contributes to rigid thinking and fear of unfamiliar social scenarios, exacerbating avoidance and anxiety.

Assertiveness is the ability to express one's thoughts, needs, and feelings confidently and respectfully without being aggressive or passive (Alberti & Emmons, 2008). Undergraduates who are assertive can set boundaries, communicate effectively, and navigate social situations without excessive fear. Lack of assertiveness is a key factor in social phobia, as individuals may struggle with speaking up, initiating conversations, or asserting their rights in social contexts. Developing assertiveness reduces fear of social judgment and fosters greater social confidence.

From the above discussion, emotionally mature individuals tend to handle social interactions with confidence, whereas those with lower emotional maturity may experience heightened social anxiety, avoidance behaviors, and difficulties in academic and professional pursuits. Despite growing concerns about social phobia among university students, limited research has been conducted to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and social phobia, particularly in Delta State. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the extent to

which emotional maturity correlates with social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in the study:

1. What is the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State?
2. What is the status of emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State?
3. What is the relationship between emotional maturity and its components of self-control, ability to manage stress, very appreciation, capable to express emotion, resilience, adaptability, assertiveness, and social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

Hypothesis

This null hypothesis was formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and its components of self-control, ability to manage stress, being very appreciative, capable of expressing emotion, resilience, adaptability, assertiveness, and social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design for this study is a survey. It examines the relationship among environmental insecurity, emotional maturity, and psychosocial factors as correlate of social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta state. The population of this study comprises all university undergraduates in Delta State. The total population is 60,790 of four public Universities in Delta State. The sample of this study consists of 608 students drawn from the entire population. Multi-stage sampling procedures comprising purposive and simple random sampling techniques will be employed in selecting the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire which is self-constructed by the researcher. It is titled Emotional Maturity and Social Phobia Questionnaire (EMSPQ)." The validity of the instrument was established by the researcher supervisor and two other lecturers who are experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling.

A pilot test of the instrument was conducted with a sample of 100 university undergraduate students outside the study area to assess its reliability. The reliability coefficient for the instrument's subscales was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The results revealed the following reliability coefficient values and range for each subscale: Emotional Maturity Rating Scale exhibits a reliability coefficient of 0.61, with a range of 0.51 - 0.86., Social Phobia Rating Scale displays a commendable reliability coefficient of 0.80, with a range of 0.52 - 0.81. The instruments were administered to the selected respondents in the universities following the sampling procedures outlined for this study. Both the researcher and three trained research assistants will visit each of the universities to carry out the data collection process. The research questions were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and the coefficient of determination. On the other hand, the hypothesis was tested using both Linear and Multiple Regressions, with a significance level of 0.05.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State?

Table 1 Mean and standard of status of the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State.

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.	I often avoid situations that require me to speak in public.	3.69	0.63
3.	I do not believe that others will notice my nervousness when I speak in public	3.02	0.18
4.	I worry about being judged by others when speaking in public.	3.14	0.81
5.	Thoughts of upcoming public speaking engagements create a sense of dread for me.	3.57	0.25
6.	Public speaking situations make me feel tense and uncomfortable.	3.84	0.53
7.	I often rehearse what I will say before speaking in public.	3.68	0.44
8.	I feel self-conscious about the way I eat when others are around.	3.33	0.17
9.	I often choose foods that are easy to eat inconspicuously in public.	3.27	0.27
10.	I find it challenging to enjoy my meal when others are watching me	1.55	0.31
11.	I believe that others will notice my unease when I eat in public	2.41	0.32
12.	I am not self-conscious about how I look while eating in public.	2.9	0.31
13.	I am concerned about spilling food while eating in front of others.	2.08	0.33
14.	I feel anxious when meeting new people	0.67	0.79
15.	I often feel apprehensive about interacting with my superiors.	2.51	0.73
16.	My heart rate increases when I anticipate interactions with my superiors.	2.67	0.67
17.	I worry about being evaluated negatively by my superiors.	3.08	0.36
18.	I believe that my superiors will notice my nervousness when interacting with them	2.63	0.35
19.	I often experience intense fear in social situations	0.81	0.62
20.	Thoughts of confronting challenging situations make me more inclined to avoid them	3.84	0.17
	Grand Mean	2.77	0.43

Bench Mark Mean: 2.50

Data in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation on the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State. The result revealed that respondents exhibit varying levels of social phobia across different items. On items related to public speaking and fear of judgment (e.g., "I often avoid situations that require me to speak in public" with a mean of 3.69, and "I worry about being judged by others when speaking in public" with a mean of 3.14), the respondents show relatively high levels of social anxiety, with mean scores above 3.00. However, on other items like "I feel anxious when meeting new people" (mean of 0.67) and "I find it challenging to enjoy my meal when others are watching me" (mean of 1.55), respondents report lower levels of social phobia. The overall grand mean of 2.77, which is above the benchmark mean of 2.50, indicates that the overall

prevalence of social phobia is moderate among university undergraduates in Delta State. This suggests that while some students experience high levels of social anxiety, particularly in specific social interactions such as public speaking and meetings with superiors, there are also instances where social anxiety is less pronounced. Therefore, the data implies that social phobia is moderately prevalent among university undergraduates in Delta State.

