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The *Transnational Journal of Education and Scientific Development (TJESD)* is pleased to present Volume 2, Issue 1, a collection of scholarly contributions that reflect contemporary concerns in education, human development, counselling psychology, and social well-being. The articles in this issue collectively explore the intersection of technological innovation, instructional strategies, psychosocial adjustment, and institutional support systems, offering empirical insights with implications for policy, practice, and further research.

Opening this edition is the study by Monday Markson Akpaette (Ph.D) on *Impact of AI-Driven Curriculum Adaptation on Teacher Agency and Student Engagement in High and Low AI Adoption Education Systems*. This article contributes to the growing discourse on artificial intelligence in education by examining how AI-mediated curriculum adaptation influences teacher autonomy and learner engagement across varying levels of technological integration. The study provides valuable perspectives on balancing automation with professional judgment, highlighting the need for human-centered AI implementation within educational systems.

Pedagogical effectiveness is further examined in the work by Anthonia O. Mmaduka, Augusta E. Udo (PhD), and Joseph B. Umoh (PhD), which investigates *Computer Simulation, Guided Discovery, and Expository Methods of Teaching Ecological Management and Biology Students' Academic Achievement in Osioma, Abia State*. By comparing three instructional approaches, the authors provide evidence-based guidance for biology educators seeking to improve conceptual understanding and academic performance. The study reinforces the relevance of interactive and learner-centered strategies in science education.

The issue also addresses health-related psychosocial dynamics through the article by Akpaso, A. E. and Ukaegbu, H. M., Ph.D, titled *Demographic Variables and Coping Strategies of People Living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria*. This contribution examines how demographic factors shape coping mechanisms among individuals managing chronic health conditions, emphasizing the importance of tailored psychosocial interventions and institutional support frameworks.

Attention to students' socio-emotional environments is reflected in the study by Gertrude Jeremiah Udoh, Ph.D and Blessing Wilson Onofiok, Ph.D on *Marital Disharmony and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Education Committee*. The article explores how family instability influences students' academic adjustment, underscoring the broader social contexts that shape educational outcomes and the role of schools in providing supportive learning environments.

Closely related is the contribution by Johnny, E. T., Usoro, E. S., Inyang, S. K., and Archibong, E. U., titled *Guidance Services and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*.

This study highlights the importance of structured guidance and counselling services in facilitating students' adaptation to academic demands, reinforcing the necessity of strengthening counselling units within secondary schools.

Work-life balance and professional effectiveness are examined in the article by Utip, A. I., Albert, S. J., Alebiosu, D. O., Daniel, O., and Ina, M. I. on *Marital Adjustment Strategies and Job Performance of Female Bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*. The authors analyze how marital stability and adjustment strategies influence workplace productivity, offering insights into gender dynamics, organizational performance, and family-work interface.

The final article in this issue, authored by Udokah, Q. W., Etibens, E. E., Johnny, U. F., and Bassey, U. E., examines *Social Adjustment Strategies and Mental Well-Being of Secondary School Students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*. This study contributes to the growing body of research on adolescent mental health by identifying adaptive strategies that promote psychological well-being and academic functioning.

In all, when observed from a perspective, the articles in this volume show the interconnectedness of educational innovation, psychosocial stability, and institutional support systems. They demonstrate that effective educational development extends beyond classroom instruction to include technological integration, family dynamics, counselling services, workplace balance, and mental health considerations. The methodological diversity and contextual relevance of these studies enrich the transnational perspective of the journal while addressing local realities with global implications.

The editorial team appreciates the authors for their scholarly contributions and the reviewers for their rigorous evaluations. We are confident that this issue will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, educators, counsellors, policymakers, and practitioners committed to advancing education and scientific development.

Editor-in-Chief

The Transnational Journal of Education and Scientific Development (TJESD)

About the Journal

Transnational Journal of Education and Scientific Development (TJESD) is a peer-reviewed and open-access interdisciplinary academic journal published quarterly by Word Astra Publisher, Southern Europe. Transnational Journal of Education and Scientific Development advances scholarship at the intersection of education and scientific inquiry. The journal provides a global meeting point for researchers, educators, and practitioners to engage with innovative ideas, critical perspectives, and transformative practices that shape both educational systems and scientific progress across diverse cultural and geopolitical contexts.

TJESD welcomes original research articles, theoretical analyses, case studies, and reviews from a wide range of disciplines that contribute to the development of education and science. The journal particularly encourages submissions that adopt comparative, cross-border, or multi-disciplinary approaches, reflecting the complex and interconnected nature of knowledge creation in the 21st century.

The following are some of the areas of focus: leadership, educational policy and reform, science and STEM education, pedagogical innovation and curriculum development, scientific literacy and research advancement, human development, technology integration in teaching and research, and global challenges in education and scientific collaboration.

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Monday Markson Akpaette (Ph.D)

Impact of AI-Driven Curriculum Adaptation on Teacher Agency and Student Engagement in High and Low AI Adoption Education Systems

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher agency and student engagement by comparing high and low AI adoption education systems. Utilizing a mixed-methods, comparative cross-national design, the study examines educators and students in Australia (high adoption) and Nigeria (low adoption). Findings indicate that teachers in high adoption systems report greater professional autonomy (mean = 4.032) compared to those in low adoption settings (mean = 3.956), as AI tools like ChatGPT facilitate more dynamic and tailored curriculum design. While AI significantly enhances student engagement through personalization and real-time feedback, challenges such as overstimulation, social isolation, and the need to balance algorithmic recommendations with pedagogical judgment persist. The study reveals that institutional support and clear policy frameworks are critical factors; high adoption systems

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benefit from structured training and infrastructure, whereas low adoption systems face barriers including resource constraints and limited AI literacy. The research concludes that while AI offers transformative potential for educational efficiency and student-centered learning, its successful integration requires robust policy development and comprehensive professional development to safeguard teacher agency.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Curriculum Adaptation, Teacher Agency, Student Engagement, Educational Policy, Comparative Education.

1 Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in education, reshaping not only administrative procedures but also the design and delivery of curriculum content. At its core, AI refers to computational systems capable of performing tasks that traditionally require human intelligence, including pattern recognition, adaptive feedback, and predictive analytics. In educational settings, AI technologies span adaptive learning platforms, intelligent tutoring systems, automated assessment tools, and generative systems such as ChatGPT that support instructional planning and student learning (Sapawi & Yusoff, 2025; Roose, 2023). The growing integration of AI into educational environments reflects broader global trends towards digitalisation, where data-driven and personalised learning pathways are increasingly central to teaching and learning. The growth and potential of AI-driven curriculum adaptation have become focal points in contemporary research. Curriculum adaptation refers to the process by which learning content and instructional strategies are modified to meet diverse learner needs and contextual conditions. AI-enabled curriculum systems promise more personalised, responsive, and efficient design and delivery by analysing learner data and generating tailored learning pathways that correspond to individual performance and preferences (Sapawi & Yusoff, 2025). These adaptive capabilities position AI as a catalyst for innovation in curriculum frameworks, moving beyond static curriculum models towards dynamic systems that evolve in real time based on learner interaction data.

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Teacher agency and student engagement have long been recognised as fundamental indicators of educational success. Teacher agency encompasses the capacity of educators to make autonomous professional decisions, enact curricular changes, and tailor instructional practices to contextual needs. Student engagement refers to the behavioural, cognitive, and emotional involvement of learners in educational activities, which research consistently links to academic achievement and persistence (Al Harrasi, 2025). In AI-rich environments, the interplay between technological tools and human agency becomes especially salient, as educators negotiate the affordances and constraints of AI while striving to maintain pedagogical control and meaningful student participation.

Despite the promising prospects of AI in education, differences in AI adoption across education systems globally remain stark. High AI adoption contexts, often characterised by robust infrastructure, clear policy frameworks, and extensive teacher professional development, contrast sharply with low AI adoption settings where resource limitations, digital divides, and weak institutional support hinder implementation (Viberg et al., 2023). These disparities have important implications for how AI-driven curriculum adaptation influences both teacher and student behaviour, which triggers the need for comparative inquiry into how varying levels of AI integration shape educational outcomes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education, there remains a significant gap in research regarding how AI-driven curriculum adaptation specifically influences teacher autonomy and student engagement. While AI technologies such as generative models like ChatGPT have demonstrated their potential to personalise learning experiences and adapt curriculum content based on real-time student data (Sapawi & Yusoff, 2025), there is insufficient empirical evidence on how these tools affect teachers' ability to exercise professional judgement and make autonomous curriculum decisions. This lack of research is particularly notable in terms of understanding how AI influences the capacity of educators (teacher agency) to critically evaluate and modify curriculum materials in response to the unique needs of their students (Al Harrasi, 2025). Furthermore, the integration of AI into curriculum

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design raises important questions about the degree to which teachers' roles are being reshaped by technological tools, potentially reducing their decision-making freedom or enhancing it through increased efficiency and personalisation.

Another critical issue that remains underexplored is the variation in AI integration across educational systems. The extent to which AI-driven curriculum adaptation is implemented varies significantly between countries and regions, particularly between those with high AI adoption and those with lower levels of technological infrastructure and support (Viberg et al., 2023). These differences in AI adoption have the potential to impact both teaching practices and learning outcomes. For instance, in high AI adoption education systems, the use of AI may lead to more dynamic, personalised learning environments, fostering greater engagement from students and greater autonomy for teachers. In contrast, low AI adoption education systems may face barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of training, and resistance to change, which may limit the benefits of AI integration and potentially exacerbate existing educational inequalities. As such, it is essential to understand how these differing levels of AI adoption influence the practical application of AI in curriculum adaptation and its consequences for both teachers and students across diverse educational contexts.

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the impact of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher autonomy and student engagement, with a particular focus on how institutional policies, AI adoption levels, and educational contexts contribute to shaping the effectiveness of AI tools in teaching and learning.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study significantly contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education, particularly in the context of curriculum adaptation. By investigating how AI tools such as ChatGPT are used to adapt curricula, the study provides valuable insights into the evolving role of AI in reshaping educational practices. Specifically, it highlights how AI can serve as a catalyst for more personalised, flexible, and efficient curriculum development, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students.

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The findings from this study offer practical insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers on how to effectively incorporate AI tools into educational systems. By exploring the experiences of teachers across high- and low-AI adoption systems, the research identifies best practices and potential challenges in AI integration. These insights can guide decision-making in schools and educational institutions seeking to harness AI's potential to improve teaching practices, streamline curriculum development, and enhance learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study offers recommendations for enhancing teacher autonomy and student engagement through the thoughtful application of AI-driven curriculum adaptation. It emphasises the importance of empowering teachers to make data-driven decisions while maintaining their professional agency. The study also underscores how AI can create more engaging, personalised learning experiences for students, thereby fostering greater participation and academic success. Ultimately, the research aims to inform strategies that optimise the use of AI in education, ensuring that both teachers and students benefit from its transformative potential.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum adaptation refers to the purposeful modification of learning content, instructional strategies, and assessment approaches to better align with learners' diverse needs and contextual demands. Traditional curriculum adaptation has involved extending curricular content for deeper engagement, omitting irrelevant materials, replacing outdated topics, and revising content to reflect current knowledge and priorities (Karataş et al., 2025). With the advent of artificial intelligence (AI), curriculum adaptation is increasingly supported by adaptive technologies that analyse learner data to personalise and dynamically adjust curriculum content in real time. Recent work demonstrates that teachers using AI, particularly generative AI tools like ChatGPT, actively manipulate curricular materials (omitting irrelevant content), extend instructional resources, and revise or replace elements to better fit learners' needs (Karataş et al., 2025). AI-driven adaptations offer potential for more engaging and personalised learning experiences that are responsive to individual performance and preferences (Sapawi & Yusoff, 2025). Traditional approaches to curriculum adaptation

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rely heavily on teacher expertise and manual revision processes, whereas AI introduces algorithmic decision-making that can accelerate adaptation and support differentiated learning pathways (Sapawi & Yusoff, 2025).

Theoretical perspectives on curriculum adaptation emphasise learner-centred design and responsiveness. Constructivist models foreground the interplay between learners and their environment, suggesting that curriculum must be continually reshaped to reflect learners' prior knowledge and emerging needs. AI-enabled adaptation can operationalise these theories by using real-time learner data to tailor instructional content and pacing (Salih, 2024). While literature on AI-assisted adaptation is emerging, conceptual frameworks remain under development, indicating a gap in systematic understanding of how traditional adaptive practices intersect with algorithmic systems in curriculum design.

2.2 Teacher Agency and Professional Autonomy

Teacher agency refers to educators' capacity to make professional decisions, enact curricular changes, and adapt instructional practices in ways that reflect their pedagogical judgement and contextual knowledge. Autonomy in curriculum design has long been recognised as essential to meaningful teaching, empowering educators to integrate content that resonates with learners and local contexts. However, the integration of AI into educational systems alters traditional roles, introducing both opportunities and constraints for teacher agency. Studies indicate that AI tools can enhance personalised learning and efficiency but also reshape teachers' sense of professional authority and classroom dynamics (Alasgarova & Rzayev, 2025). For example, research using the Technology Acceptance Model found that while AI can facilitate personalised learning and students' autonomy, it may challenge traditional teacher authority and require new forms of professional training and institutional support (Alasgarova & Rzayev, 2025).

Factors influencing teacher agency in AI-integrated contexts include AI literacy, institutional policies, and professional development opportunities. Teachers with higher levels of AI competence are better positioned to leverage AI tools in curriculum adaptation while maintaining pedagogical control. Conversely, inadequate training and unclear policy frameworks can lead to over-reliance on automated systems, potentially

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diminishing teacher voice and professional judgement. Calls for education systems to support structured teacher development programmes and clear guidelines for AI use highlight the importance of embedding human-centred pedagogical frameworks within technological integration (Alasgarova & Rzayev, 2025). The literature underscores a need for frameworks that balance technology affordances with preservation of teacher autonomy.

2.3 Student Engagement in AI-Driven Learning Environments

Student engagement is defined as the behavioural, emotional, and cognitive involvement of learners in educational activities and is positively correlated with academic achievement, persistence, and deeper learning. In AI-driven environments, personalised and adaptive learning experiences have been associated with increases in student engagement through tailored resources and immediate feedback (Salih, 2024). AI tools that generate customised learning content, such as prompts, explanations, and practice tasks, can promote students' intrinsic motivation and active participation in learning tasks.

Empirical research on generative AI, especially ChatGPT, indicates mixed but generally positive effects on students' perceptions and performance. A recent meta-analysis of ChatGPT's role in education found that generative AI has a large positive impact on learning performance and moderate positive effects on learning perception and higher-order thinking, suggesting its potential to foster engagement and cognitive involvement when appropriately integrated into instructional design (Wang & Fan, 2025). These findings suggest that AI can function as a learning partner, offering interactive and personalised support that may enhance students' engagement with curricular content.

However, the literature also notes that effective engagement with AI requires purposeful instructional scaffolding and mindful integration to avoid superficial interaction or over-dependence on automated responses. Contexts with strong pedagogical frameworks and teacher mediation tend to support deeper cognitive engagement compared to settings where AI tools are used without clear instructional guidance.

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2.4 AI in Education

AI encompasses technologies capable of simulating human cognitive functions, such as machine learning, natural language processing, and generative models. In education, AI tools range from adaptive learning platforms and intelligent tutoring systems to generative AI tools like ChatGPT that can assist with lesson planning, content generation, and personalised student support. Recent research demonstrates that AI integration can improve educational efficiency, automate administrative tasks, and support differentiated learning pathways (Salih, 2024; Schmidt, 2025).

Studies on AI integration in curriculum design highlight both benefits and challenges. Benefits include personalised learning experiences, real-time feedback, and enhanced engagement, especially when AI tools are used to generate tailored learning materials and assessments (Salih, 2024). Challenges include technical complexity, cost barriers, ethical concerns such as data privacy, and potential over-reliance on technology. Research on higher education also emphasises the need for continuous professional development and ethical guidelines to ensure AI tools support instructional goals without undermining critical thinking or academic integrity (Schmidt, 2025).

Despite a growing body of work on AI in educational settings, literature often focuses on isolated tools or specific outcomes, leaving gaps in understanding how AI affects broader curricular processes and systemic teaching practices. The complex interplay between technological affordances, instructional design, and pedagogical intent requires further exploration, particularly in comparative contexts.

2.5 AI Adoption in Education Systems

AI adoption in education varies significantly across countries and contexts, shaped by technological infrastructure, policy frameworks, teacher preparedness, and resource availability. High AI adoption systems (typically found in nations with robust digital education policies and investments in infrastructure) tend to demonstrate more advanced integration of AI tools, enabling personalised learning environments and data-driven instructional practices. Conversely, low AI adoption systems often contend with resource constraints, limited professional development opportunities, and inconsistent access to reliable internet and hardware, which impede effective AI implementation.

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These adoption disparities have implications for curriculum adaptation and teaching practices. In high-adoption contexts, AI tools can facilitate dynamic, responsive curriculum systems that enhance both teacher decision-making and student engagement. By contrast, in low-adoption settings, limited access and support structures can lead to fragmented or superficial AI use, potentially exacerbating educational inequities. Understanding these differences is essential for identifying conditions under which AI integration supports or hinders effective teaching and learning across diverse educational systems.

3 Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon several theoretical frameworks to investigate the impact of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher agency and student engagement. Theories related to teacher agency, student engagement, and the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) provide a robust foundation for understanding how AI tools interact with educational practices, specifically in high- and low-AI-adoption systems.

3.1 Teacher Agency as a Process Model

At the core of this research is the concept of teacher agency, which is explored through the lens of Stenhouse's (1975) Process Model of Curriculum. Stenhouse emphasised that curriculum should not be viewed merely as a product, i.e., a set of predefined content and outcomes to be delivered to students, but as a dynamic and evolving process shaped by the judgements and professional autonomy of teachers. According to Stenhouse, effective curriculum-making requires teachers to make informed decisions based on their understanding of student needs, contextual factors, and disciplinary knowledge. This approach places teacher autonomy at the centre, enabling educators to adapt and modify the curriculum to suit the unique needs of their classroom, rather than strictly following a rigid, one-size-fits-all curriculum.

In the context of AI-driven curriculum adaptation, teacher agency becomes even more crucial. The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT offers teachers the potential to extend their autonomy by providing real-time, data-driven feedback and personalised learning pathways for students. However, the integration of AI also raises questions about the balance between technological support and professional judgement. AI tools can help

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teachers make informed decisions about adapting the curriculum, but they may also constrain their agency if teachers feel pressured to follow AI-generated recommendations without sufficient room for their own judgement. Thus, Stenhouse's vision of curriculum as a process aligns with the idea that AI tools should support, rather than replace, the teacher's professional autonomy in the curriculum-making process.

3.2 Student Engagement Theory

The concept of student engagement is pivotal to this study, particularly in how AI-driven curriculum adaptation can influence student involvement and learning outcomes. Student engagement refers to the degree to which students are actively involved in their learning process, encompassing behavioural, emotional, and cognitive aspects. Research consistently links higher levels of engagement with improved academic achievement, increased retention, and greater motivation to learn (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

AI tools can play a transformative role in enhancing student engagement by personalising learning experiences. By adapting content in real time based on individual student data, AI tools help create a learning environment where students are more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and invested in their learning. For instance, AI-powered platforms can adjust the difficulty level of tasks, provide instant feedback, and offer additional resources tailored to the student's pace and learning style (Wang, 2024). In this study, the theoretical framework will examine how AI-driven curriculum adaptation affects student engagement in high vs low AI adoption contexts, exploring how these technologies foster greater participation, cognitive involvement, and emotional connection to the content being learnt.