Research Question 2: What is the status of emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean and standard of status of emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State.

S/N	Components Of Emotional Maturity	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Remark
1.	Self-Control	2.52	0.51	2 nd	+
2.	Stress Management Ability	1.79	0.18	6 th	-
3.	Appreciation	2.51	0.21	3 rd	+
4.	Emotion Expression Capability	2.54	0.25	1 st	+
5.	Resilience	1.71	0.23	7 th	-
6.	Adaptability	2.08	0.17	5 th	-
7.	Assertiveness	2.51	0.14	3 rd	+
	Grand Mean	2.24	0.24		-

Mean Bench Mark=2.50, -=Low, + ==High

The data in Table 2 reveals the status of emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State. The results show a mix of high and low emotional maturity across different components. Emotion Expression Capability ranked the highest with a mean of 2.54 and a standard deviation of 0.25, indicating that students exhibit a relatively high capacity to express their emotions. Self-Control followed closely with a mean of 2.52 and a standard deviation of 0.51, suggesting that students demonstrate a moderate to high level of self-control. Appreciation and Assertiveness shared the same mean of 2.51 and ranked third. Both components reflect a moderate to high level of emotional maturity, with students generally showing a good sense of appreciation and assertiveness in various situations. On the other hand, Stress Management Ability and Resilience had the lowest rankings. Stress Management Ability ranked sixth with a mean of 1.79 and a standard deviation of 0.18, indicating that students struggle with managing stress. Similarly, Resilience ranked seventh with a mean of 1.71 and a standard deviation of 0.23, suggesting that students face challenges in recovering from setbacks. Adaptability also scored relatively low, with a mean of 2.08 and a standard deviation of 0.17, placing it in the fifth position. This implies that students may find it difficult to adjust to changing circumstances. Overall, the grand mean of 2.24 and standard deviation of 0.24 falls below the benchmark of 2.50, indicating that emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State is generally low. While there are areas of relative strength, particularly in emotion expression and self-control, significant room for improvement exists in areas like stress management, resilience, and adaptability. This suggests a need for targeted interventions to foster emotional maturity in these students.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, Very Appreciative, Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience, Adaptability and Assertiveness with social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

TABLE 3: Correlation matrix of emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, Very Appreciative, Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience, Adaptability and Assertiveness with social phobia

Variable	Mean	SD	SC	ATMS	VA	COEE	AD	AS	EM	SP
SC	31.09	3.83	1							
ATMS	11.24	1.81	.080	1						
VA	5.24	1.25	.014	.518	1					
COEE	9.67	2.18	.054	.484	.225	1				
AD	3.06	.74	.084	.535	.059	.266	1			
AS	3.06	.67	.015	.305	.100	.198	.017	1		
EM	53.80	5.44	.022	.275	.098	.135	.158	.057	1	
SP	52.68	8.24	.032	.331	.129	.102	.188	.211	-.108	1

The data presented in Table 3 shows the correlation matrix assessing the relationship between psychosocial factors (PSF) and their components with social phobia (SP) among university undergraduate students in Delta State revealing some noteworthy patterns. While the overall correlations are weak, certain components exhibit modest relationships with social phobia. Notably, the ability to manage stress shows the strongest association with social phobia, with a correlation coefficient of 0.331. This suggests that students who are better at managing stress may experience slightly lower levels of social phobia. Other components, such as self-control and capability of expressing emotion, demonstrate weaker correlations with social phobia, at 0.032 and 0.102 respectively, indicating a limited direct influence on this condition. Interestingly, emotional maturity as a composite variable is negatively correlated with social phobia (-0.108), although the relationship is weak, suggesting that higher emotional maturity might contribute to slightly reduced social phobia levels. The internal relationships among components of emotional maturity reveal additional insights. For example, the ability to manage stress correlates moderately with traits such as very appreciative (0.518) and adaptability (0.535), indicating that students who handle stress effectively may also exhibit greater adaptability and appreciation for others. However, other components, such as self-control, display generally weak correlations with the rest, suggesting that these elements of emotional maturity operate somewhat independently. Overall, these findings imply that while certain components of emotional maturity, particularly the ability to manage stress, have some relevance to social phobia, the overall relationship is weak. This indicates that social phobia is likely influenced by a broader array of psychological, social, and environmental factors beyond emotional maturity. The results emphasize the need for further investigation into other potential contributors to social phobia among university students.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, being Very Appreciative, being Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience, and Adaptability, with social phobia.