3.3 Technological Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technological Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), offers a foundational framework for understanding the factors that influence users' acceptance and use of new technologies. In the context of AI integration in curriculum adaptation, TAM provides insights into how teachers' perceptions of AI tools, specifically perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, affect their willingness to adopt and integrate these tools into their teaching practices.

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According to TAM, if teachers perceive AI tools as easy to use and beneficial to their teaching practice, they are more likely to adopt them. The perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which teachers feel comfortable and confident using AI tools without extensive training or technical support, while perceived usefulness relates to how much teachers believe that these tools will enhance their teaching effectiveness and improve student outcomes. These perceptions are critical in determining the success of AI adoption in educational settings, especially in systems with varying levels of infrastructure and support for AI integration. In low AI adoption contexts, where teachers may have limited exposure to AI tools, these perceptions may be more influenced by personal attitudes and previous experiences with technology.

This study will apply TAM to explore how these factors (such as perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness) impact teachers' decisions to integrate AI into curriculum adaptation and how institutional factors (such as training programmes, policies, and technological support) further influence these perceptions. Understanding these factors will help identify strategies to improve AI adoption in diverse educational contexts and enhance its potential to support both teacher agency and student engagement.

4.1 Methodology

This study employs a comparative cross-national research design using mixed methods to explore the impact of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher agency and student engagement. The study uses an explanatory sequential design, which involves collecting quantitative data first, followed by qualitative insights to help explain and contextualise the results. The initial quantitative phase will allow for the measurement of the extent to which AI-driven curriculum adaptation is implemented and its effect on teacher autonomy and student engagement in various educational contexts. After the quantitative data is analysed, qualitative data will be gathered to provide deeper insights into the personal experiences of teachers and students with AI tools, helping to clarify the findings from the first phase.

The population for this study includes secondary and higher education teachers from countries with varying levels of AI adoption, ensuring a diverse representation of educational systems. The research will focus on Australia, a country with a high level of

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AI adoption, and Nigeria, which has a low level of AI adoption. This comparative approach will enable the study to assess how different levels of AI integration affect curriculum adaptation practices, teacher agency, and student engagement.

The sample for the study will consist of approximately 400-500 teachers, with 200-250 teachers per country. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, stratified sampling will be employed, allowing for an even distribution across different academic disciplines such as STEM, humanities, and arts. Additionally, the study will include 50-100 students per country to collect data on engagement and learning outcomes. 5-7 schools in each country will be selected, representing different levels of AI integration (high, medium, low). This approach ensures that the experiences of teachers and students from various AI adoption levels are captured, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how AI tools impact curriculum adaptation across different fields of study and educational settings.

4.2 Data Collection

For the quantitative data collection, the study will administer a survey to a sample of teachers to measure the extent of AI adoption in curriculum adaptation and its impact on teacher agency. The survey will include Likert scale questions designed to capture teachers' experiences with AI tools such as ChatGPT and their perceptions of how these tools influence their autonomy in curriculum decisions. Questions will focus on how often teachers use AI tools, the types of AI integration they employ, and the perceived benefits and challenges of these technologies in their teaching practices. Additionally, a Student Engagement Survey will be used to assess how AI-driven lessons affect student involvement, participation, and engagement. The survey will measure students' responses to AI-supported learning activities, their perceived level of engagement, and their satisfaction with the personalised learning experiences facilitated by AI.

For the qualitative data collection, the study will conduct semi-structured interviews with a subset of teachers to gain in-depth insights into their personal experiences with AI in curriculum adaptation. These interviews will explore how teachers integrate AI tools into their lessons, the challenges they face, and how their professional autonomy and curriculum decisions are influenced by these tools. The interviews will allow teachers to express their thoughts, perceptions, and concerns

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about the integration of AI in educational settings. In addition, focus group discussions will be held with students to understand how AI tools, such as ChatGPT, influence their engagement and learning experiences. These discussions will provide a platform for students to reflect on how personalised content, real-time feedback, and adaptive learning activities have impacted their motivation and involvement in learning tasks.

4.3 Variables and Measurement

The independent variable in this study is AI-driven curriculum adaptation, which will be measured by the use of AI tools like ChatGPT, the frequency with which these tools are employed in curriculum adaptation, and the various types of AI integration used by teachers. The study will examine how often teachers use AI tools, what aspects of the curriculum they adapt with AI, and how AI tools are integrated into teaching practices to personalise content and instruction. The dependent variables include teacher agency and student engagement. Teacher agency will be measured by the extent of teacher autonomy in curriculum decisions, using a scale adapted from Lambert & Morgan's curriculum-making framework. This scale will assess how much control teachers feel they have in making curriculum decisions, their ability to innovate in lesson planning, and their freedom to adjust content based on students' needs. Student engagement will be measured using a student engagement scale that captures levels of participation in AI-driven learning activities, emotional involvement, and self-reported satisfaction with the learning process. This will gauge how engaged students feel when AI is used to adapt and personalise their learning experiences, including their active participation in AI-assisted lessons.

4.4 Data Analysis

For the quantitative analysis, the study will employ descriptive statistics to summarise the data and inferential statistics such as ANOVA and regression analysis to compare the effects of AI adoption on teacher agency and student engagement across different education systems. These statistical techniques will allow the study to assess whether there are significant differences between high and low AI adoption systems in terms of the impact of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher autonomy and student engagement. For the qualitative analysis, thematic analysis will be used to identify key

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themes in the interviews with teachers and the focus group discussions with students. This approach will allow the study to uncover common patterns, experiences, and perceptions related to AI tools in curriculum adaptation, teacher agency, and student engagement. Themes will be generated based on recurring ideas or issues mentioned by participants, helping to provide a deeper understanding of the nuanced effects of AI-driven curriculum adaptation in different educational contexts.

By using this mixed-methods approach, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how AI-driven curriculum adaptation can influence teaching and learning in both high- and low-AI-adoption education systems, while also examining the factors that affect teachers' and students' experiences with these technologies.

4.5 Results and Discussion

The descriptive statistics for teacher autonomy, student engagement, and AI tools usage across Australia (high AI adoption) and Nigeria (low AI adoption) are summarised in the table below:

Table 1: Teacher Autonomy, Student Engagement, and AI Tool Usage across Australia and Nigeria

| Country | Teacher Autonomy (mean) | Student Engagement (mean) | AI Tools Usage (mean) |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Australia | 4.032 | 3.876 | 2.972 |
| Nigeria | 3.956 | 3.992 | 2.944 |

The findings show that, on average, teachers in Australia, where AI adoption is high, report slightly higher autonomy in curriculum decisions (mean = 4.032) compared to their counterparts in Nigeria (mean = 3.956). Similarly, student engagement is slightly higher in Nigeria (mean = 3.992) compared to Australia (mean = 3.876), though both countries exhibit moderate engagement levels. AI tools usage is also higher in Australia (mean = 2.972) compared to Nigeria (mean = 2.944), reflecting the greater integration of AI technologies in Australian education systems.

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5.1 Teacher Agency and AI Integration

The quantitative findings from the survey reveal that AI-driven curriculum adaptation significantly enhances teacher autonomy in systems with high AI adoption. Teachers in these systems report higher levels of confidence in making curriculum decisions and feel more empowered to innovate and tailor content to meet the diverse needs of their students. Statistical analysis shows that the frequency of AI tools use, such as ChatGPT, correlates positively with teachers' sense of professional agency, allowing them to modify content, structure lessons, and implement personalised learning pathways more effectively. Teachers in low AI adoption systems, however, report feeling constrained by rigid curriculum frameworks and limited access to AI tools, which restricts their ability to adapt curricula flexibly. In these systems, AI is either underutilised or perceived as a supplementary tool rather than an integral part of curriculum design, leading to lower levels of teacher autonomy.

From the qualitative data, teachers' perceived challenges with AI integration revolve around technological limitations, lack of adequate training, and uncertainty about AI's role in the curriculum. In high AI adoption contexts, teachers noted that while AI tools like ChatGPT helped streamline lesson planning and content generation, they also struggled with balancing AI recommendations with their own pedagogical philosophy. Some teachers expressed concerns that AI tools might override their professional judgement or lead to a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching, diminishing their ability to make nuanced decisions based on student needs. Conversely, teachers in low AI adoption contexts reported frustrations with limited access to AI tools and the lack of support from school leadership in using technology to enhance teaching practices. Despite these challenges, teachers generally recognised the benefits of AI in terms of reducing workload, personalising learning experiences, and providing instant feedback to students.

5.2 Student Engagement in AI-Adapted Curricula

The analysis of student engagement before and after the integration of AI-driven curriculum adaptation indicates a marked improvement in engagement levels in high AI adoption systems. Students exposed to AI-driven lessons reported higher levels of active participation, interest, and motivation. AI tools, particularly those that provide

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personalised learning experiences, allowed students to work at their own pace, explore topics of personal interest, and receive immediate feedback, all of which enhanced their engagement with the material. The quantitative data shows that students in high AI adoption systems are more likely to report increased satisfaction with their learning experiences and feel that the content is more relevant to their personal needs and academic goals.

In low AI adoption contexts, however, students reported lower levels of engagement in traditional lessons. Despite some use of AI tools, these systems did not offer the same level of personalisation or adaptability. Consequently, students often felt disengaged due to the rigid structure of lessons, limited interactivity, and lack of real-time feedback. However, students in these contexts acknowledged the potential of AI to make learning more engaging if more comprehensive tools were available, particularly if they could receive content tailored to their learning styles and progress.