Table 4: Multiple regression and multiple correlation analysis of emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, being Very Appreciative, being Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience and Adaptability with social phobia.

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	R	B	SE	B	t	P
Regression	778.604	8	97.326	1.443	.14					.176 ns
Residual	39866.669	59	674.519							
Total	40645.273	59								
(Constant)		9				51.17	3.56		14.36	.000 *
Emotional maturity						.07	.18	.05	.36	.719 ns
Self-control						.15	.20	.05	.72	.474 ns
Ability to Manage Stress						-.06	.26	-.01	-.23	.821 ns
Very Appreciative						-.43	.35	-.07	-1.25	.212 ns
Capable of Expressing Emotion						-.37	.25	-.09	-1.47	.14 ns
Resilience						.20	.52	.02	.38	.701 ns
Adaptability						-.33	.55	-.03	-.60	.548 ns

The multiple regression analysis evaluating the relationship between emotional maturity and its components with social phobia among university students indicates no significant overall model ($F = 1.443$, $p = .176$), suggesting that emotional maturity and its components do not collectively predict social phobia significantly. Individually, none of the components—self-control, ability to manage stress, being very appreciative, capable of expressing emotion, resilience, and adaptability—show significant relationships with social phobia (all p -values $> .05$). The coefficients (B-values) for these variables are also small, indicating minimal predictive power. The constant is significant ($B = 51.17$, $p = .000$), reflecting a baseline level of social phobia regardless of these predictors. The strength of the relationship observed among emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, being Very Appreciative, being Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience and Adaptability with social phobia is illustrated in the path analysis model in Figure 4.2.