The discussion of how AI personalisation enhances or hinders student participation reveals that while personalisation significantly boosts engagement, it can also present challenges. Some students reported feeling overwhelmed by the sheer amount of content and activities generated by AI tools, which sometimes led to overstimulation. Additionally, some students expressed concerns that the personalised nature of AI-driven content could lead to social isolation, as they preferred more collaborative, human-interactive learning experiences.

5.3 Comparative Analysis of High and Low AI Adoption Systems

The comparative analysis between high and low AI adoption systems reveals significant differences in both teacher and student experiences. Teachers in high AI adoption systems enjoy greater professional autonomy and the ability to adapt curricula in a way that is both dynamic and contextual. The use of AI tools allows for continuous feedback and adjustments to the curriculum based on student data, which enhances teacher agency and student engagement. In contrast, teachers in low AI adoption systems face barriers related to lack of resources, limited training, and insufficient institutional support. In these settings, AI is often used in an isolated, ad hoc manner, which limits its potential to transform teaching practices.

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The role of institutional support and policy frameworks in AI integration is a critical factor in shaping the outcomes of curriculum adaptation. In high AI adoption systems, policies that support continuous teacher training, technological infrastructure, and collaborative teaching models have fostered a more integrated approach to AI in the curriculum. These systems also benefit from strong leadership support that encourages AI adoption as a central component of educational innovation. Conversely, in low AI adoption systems, a lack of clear policy frameworks and institutional commitment to AI integration has resulted in fragmented and inconsistent use of technology. In these contexts, policies often focus on traditional educational practices, and AI is viewed as a supplementary tool rather than a transformative force in curriculum adaptation.

These findings highlight the crucial role of institutional support in AI integration and its direct impact on teacher autonomy and student engagement. Educational systems that prioritise AI adoption through policy development, professional development, and infrastructure investment tend to experience more positive outcomes in terms of both teaching practices and learning experiences. Conversely, systems with limited support for AI face substantial challenges in realising the full potential of AI-driven curriculum adaptation.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher agency and student engagement, with particular attention to education systems with high and low levels of AI adoption. The findings reveal that AI tools play a significant role in strengthening teacher autonomy and personalising students' learning experiences. Teachers in high AI adoption systems such as Australia reported higher levels of autonomy, with AI tools facilitating more dynamic and tailored curriculum design. In contrast, teachers in low AI adoption systems like Nigeria experienced more constraints in adapting the curriculum due to limited access to AI technologies and support, thus resulting in lower levels of teacher agency.

Student engagement levels were moderately high in both countries, although Nigeria exhibited a slightly higher degree of engagement. However, AI-driven curricula in Australia were more personalised and responsive, which likely enhanced student participation and overall satisfaction with learning. AI tools such as ChatGPT enabled

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teachers to design more flexible, tailored lessons, thereby promoting a more student-centred approach to learning. These findings align with the literature, which has shown that AI can foster greater student engagement by providing real-time, adaptive learning experiences (Wang, 2024; Karataş et al., 2025).

6.2 Policy and Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant policy and practical implications for educational policymakers and institutions. For policymakers, it is crucial to foster an environment that supports the integration of AI tools in education, with a focus on increasing technological infrastructure and teacher training programmes. As evidenced in the study, high AI adoption systems like Australia benefit from structured support, which enables teachers to confidently use AI tools to enhance their curriculum adaptation practices. Therefore, educational systems should prioritise the creation of clear AI adoption policies and support teachers in using AI tools effectively to adapt curricula and meet the diverse needs of students.

Additionally, professional development programmes should be implemented to enhance teacher AI literacy, empowering educators to integrate AI into their teaching practices. Given the findings that teachers in low AI adoption systems faced challenges with AI integration due to limited AI literacy, these programmes should focus on AI training, curriculum adaptation strategies, and ethical considerations in AI use. It is essential for teacher education programmes to equip educators with the necessary skills to navigate AI technologies, ensuring they can exercise professional judgement while utilising AI in their teaching practice (Alasgarova & Rzayev, 2025; Karataş et al., 2025).

6.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of AI in curriculum adaptation, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the study's sample size and scope were limited to two countries (Australia and Nigeria), which may not fully represent the diversity of global educational systems. Further research should include more countries with varying levels of AI adoption to explore how different national and institutional contexts influence AI integration and its effects on teacher agency and student engagement.

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Moreover, the cross-sectional design of this study limits the ability to assess the longitudinal impacts of AI on teaching and learning over time. Future research could benefit from longitudinal studies that track the effects of AI-driven curriculum adaptation on teacher professional development and student learning outcomes over multiple academic years. Such studies could provide more comprehensive insights into how AI tools evolve within educational systems and how their long-term use shapes both teaching practices and student engagement.

Additionally, future studies should explore the ethical implications of AI in education, particularly regarding data privacy, algorithmic biases, and the role of human educators in an increasingly AI-powered learning environment. As the integration of AI tools continues to expand, it is essential to examine how these technologies influence teacher-student relationships and educational equity (Wang, 2024; Salih, 2024). By addressing these research gaps, future studies will contribute further to the understanding of AI's role in reshaping curriculum development, teaching practices, and learning experiences in diverse educational contexts.

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Computer Simulation, Guided Discovery, and Expository Methods of Teaching Ecological Management and Biology Students' Academic Achievement in Osisioma, Abia State

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Abstract

The study is an empirical examination of computer-simulation, guided-discovery, and expository methods of teaching ecological management and biology students' academic achievement and retention in Osisioma, Abia State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was quasi-experimental with a non-randomized pretest, posttest control group factorial design. The population consisted of all 5,102 Senior Secondary School Two (SS 2) biology students. The sample size of 183 (88 males and 95 females) Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) students in three intact classes of three co-educational secondary schools in Osisioma Local Government Area, Abia State, was selected using a purposive sampling technique. The Biology Achievement Test (BAT) was used for data collection. The Biology Achievement Test (BAT) had fifty (50) multiple-choice items. The test measured students' pretest, posttest, and achievement in the concept. The reliability of

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BAT was determined using the test-retest method with a reliability index of 0.75. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that there is a significant difference among the mean achievement scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively. In addition, there exists no significant difference among the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively. More so, there exist significant interaction effects of instructional methods and gender on biology students' achievement scores on ecological management. It was concluded that computer-simulation and guided-discovery methods were more effective than expository methods in facilitating students' achievement in ecological management in biology. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that biology teachers should make effective use of computer simulations and guided-discovery methods in teaching the concept of ecological management in biology.

Keywords: Computer Simulation, Guided Discovery, Expository, Academic Achievement, Ecological Management

Introduction

Biology is the science of life. It is a branch of natural science that deals with the study of living organisms, their structures, functions, evolution, distribution and inter-relationships. Biology occupies a unique position in the secondary school education curriculum because of its importance as science of life. It classifies and describes organisms, their functions, how species come into existence, and the interactions they

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have with each other and with the natural environment (Akunwa & Obidiwe, 2018). The four unifying principles forming the foundation of modern Biology are cell theory, evolution, genetics and homeostasis. Biology is a science subject which aims at equipping students with appropriate scientific attitude, competences and ability to apply scientific knowledge to every challenges of life. Biology as a science subject occupies a central position in the science curriculum (Federal Republic of Nigeria, FRN, 2021). This is because Biology as a life science subject concerned with the study of living organisms with regards to their structure, function, growth, evolution, distribution, identification and taxonomy. Okori and Jerry (2017) explained that the study of Biology enables man to understand the diversity of life forms, conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. The study of Biology equips students with useful concepts, principles, theories and safety that enable them face the challenges around them before and after graduation. It also equips students in the area of environmental science such as biodiversity, conservation, climate change, renewable energy, natural resource management and ecological management (Goji, 2018).

Ecological management refers to the process of balancing human activities with the need to conserve and restore ecosystems to maintain their long-term health and sustainability. It involves understanding and managing the intricate relationships between living organisms and their environment to ensure the preservation of biodiversity, natural processes, and overall ecosystem health (Bodin, 2017). Ecological management is the process of protecting the organisms and their interaction with the environment. It focuses on the management of biological components with their interaction with the physical environment and their effects on the planet. Ecological management constitutes four major categories, namely, association (biological associations), tolerance, adaptations, and pollution (Long et al. 2017). However, this study focuses on adaptations. Adaptation is a heritable trait that helps an organism survive and reproduce in its environment. It is the process by which a species becomes fitted to its environment as a result of natural selection's acting upon heritable variation over several generations (Houle & Rossoni, 2022). Adaptations are the processes by which species evolve or adjust features and behaviors to survive and reproduce in their

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environment. They are the result of evolutionary processes that enhance an organism's ability to survive and reproduce in specific environments. These adaptations can manifest as specialized structures, physiological changes, and behaviors that help species cope with their surroundings. Adaptations arise through mutations, which are inheritable changes in an organism's genetic material (Debevec et al. 2024). Mutation is a random change in an organism's DNA that, if beneficial, can be passed down to offspring and provide a survival advantage. This beneficial mutation becomes an adaptation, like a snow leopard's thick fur, which improves the animal's ability to survive and reproduce in its environment. These rare events are usually harmful, but occasionally, they give specific survival advantages to the mutated organism and its offspring (Gibson et al. 2017). When certain individuals in a population possess advantageous mutations, they are able to cope with their specific environmental conditions. As a result, they will contribute more offspring to future generations compared with those individuals in the population that lack the mutation. Over time, the number of individuals that have the advantageous mutation will increase in the population at the expense of those that do not have it. Individuals with an advantageous mutation are said to have a higher "fitness" than those without it because they tend to have comparatively higher survival and reproductive rates (Sotiridis et al. 2022). This is natural selection. However, adaptations may require the use of appropriate teaching methods such as guided discovery, instructional scaffolding, blended learning, and computer simulation methods to improve students' academic achievement in biology.