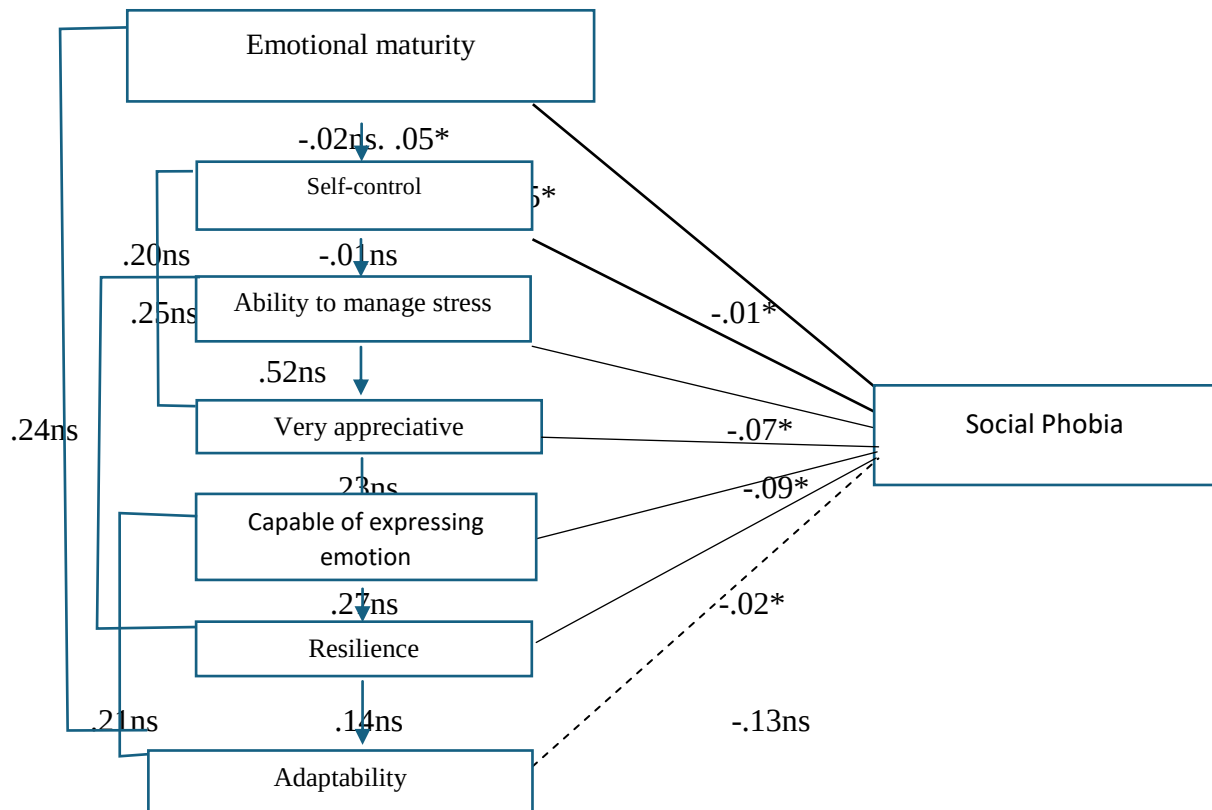


Figure 1: Path Analysis model indicating the strength of the relationship between emotional maturity and its components with social phobia

The path analysis in Figure 1 shows the predictive power between the predictor variables and criterion variable figure 4.2 revealed that a positive significant relationship was observed between Self-control and social phobia, ($B = -.05^*$), Ability to Manage Stress, and social phobia, ($B = .05^*$), while the following has a negative significant relationship being Very Appreciative and social phobia ($B = -.01^*$). Being Capable of Expressing Emotion and social phobia ($B = -.07^*$), Resilience and social phobia ($B = -.09^*$), Adaptability and social phobia ($B = -.02^*$), and assertiveness and social phobia ($B = -.28^*$). To justify that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables, a multicollinearity test was conducted.

Table 5: Multicollinearity Diagnosis of emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, Very Appreciative, Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience and Adaptability with social phobia

	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
Emotional maturity	.003	.015	.015	.076	13.181
Self-control	.080	.029	.029	.184	5.435
Ability to manage stress	-.014	-.009	-.009	.523	1.912
Very appreciative	-.054	-.051	-.051	.603	1.660
Capable of expressing emotion	-.084	-.060	-.060	.371	2.692
Resilience	.015	.016	.016	.751	1.331
Adaptability	-.022	-.025	-.025	.819	1.221

The zero-order coefficients of 0.003, 0.080, -0.16, -0.014, -0.054, 0.084, 0.015 and -0.022 indicate the relationships between emotional maturity and its components of Self-control, Ability to Manage Stress, Very Appreciative, Capable of Expressing Emotion, Resilience and Adaptability with social phobia. Additionally, the partial correlation coefficients of 0.015, 0.029, -0.009, -0.051, -0.060, 0.016, and -0.025 highlight these relationships as well. The tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the independent variables have also been calculated.

Discussion of Findings

Prevalence of social phobia among University Undergraduate Students in Delta State.

The first finding in this study revealed that social phobia is moderately prevalent among university undergraduates in Delta State. This finding indicates that a significant number of students experience anxiety and fear in social situations, which can have a detrimental impact on their social and academic lives. A plausible reason for this finding is that university life often involves new social challenges, academic pressures, and the need to interact with peers, faculty, and others in various settings. These circumstances may trigger social anxiety in students who are not emotionally prepared to handle such situations. This finding aligns with the study of Jones (2020), who found that a significant proportion of university students worldwide experience social phobia, often exacerbated by the pressures of academic performance and peer relationships. Similarly, Smith and Williams (2018) identified that social phobia is linked to decreased self-esteem and poor academic participation. The results of this study suggest the importance of implementing support systems, such as counselling services, to help students manage social anxiety and encourage their active participation in university life.

Status of Emotional Maturity among University Undergraduate Students in Delta State.

The second finding in this study revealed that emotional maturity among university undergraduate students in Delta State is generally low. This finding suggests that a large number of students may struggle with regulating their emotions, making thoughtful decisions, and effectively navigating social and academic challenges. A plausible reason for this is that many university students, especially those transitioning from high school, are still developing emotional and social competencies necessary for handling the stresses and complexities of adulthood and higher education. This finding aligns with the study of Gomez (2019) who reported that emotional immaturity is common among university students, particularly in their early years, when they are adjusting to new environments and responsibilities. Moreover, Miller and Barnes (2017) emphasised the importance of emotional intelligence for academic success and interpersonal relationships, noting that students with low emotional maturity may experience higher levels of stress and anxiety. The results of this study highlight the need for university programs focused on emotional intelligence development, stress management, and coping skills to help students navigate both their academic and personal lives more effectively.

Relationship between Emotional Maturity and Social Phobia among University Undergraduate Students in Delta State.