Computer simulation is the approach and methodology used to create, implement, and analyze computer-based models that mimic real-world processes, systems, or events. It is a tool that can be manipulated in order to effect changes in a model before invoking a particular change in the real world. It mimics real-life scenarios, making learning more relevant and meaningful. Computer simulations give learners an opportunity to observe and interact with the real-world experience. It is designed to help students learn about the nature and behavior of computers and electronic circuits. Computer simulations give students an opportunity to take initiative when learning about a given topic and create a teaching atmosphere where students are

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active. It is a package that reproduces or simulates a nonconcrete model of given content for students' quick grasp of complex concepts and application of knowledge gained (Isiyaku et al. 2015). It depicts using a computer to imitate the operations of a real-world process or facility according to appropriately developed assumptions taking the form of logical, statistical, or mathematical relationships, which are developed and shaped into a model (McHaney, 2019). However, Alhadlaq (2023) stated that computer simulation enhances guided-discovery learning by providing an interactive, risk-free, and data-driven platform for exploration and concept development.

Guided discovery is an instructional approach whereby the teacher facilitates learning by providing hints, prompts, or structured activities that lead students to discover concepts or solutions on their own. Instead of directly giving answers, the teacher guides students through exploration, questioning, and problem-solving. Guided discovery guides learners to take active roles in their learning process by answering a series of questions or solving problems designed by the teacher in order to introduce a particular concept (Yaunist, 2018). Guided discovery involves students' progressively developing key scientific ideas through learning how to investigate and diagnose situations, formulating problems, critiquing experiments, and distinguishing alternatives. It also helps students in planning investigations, researching assumptions, searching for information, constructing models, and debating with peers using evidence and representations as well as forming coherent arguments (Bamiro, 2016). It is an approach of teaching in which students are guided to find out information by themselves; in this way, students build their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter (Dajal & Mohammed, 2019). Bibi et al. (2022) added that good teaching often blends different methods, starting with expository for a foundation and then shifting to guided discovery for deeper engagement.

The expository method is a teacher-centered instructional strategy where the teacher presents information, concepts, principles, or ideas directly to students in a clear, structured, and organized way. The goal is to transmit knowledge efficiently from the teacher to the learner. It is a direct teaching strategy where the teacher takes the lead in delivering content. Expository strategy ensures efficient knowledge

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transfer, especially for foundational or complex topics (Prayekti, 2018). It is a didactic teaching approach in which the teacher presents information to students while the students merely listen. The expository method is a pressure-learning approach that the teacher uses to deliver a preplanned lesson to the students with or without the use of instructional materials. It is occasionally called deductive teaching because the teacher often begins with a definition of the concepts or principles, illustrates them, and unfolds their implications. However, Eze and Osuyi (2018) opined that the expository teaching method is the most commonly used method for teaching biology because it helps a teacher to take a large number of students at a time and cover a lot of ground but may not promote excellence and hard work.

Gender is the social and cultural roles, behaviors, expectations, and identities associated with being male or female. It is a wide range of biological, behavioral, physical, and mental characteristics regarding and differentiating the female and male populations (Okeke, 2020). Hence, gender is an aspect concerning the responsibilities, roles, opportunities, constraints, and needs of males and females in all aspects of social context (Omotosho, 2019). It is the different socio-cultural stereotyped roles and responsibilities expected of boys and girls. Ullah and Ullah (2019) opined that there is an acknowledged problem of female underperformance when compared with male counterparts, apparently, under equivalent conditions; this problem of female underachievement appeared to be more pronounced in science and mathematics. Turner et al. (2019) declared that it is not accurate to attribute any perceived difficulties or underachievement solely to female students, but even if there are any in sciences, there may be several factors contributing to it, such as societal expectations, stereotypes, and biases. Lane et al. (2022) stated that it is crucial to recognize that individuals vary widely and any challenges in mathematics and science subjects are not inherently tied to gender but rather influenced by a range of factors, including personal cognitive ability, teaching methods, and societal expectations.

Some research works have shown contradicting evidence in students' academic achievement in sciences due to gender. For instance, Oladejo et al. (2021) as well as Ani et al. (2022) asserted that gender has no significant difference in students'

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achievement. Mwihia (2020) and Oladejo *et al.* (2021) observed a significant difference between male and female students' achievement in sciences. In addition, Emerhiona *et al.* (2018) affirmed a significant interaction effect of teaching methods and gender on biology students' achievement. Oladejo (2018) stated that there are no significant interaction effects of teaching methods and gender on students' academic performance. However, Jack (2023) and Etukakpan *et al.* (2025) opined that there is a significant difference in the achievement scores of biology students taught using computer simulation and expository methods in favor of computer simulation. More so, Ubom *et al.* (2024) and Mgbomo *et al.* (2024) state that there existed a significant difference between the mean academic achievement scores of students taught science using the guided-discovery method and those taught using the expository method in favor of students taught using the guided-discovery method. These conflicting results and the inconsistency existing in literature on gender and academic achievement pose a need to check if gender would affect the academic achievement of students taught the concept of ecological management based on the three methods such as a computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods.

Statement of the Problem

One of the problems facing the Nigerian educational sector today is the persistent poor achievement of students in external examinations, especially in the sciences. Biology is no exception, particularly ecological management. The WAEC chief examiners' report of 2022 and other research reports have shown that a high percentage of secondary school students continue to perform poorly in biology during external examinations. The poor achievement of students in biology may be associated with poor teaching methods adopted by teachers during classroom instructions. Researchers in biology education have continually sought better teaching methods that would provide a bridge between concepts that seem impracticable, abstract, and complex as well as require students to memorize numerous facts and terminologies such as ecological management. Poor teaching methods adopted by teachers do not only lead to poor understanding of the concepts but are also capable of hindering students' ability

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to understand and apply information. Some teaching methods identified by studies to teach such concepts are computer simulation, guided discovery, blended learning, and activity-based methods when compared to the expository method. It is on this basis that the study sought to examine the effects of computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods of teaching ecological management and biology students' academic achievement in Osioma, Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate computer-simulation, guided-discovery, and expository methods of teaching ecological management and biology students' academic achievement in Osioma, Abia State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Determine the difference among the academic achievement mean scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively.
- ii. Examine the differences in academic achievement mean scores between male and female biology students when taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively.
- iii. Determine the interaction effects of instructional methods (computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository) and gender on biology students' achievement mean scores when taught ecological management.

Research Questions

- i. What are the differences in the mean academic achievement scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods?
- ii. What are the differences in the mean academic achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods?

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- iii. What are the interaction effects of instructional methods (computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods) and gender on the mean academic achievement scores of biology students in ecological management?

Research Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods.
- iii. There is no significant interaction effect of instructional method (computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository) and gender on biology students' achievement scores in ecological management.

Methodology

The design of the study was a quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, the nonrandomized pretest-posttest control group factorial design. A quasi-experimental design is considered appropriate for the study because intact classes were used to avoid disruption of normal class lessons. The study was conducted in three co-educational public secondary schools in Osisioma Local Government Area in Abia State. The population consists of all 5,102 Senior Secondary School Two (SS 2) students offering biology in all the 14 public secondary schools in the Osisioma Local Government Area of Abia State. The sample size of the study was 183 senior secondary two students, made of 88 males and 95 females in three coeducational secondary schools. The sample was drawn from three co-educational secondary schools using the purposive sampling technique from the 14 public secondary schools available in the area. The selected schools met the criteria, which are schools that have qualified biology

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teachers, functional biology laboratories, and schools that have registered candidates for WASCE and NECO for the past 18 years. The instrument for the study was the Biology Achievement Test (BAT). BAT was designed to measure the students' achievement on the concept of adaptations. It consists of fifty (50) multiple-choice items with four (4) options. A-D-D with only one correct answer and three distracters drawn from the concept of adaptations.

The instrument was face-validated by experts in biology education at Abia State University, Uturu, who read through the items and suggested corrections where necessary. Based on the comments and suggestions, the researcher was appropriately guided in the development of the valid instruments. The instruments were adjusted accordingly. To ensure content validity, a test blueprint was used as a guide in the selection of the items. The reliability of the Biology Achievement Test (BAT) was determined using the test-retest method. A trial test was administered to twenty (20) Senior Secondary Two (SS 2) Biology students selected from the target population. Who did not participate in the main study? The second test was administered two weeks after the first test. The results showed a reliability index of 0.75. This is an indication that the instrument was reliable and capable of measuring the intended items in this study.

Experimental Procedure

The biology teachers in the sampled schools were used as research assistants with students in intact classes. Each of the classes was assigned to experimental group one, experimental group two, and a control group, respectively. To qualify as research assistants, the three biology teachers were trained for one week. Well-prepared lesson packages were used by the research assistants in teaching the concept of adaptations in their respective groups for four weeks.

Experimental group 1 using computer simulation: the research assistant displayed to students the downloaded video from the Bioman Biology site on adaptations and guided students through it. The students interacted with scenarios showing various types of adaptation. Identify the type of relationship shown; match



the organisms with their type of interaction, and record results in their notebooks. In experimental group 2 using guided discovery, the research assistant displayed pictures showing a cow with an egret on its back, a tapeworm in the human intestine, and a remora fish attached to a shark. Ask; what do you observe in these pictures? In addition, encourage students to share what they think is happening to the organisms. The teacher (research assistant) allowed students to investigate adaptations through structured activities by modeling associations.

In the control group, adaptations were taught using the expository method. The research assistant also broke down the concept of adaptation into weeks and then used lesson notes on adaptation to teach the students.

The data obtained from the achievement test were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions, while ANCOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the difference among the achievement mean scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively?

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Mean Gain Scores of Students' Pretest and Posttest Scores Taught Ecological Management Using Computer Simulation, Guided Discovery, and Expository Methods

| Instructional Methods | N | Prettest Scores | | Posttest Scores | | Mean Gain |
|-----------------------|----|-----------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|
| | | \bar{X} | SD | \bar{X} | SD | |
| Computer Simulation | 69 | 4.94 | 1.47 | 29.41 | 4.07 | 24.47 |
| Guided Discovery | 58 | 5.09 | 1.56 | 30.07 | 5.04 | 24.98 |

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| | | | | | | |
|------------|----|------|------|-------|------|-------|
| Expository | 56 | 4.95 | 1.59 | 22.00 | 4.09 | 17.05 |
|------------|----|------|------|-------|------|-------|

Results in Table 1 show that the pretest mean achievement scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods are 4.94, 5.09, and 4.95, respectively, while their posttest mean achievement scores are 29.41, 30.07, and 22.00, respectively. The mean gain scores of students taught biology using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods are 24.47, 24.98, and 17.05, respectively. This result indicates that biology students taught using the guided discovery method had the highest mean gain score, followed by those taught using the computer simulation method, while those taught using the expository method had the least mean gain score.

Research Question 2: What is the difference among the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively?

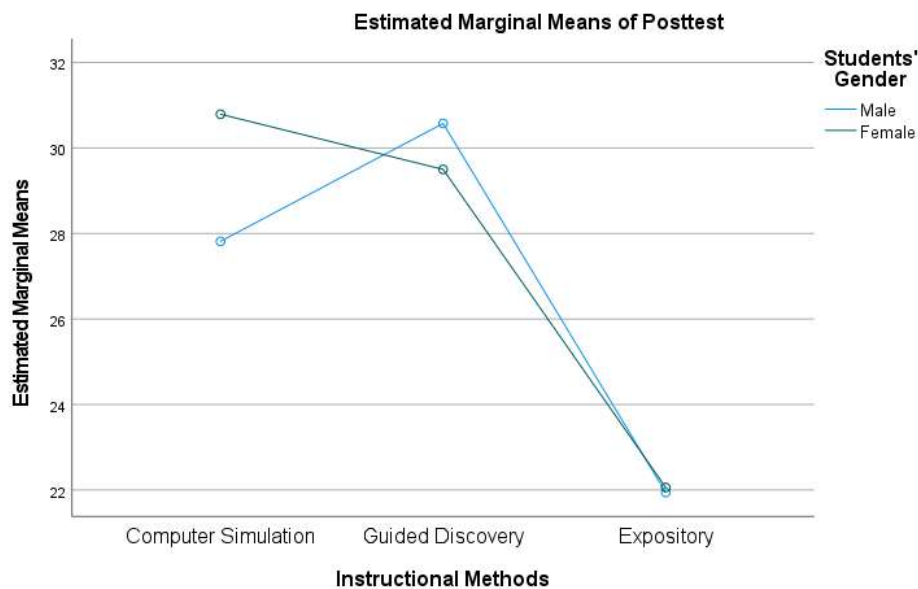
Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, and Mean Gain Scores of Male and Female Students' Pretest and Posttest Taught Ecological Management Using Computer Simulation, Guided Discovery, and Expository Methods

| Instructional Methods | Gender | N | Prettest | | Posttest | | Mean Gain |
|-----------------------|--------|----|----------|------|----------|------|-----------|
| | | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| Computer Simulation | Male | 32 | 5.44 | 1.34 | 27.88 | 3.51 | 22.44 |
| | Female | 37 | 4.51 | 1.47 | 30.73 | 4.11 | 26.22 |
| Guided Discovery | Male | 30 | 5.43 | 1.46 | 30.63 | 5.42 | 25.20 |
| | Female | 28 | 4.71 | 1.61 | 29.46 | 4.63 | 24.75 |
| Expository | Male | 26 | 4.54 | 1.27 | 21.88 | 3.53 | 17.34 |
| | Female | 30 | 5.30 | 1.77 | 22.10 | 4.58 | 16.80 |

Results in Table 2 show the mean gain of male and female students taught ecological management using computer simulation is 22.44 and 26.22, respectively; the mean gain of male and female students taught ecological management using guided

discovery is 25.20 and 24.75, respectively, while the mean gain of male and female students taught ecological management using expository is 17.34 and 16.80, respectively. This result indicates that female students' mean gain score taught ecological management using computer simulation is higher than that of their male counterparts; male students' mean gain score taught ecological management using guided discovery is higher than that of their female counterparts, while male students' mean gain score taught ecological management using expository is higher than that of their female counterparts.

Research Question 3: What are the interaction effects of instructional methods (computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository) and gender on biology students' achievement scores on ecological management?



Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 4.99

Fig 1: Interaction 1: Interaction effect plot for teaching methods and gender on biology students' achievement on ecological management.



Fig. 1 shows the interaction effects of instructional methods and gender on biology students' achievement scores on ecological management. The plot shows that the mean plots of male students taught ecological management using computer simulation, mean guided discovery, computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods are 27.82, 30.58, 30.58, 21.94, and 30.58, respectively, while those of their female counterparts are 30.79, 29.50, 21.94, 22.06, and 29.50, respectively. This result indicates that interaction exists at 22.06 and exists between male students and female students who are taught using computer simulation and guided discovery. This is because the mean of female students taught computer simulation is higher than that of male students, and the mean of male students taught using guided discovery is higher than that of female students. students, interaction effects on students. exist between male and female students taught using guided discovery and expository methods. This is because the mean of male students taught using guided discovery is higher than that of female students, and the mean of male students taught using expository is still lower than that of female students.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference among the mean achievement scores of biology students, students taught ecological management using computer simulation, biology computer simulation, guided discovery, computer simulation, and expository methods, and guided discovery, respectively.

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Students' Posttest Scores Classified by Instructional Methods with Pretest as Covariate

| Source of Variation | | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. at P<.05 |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------------|
| Posttest | Covariates | Pretest | 4.08 | 1 | 4.08 | 0.209 | 0.65 |
| | Main Effects | Instructional Methods | 2320.14 | 2 | 1160.07 | 59.37 | 0.00 |
| | Residual | | 3497.40 | 179 | 19.54 | | |
| | Total | | 5821.62 | 182 | 31.99 | | |

In Table 3, the calculated probability value (P-value) of 0.00 of the main effects (methods) is less than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that at $P < 0.05$, there is a significant difference among the mean achievement scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively. In order to determine the direction of significance, the Least Square Difference (LSD) post hoc pairwise comparison test was done, and the results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: LSD Post Hoc Pairwise Comparison Test of Students' Posttest Scores Classified by Instructional Methods with Pretest Scores as Covariate

| (I) Methods | (J) Methods | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sign at $P < .05$ |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Computer Simulation | Guided Discovery | -0.66 | 0.788 | 0.41 |
| | Expository | 7.41* | 0.795 | 0.00 |
| Guided Discovery | Computer Simulation | 0.66 | 0.788 | 0.41 |
| | Expository | 8.06* | 0.829 | 0.00 |
| Expository | Computer Simulation | -7.41* | 0.795 | 0.00 |
| | Guided Discovery | -8.06* | 0.829 | 0.00 |

Table 4 shows a mean achievement difference of 0.66 between biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation and guided discovery methods; 7.41 between biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation and expository methods; and 8.06 between biology students taught ecological management using guided discovery and expository methods. The levels of significance displayed indicated that biology students taught ecological management using the computer-simulation instructional method achieved significantly better than those taught ecological management using the expository

method; biology students taught ecological management using the guided discovery instructional method achieved significantly better than those taught ecological management using the expository method. There existed a non-significant difference between biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation and guided discovery instructional methods.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference among the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively.

Table 5: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of Students' Posttest Scores Classified by Gender with Pretest as Covariate

| Source of Variation | | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. at P<.05 |
|---------------------|--------------------|--|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------------|
| Posttest | Covariates | Pretest | 4.08 | 1 | 4.08 | 0.22 | 0.64 |
| | Main Effects | Instructional Methods | 2320.14 | 2 | 1160.07 | 61.29 | 0.00 |
| | | Students' Gender | 28.49 | 1 | 28.49 | 1.51 | 0.22 |
| | 2-Way Interactions | Instructional Methods * Students' Gender | 137.43 | 2 | 68.72 | 3.63 | 0.03 |
| | Residual | | 3331.48 | 176 | 18.93 | | |
| | Total | | 5821.62 | 182 | 31.99 | | |

In Table 5, the calculated probability value (P-value) of 0.22 for the main effects of students' gender is greater than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that at $P < 0.05$, there exists no significant difference among the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students



taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively.

Hypothesis 3: There are no significant interaction effects of instructional methods (computer-simulation, guided-discovery, and expository) and gender on biology students' achievement scores on ecological management.

In Table 5, the calculated probability value (P-value) of the interaction effects of instructional methods and students' gender on achievement is less than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that at $P < 0.05$, there exist significant interaction effects of instructional methods (computer-simulation, guided-discovery, and expository) and gender on biology students' achievement scores on ecological management.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study showed there is a significant difference among the mean achievement scores of biology students taught ecological management using computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository methods, respectively, in favor of computer simulation and guided discovery methods. Biology students taught ecological management using a computer-simulation instructional method achieved significantly better than those taught ecological management using an expository method. The findings are also a result of computer simulation enhancing students' learning through the transformation of complex or abstract ideas into visual, interactive experiences that make it easier for students to grasp concepts and encourage active participation and exploration, leading to increased engagement and motivation. The finding is in line with that of Jack (2023) and Etukakpan et al. (2025), who investigated the effects of computer simulation on students' achievement and found that there is a significant difference in the achievement scores of biology students taught using computer simulation and expository methods in favor of computer simulation. In addition, the findings on instructional methods and students' achievement indicated that biology students taught ecological management using the guided-discovery instructional method also achieved significantly better than those taught ecological

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management using the expository method. The findings could be the guided discovery stimulating inquisitiveness and promoting students' enthusiasm to discover the answer to problems, thereby making students engage in hands-on activities. The findings are in line with those of Ubom et al. (2024) and Mgbomo et al. (2024), who investigated the effects of the guided-discovery method on senior secondary school students' academic achievement in science and found that there existed a significant difference between the mean academic achievement scores of students taught science using the guided-discovery method and those taught using the expository method in favor of students taught using the guided-discovery method.