The result of research question three and its corresponding hypothesis one revealed no significant relationship between emotional maturity and social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State. This suggests that emotional maturity, encompassing the ability to regulate emotions, exhibit self-control, and maintain healthy interpersonal

relationships, may not be a central factor in predicting the presence or severity of social phobia in this population. Several plausible explanations support this finding. Firstly, social phobia might be driven more by environmental, situational, or cognitive factors than emotional maturity. For example, university students often face unique stressors such as academic demands, peer pressure, and fear of judgement, which could contribute to social anxiety independently of their emotional regulation abilities. Secondly, emotional maturity is a developmental process that may not yet be fully realised in young adults, particularly those navigating the social and emotional complexities of university life. Even those demonstrating higher levels of emotional maturity may still experience social phobia due to other factors like genetic predispositions, early life experiences, or adverse social environments. Lastly, the ingrained cognitive patterns and perceptions central to social phobia may not necessarily correspond with an individual's emotional maturity, indicating that the disorder operates through mechanisms that emotional regulation alone may not influence.

However, these findings stand in contrast to research by Gayatri and Vincent (2016), who argued that emotional maturity is intrinsically linked to social anxiety, with emotionally mature individuals better equipped to manage social fears and maintain confidence in interpersonal interactions. Similarly, Carpenter et al. (2018) observed that deficits in emotional regulation often exacerbate social phobia, suggesting that individuals with lower emotional maturity are more likely to struggle with fear of judgement and avoidance behaviours. Nolen-Hoeksema and Schweizer (2010) further posited that emotional maturity plays a critical role in mitigating the development and severity of anxiety disorders, including social phobia, as it provides individuals with the tools necessary to challenge negative thought patterns and manage anxiety-provoking situations.

Conclusion

This study examined the prevalence of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State and investigated whether emotional maturity plays a determining role. The findings indicate that social phobia is moderately prevalent among university undergraduates, suggesting that a significant proportion of students' experience anxiety and fear in social situations. Additionally, the study revealed that emotional maturity among these students is generally low, which may contribute to various psychological and social challenges. However, contrary to expectations, the statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between emotional maturity and social phobia, indicating that other factors beyond emotional maturity may be influencing social phobia among undergraduates in Delta State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Universities in Delta State should organize workshops and seminars to educate students on social phobia, its impact, and coping strategies. This can help reduce stigma and encourage affected students to seek help.
2. University counseling centers should be equipped with trained professionals who can provide therapy and support for students experiencing social phobia. Psychological services should be made accessible and affordable to encourage students to utilize them.
3. Universities authority should integrate emotional intelligence development programs into their curriculum. This can include activities that enhance self-awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills.

REFERENCES

- Alberti, R. E., & Emmons, M. L. (2008). *Your perfect right: Assertiveness and equality in your life and relationships*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., & Tice, D. M. (2007). The strength model of self-control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(6), 351-355.
- Brackett, M. A., & Salovey, P. (2019). *Emotional intelligence: Key readings on the Mayer and Salovey model*. Dude Publishing.
- Carpenter, J. K., Andersen, P., & Hofmann, S. G. (2018). The role of emotion regulation in social anxiety disorder: A systematic review. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 108, 129-149.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.
- Gayatri, R., & Vincent, A. (2016). Emotional maturity and its impact on social anxiety among college students. *Journal of Psychological Studies*, 12(2), 78-90.
- Goleman, D. (2018). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam.
- Gomez, L. R. (2019). Emotional immaturity and its implications for university students' adaptation to academic life. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 35(4), 215-230.
- Gross, J. J. (2002). Emotion regulation: Affective, cognitive, and social consequences. *Psychophysiology*, 39(3), 281-291.
- Jones, T. M. (2020). Social phobia among university students: Prevalence, contributing factors, and interventions. *International Journal of Mental Health Studies*, 27(3), 301-319.
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (2024). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing.
- Martin, A. J., Nejad, H. G., Colmar, S., & Liem, G. A. (2013). Adaptability: Conceptual and empirical perspectives on responses to change, novelty, and uncertainty. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 23(1), 58-81.
- Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 227-238.
- Miller, D. L., & Barnes, S. P. (2017). The role of emotional intelligence in higher education: Implications for academic success and student well-being. *Educational Psychology Review*, 22(1), 45-60.
- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., & Schweizer, S. (2010). Emotion-regulation strategies and their relation to anxiety disorders. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 6, 271-291.
- Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185-211.
- Smith, J. K., & Williams, R. A. (2018). The impact of social anxiety on academic participation and self-esteem in university students. *Journal of College Mental Health*, 20(2), 134-147.
- Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2018). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13(3), 243-274.