The findings from the results on the difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught the concept of ecological management indicated a significant difference. There existed no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer-simulation-guided discovery and expository methods, respectively. This result indicates that female students' mean gain score from learning ecological management using computer simulation is higher than that of their male counterparts; male students' mean gain score from learning ecological management using guided discovery is higher than that of their female counterparts, while male students' mean gain score from learning ecological management using expository methods is higher than that of their female counterparts. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female biology students taught ecological management using computer-simulation-guided discovery and expository methods, respectively. This might be due to the fact that the three teaching resources are student-friendly. This study is in line with the findings of Oladejo et al. (2021) as well as Ani et al. (2022), who found that gender has no significant difference in students' achievement. However, this study is contrary to the studies of Mwihi (2020) and Oladejo et al. (2021), who found a significant difference between male and female students' achievement in sciences.

The findings from the interaction effects of instructional methods and gender on students' achievement indicated significant interaction effects of instructional

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methods and gender on biology students' achievement scores in ecological management. This result indicates that interaction exists between male students and female students taught using computer simulation and guided discovery. This means that female students who were taught using computer simulation scored higher on average than male students taught with the same method, while male students taught using the guided discovery method scored higher on average than female students taught with that method. Interaction effects do exist between male and female students taught using guided discovery and expository methods. This is because the mean of male students taught using guided discovery is higher than that of female students, and the mean of male students taught using exposition is still lower than that of female students. There exist significant interaction effects of instructional methods (computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository) and gender on biology students' achievement scores on ecological management. This implies that computer simulation, guided discovery, and expository teaching methods do not work the same way for males and females; one gender benefits significantly more from a particular method than the other in the concept of ecological management. The finding of the study is in line with that of Emerhiona *et al.* (2018), who found significant interaction effects of teaching methods and gender on biology students' achievement. However, this finding is contrary to the study of Oladejo (2018), who found that there are no significant interaction effects of teaching methods and gender on students' academic performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is hereby concluded that the three instructional methods investigated, computer simulation and guided discovery, were more effective than the expository method in facilitating students' achievement in the concept of ecological management in biology. Additionally, students' gender did not have a significant impact on their performance. However, there was a significant interaction effect between instructional methods and gender on the achievement of biology students.

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Recommendations

- i. Teachers should make use of computer simulation and guided-discovery methods in learning the concept of ecological management to improve students' academic achievement in biology.
- ii. Students should be exposed to computer simulation and guided-discovery methods in learning the concept of ecological management in order to increase students' academic achievement in biology.
- iii. Biology teachers should deploy computer-simulation and guided-discovery methods in teaching the concept of ecological management to increase students' academic achievement in biology.

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Demographic Variables and Coping Strategies of People Living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of demographic variables on coping strategies of people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses guided the conduct of the study. The review of related literature was organized under three sub-headings: theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and empirical framework. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 3,980 people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome on anti-retroviral therapy (ART) attending HIV clinics, from which a sample of 357 participants was selected using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled “Demographic Variables and Coping Strategies



Questionnaire for People Living with HIV/AIDS” (DVCSQPLWHA), which was face-validated by three experts. The internal consistency method was used to establish reliability, yielding a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.74$. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. All the hypotheses were tested using one-way analysis of variance at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed significant influence of level of age and duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). However, the study found no significant influence of employment status on PLWHA. Thus, the study highlighted the importance of age-specific interventions and continuous support over time in enhancing coping abilities among people living with HIV/AIDS. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the Federal and State Ministries of Health, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations such as AIDS-focused groups, should prioritize education and awareness programmes for PLWHA by providing access to health literacy campaigns, counselling services, and skill acquisition initiatives.

Keywords: Demographic variables, coping, strategies, people, HIV/AIDS

Introduction

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) have continued to pose significant challenges to public health globally, with sub-Saharan Africa among the most affected regions. Nigeria, in particular, bears a considerable portion of this burden and may rank among the countries with the highest prevalence rates. According to the United Nations Programme on AIDS (2022), approximately 1.9 million Nigerians are currently living with HIV, a figure that reflects both the scale of the epidemic and the need for comprehensive health and social interventions. Despite significant progress in the availability and accessibility of antiretroviral therapy (ART), which has contributed to improved health outcomes and

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increased life expectancy for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), the disease continues to impact multiple dimensions of individual and societal life.

Beyond the clinical and physical implications of the virus, PLWHA may grapple with persistent psychosocial challenges. These include social stigma and discrimination, which may manifest in both subtle and overt forms, leading to isolation, exclusion from social networks, and loss of status within communities. Emotional distress, such as anxiety, depression, and hopelessness, is also commonly reported, exacerbated by the uncertainty of disease progression and fear of disclosure. Economic hardship is another prevalent issue, as individuals may experience job loss, reduced income, or inability to sustain employment due to illness-related complications. Furthermore, the strain of managing a chronic illness can disrupt family dynamics, alter marital relationships, and hinder effective participation in community activities, thereby diminishing overall quality of life (Thoits, 2016).

In response to these multifaceted challenges, PLWHA may adopt a range of coping strategies aimed at mitigating the psychological, social, and economic burdens of the disease. Coping strategies are the conscious or unconscious efforts that individuals make to regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in response to stressors. These strategies may include seeking social support, engaging in religious or spiritual practices, adopting healthy lifestyle choices, participating in support groups, and utilizing mental health services. According to Ukaegbu (2018), coping strategies could come in various forms, such as problem-focused, emotionally focused, avoidance coping, and social support.

Problem-focused coping involves addressing the source of stress through actionable steps such as seeking medical care, adhering to antiretroviral treatment, or acquiring information about the illness. Emotion-focused coping, on the other hand, aims to manage the emotional responses associated with the diagnosis, such as fear, guilt, or sadness; this may include activities like praying, meditation, or seeking emotional support. Avoidance coping involves efforts to deny or evade the reality of the illness, such as substance use, social withdrawal, or non-disclosure of HIV status. Social support coping includes seeking help, comfort, or advice from family members,

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friends, or support groups, and has been positively linked to better mental health outcomes (Ukaegbu and Obikoya, 2017). These strategies are not mutually exclusive and may be employed simultaneously or vary over time depending on the individual's stage of illness, social context, and available resources. The choice and efficacy of these coping mechanisms, however, are not uniform across all individuals and may be significantly influenced by various demographic variables, namely age, employment status, and duration since diagnosis.

Age refers to the length of time a person has lived since birth, typically measured in years. It is a key demographic variable that influences individuals' physical development, psychological maturity, social roles, and health behaviour. Age is often used in research to classify individuals into developmental stages, which can affect their coping abilities, decision-making, and vulnerability to health risks (Awofala and Ogundele, 2018). Younger individuals, especially those in their reproductive years, may face identity crises, stigma, and concerns about fertility or relationships, whereas older individuals may struggle with additional health complications and reduced social engagement. The capacity to cope with the psychological burden of HIV/AIDS can therefore differ across age brackets, with younger patients possibly exhibiting higher resilience or risk-taking behaviours, and older adults experiencing greater emotional strain or social withdrawal. In the context of this study, the age of PLWHA is categorized into four, namely those aged 1-25, 26-35, and 36-45, as well as 46 years and above.

Employment status refers to an individual's position in relation to paid work, typically classified as employed, unemployed, or economically inactive. It indicates whether a person is currently engaged in gainful employment, actively seeking work, or not participating in the labour force due to reasons such as schooling, retirement, or illness. Employment status may significantly affect income level, access to healthcare, social identity, and the ability to cope with health-related challenges, including chronic illnesses like HIV/AIDS (Adewale, 2019). Gainful employment not only ensures financial stability but also fosters social participation and personal identity, all of which contribute to psychological resilience. In contrast, unemployment or job

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insecurity may exacerbate financial strain, reduce access to quality care, and heighten feelings of worthlessness or dependency. This often limits the individual's capacity to engage in constructive coping behaviours such as accessing support groups or maintaining a regular treatment schedule. In the context of this study, the employment status of PLWHA is categorized into three, namely, those who are employed, the unemployed, and those who are students.

'Duration since diagnosis' refers to the length of time that has elapsed since an individual was formally diagnosed with a medical condition, such as HIV/AIDS. This variable is critical in health research because it can influence an individual's psychological adjustment, treatment adherence, coping mechanisms, and overall well-being. Generally, a longer duration since diagnosis allows for greater adaptation to the illness, although it may also be associated with treatment fatigue or cumulative psychological burden (Ezechi, 2017). Newly diagnosed individuals may experience shock, denial, and heightened vulnerability, while those who have lived with the condition over an extended period are likely to develop adaptive mechanisms, including lifestyle adjustments and engagement with support services. As individuals transition from the acute emotional phase to a phase of acceptance, their ability to cope with the demands of the illness generally improves. In the context of this study, duration since diagnosis of PLWHA is categorized into three, namely 0–2, 3–5, as well as 6 years and above.

Despite the growing recognition of the psychosocial dimensions of HIV/AIDS management, there is limited empirical data on how demographic variables influence coping strategies among patients receiving care in institutional settings like the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo. Embarking on this study is crucial in developing patient-centered interventions that reflect the diverse experiences and needs of PLWHA. This study, therefore, was aimed at investigating the influence of demographic variables on coping strategies of people living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria.

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Statement of the Problem

Despite remarkable advances in HIV treatment and care, the psychosocial burden of living with HIV/AIDS remains a critical public health concern, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the epidemic is most severe. Nigeria, as one of the countries with the highest HIV prevalence in the region, continues to witness the emotional, social, and economic challenges faced by people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). At the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH), Uyo, patients accessing antiretroviral therapy (ART) often confront more than just medical issues. They may also grapple with stigma, discrimination, emotional distress, and socio-economic instability, which can significantly affect their ability to cope with the disease.

Coping strategies such as seeking social support, religious engagement, or problem-solving approaches are essential for maintaining psychological stability and treatment adherence. PLWHA may face stressors such as fear of disclosure, uncertainty about the future, diminished self-worth, and societal rejection. Without effective coping mechanisms, these stressors can lead to mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, and social withdrawal, which may, in turn, affect adherence to treatment and overall quality of life. Coping strategies may help PLWHA manage emotional responses, build resilience, access social support systems, and remain engaged with their treatment regimen. Therefore, the ability to cope effectively is not only central to emotional well-being but also critical to clinical outcomes and long-term survival.

However, the effectiveness and type of coping strategy adopted by PLWHA may vary based on key demographic variables such as age, employment status, and duration since diagnosis. For instance, younger or newly diagnosed individuals may experience more emotional volatility, while older or long-term diagnosed individuals may have developed more resilient coping patterns. Similarly, employed individuals may access better support systems compared to their unemployed or widowed counterparts.

Despite the relevance of these demographic variables, there is a paucity of empirical evidence on how demographic characteristics influence the coping strategies



adopted by PLWHA in UUTH, Uyo. Most of the interventions are generalized, without tailoring psychosocial support to the demographic realities of patients. This gap hinders the development of comprehensive, patient-centred care strategies that address the unique needs of different groups within the PLWHA population. Therefore, understanding the influence of demographic variables on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS is crucial for improving the psychosocial well-being and treatment outcomes of PLWHA in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of demographic variables on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to determine:

1. The influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.
2. The influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.
3. The influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study, when published, will be beneficial to People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), guidance counsellors, hospital management, government, and future researchers. Specifically, the study will enhance the understanding of PLWHA attending the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital regarding how demographic variables such as age, marital status, educational attainment, employment status, and duration since diagnosis influence their coping strategies. Insights into how individuals with similar demographic profiles manage emotional, psychological, and social responses to HIV/AIDS may empower PLWHA to adopt more adaptive coping mechanisms, leading to improved treatment adherence, reduced emotional distress, and enhanced overall well-being.



Guidance counsellors will also benefit from the study, as it provides empirical evidence on how personal characteristics shape coping styles among individuals living with chronic illness. This knowledge will support the development of more personalized and demographically sensitive interventions, thereby improving the effectiveness of psychosocial counselling in healthcare settings.

Furthermore, hospital management at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital will find the findings valuable for understanding the psychosocial needs of HIV-positive patients. The insights can inform the design of targeted support services, including patient education programmes, peer support groups, and mental health resources, ultimately enhancing patient satisfaction, emotional resilience, and treatment outcomes.

The government will benefit from the study by gaining insight into the social determinants influencing the health and coping capacity of PLWHA. The findings can guide the development of inclusive, evidence-based health policies that incorporate social support interventions, economic empowerment initiatives, and targeted public awareness campaigns. Such measures will contribute to stigma reduction, improved mental health, and sustainable HIV/AIDS care.

Finally, the study will serve as a valuable resource for future researchers exploring the intersection of demography, mental health, and chronic illness management. It contributes to existing literature on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria by offering a context-specific analysis of coping strategies within a clinical population, and provides a basis for further studies across different regions or expanded psychosocial variables.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

- i. What is the influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS?
- ii. What is the influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS?

- iii. What is the influence of “duration since diagnosis” on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the conduct of the study:

- i. There is no significant influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- ii. There is no significant influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- iii. There is no significant influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Scope of the Study

The study investigated the influence of demographic variables on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria. Demographic variables, namely age, employment status, and duration since diagnosis, were investigated as the independent variables of the study, while coping strategies served as the dependent variable. Only people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria, participated in the study.

Theoretical Framework

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984)

The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping was developed by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in 1984. The theory explains that stress is the result of a dynamic interaction between a person and their environment, emphasizing two key cognitive processes: primary appraisal (evaluating whether an event is a threat) and secondary appraisal (assessing one’s resources to cope with the threat). Coping strategies are then employed based on this appraisal process and may be either problem-focused (direct action) or emotion-focused (regulating emotions). The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping is relevant to the present study as it provides a psychological framework



for understanding how individuals living with HIV/AIDS respond differently to the same diagnosis depending on their demographic characteristics. For instance, an employed individual may appraise the illness as manageable due to financial security and access to healthcare, while an unemployed individual may perceive it as overwhelming. Age can influence how the individual appraises the stressor and the type of coping strategies selected. The model underscores the need to understand the subjective experience of coping and the role of personal and demographic resources.

Conservation of Resources Theory by Steven Hobfoll (1989)

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory was proposed by Stevan Hobfoll in 1989. The theory argues that stress arises from the threat of loss, actual loss, or lack of gain in valuable resources such as time, finances, social support, and personal traits. Individuals are motivated to acquire and maintain these resources, and the failure to do so leads to psychological stress.

COR theory is relevant to the present study as it sheds light on why demographic characteristics influence coping among people living with HIV/AIDS. For instance, employment status is a major condition resource that contributes to income stability and access to healthcare. When people lose their jobs after an HIV diagnosis, their ability to cope may deteriorate due to financial strain and social withdrawal. The COR theory provides a robust explanation of how disparities in resource availability, which are often linked to demographic factors, can shape the trajectory of coping behaviour among PLWHIV.

Empirical Reviews

Age and Coping Strategies

A study which examined age differences in coping strategies among patients undergoing long-term medical treatment in Ibadan, Nigeria, was conducted by Ogunleye and Salami (2017). Using a descriptive survey design, the study involved a purposive sample of 200 participants from two teaching hospitals. The "Coping Strategies Inventory for Chronic Illness (CSICI)," with a reliability coefficient of 0.75, was used for data collection. Analysis using one-way ANOVA indicated no significant



differences in coping strategies across age groups, as access to counselling, adherence support programs, and peer guidance were found to mediate coping outcomes. Another study to investigate age-related differences in coping strategies among individuals living with chronic illnesses in Enugu State was conducted by Nduka and Chukwuma (2018). The study employed a descriptive survey design with a purposive sample of 240 participants drawn from three major healthcare facilities. Data were collected using the "Chronic Illness Coping and Adaptation Scale (CICAS)," which had a reliability coefficient of 0.77. Data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study showed that older participants demonstrated significantly higher levels of adaptive coping strategies, such as emotional regulation, proactive problem-solving, and seeking social support, compared to younger participants. The authors attributed this to accumulated life experiences, greater emotional maturity, and more effective stress management skills.

Employment Status and Coping Strategies

A study conducted by Afolabi and Adeyemi (2017) investigated the influence of employment status on coping strategies among patients living with chronic conditions in southwestern Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and involved a purposive sample of 220 participants from two tertiary hospitals. Data were collected using the "Coping Strategies for Chronic Illness Questionnaire (CSCIQ)," which had a reliability coefficient of 0.73. Analysis using one-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in coping strategies across employment categories. Participants in stable government positions demonstrated more proactive and problem-focused coping due to financial security and access to healthcare benefits, whereas unemployed participants relied more on informal support networks. Another study that explored the influence of occupational status on coping strategies among adults living with chronic illnesses in Enugu State was conducted by Chukwu and Eze (2018). The study employed a descriptive survey design involving a purposive sample of 240 participants drawn from three major healthcare facilities. Data were collected using the "Occupational and Chronic Illness Coping Inventory (OCICI)," which had a reliability coefficient of 0.75. Data analysis was carried out using one-way analysis of variance



(ANOVA). The findings indicated that occupational status did not significantly influence coping strategies. Instead, individual psychological factors, including resilience, self-efficacy, and perceived social support, were stronger determinants of adaptive coping strategies.

Duration Since Diagnosis and Coping Strategies

Bello and Olatunde (2018) conducted a study to examine the relationship between "duration since diagnosis" and coping strategies among patients living with chronic illnesses in Lagos, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and involved a purposive sample of 220 participants from two teaching hospitals. Data were collected using the "Coping Strategies Assessment for Chronic Illness Patients (CSACIP)," which had a reliability coefficient of 0.74. Analysis using one-way ANOVA revealed no significant relationship between duration since diagnosis and coping strategies. The study found that psychosocial support, counselling access, and peer group participation were more critical in determining coping ability than the length of time since diagnosis. A related study also investigated the influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies among adults living with chronic illnesses in southeastern Nigeria was conducted by Okeke and Ogbu (2019). The study employed a descriptive survey design involving a purposive sample of 250 participants drawn from three major healthcare facilities. Data were collected using the "Chronic Illness Duration and Coping Inventory (CIDCI)," which had a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings indicated that participants with a longer duration since diagnosis demonstrated higher coping ability, as they were more likely to engage in structured coping mechanisms, emotional regulation, and proactive health behaviours. The study attributed this to sustained experience in disease management, which enhances emotional resilience and adaptive strategies.

From the empirical studies reviewed, the researchers observed that none of the previous studies investigated the influence of age, employment status, and "duration since diagnosis" on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University

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of Uyo Teaching Hospital, Uyo, Nigeria. The present research, therefore, was conducted to fill the existing gap created by past empirical studies.

Design of the Study

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The design is considered appropriate because the study seeks to collect data from a defined population of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in order to describe the coping strategies they adopt and how these strategies vary according to demographic variables such as age, employment status, and duration since diagnosis. The design enabled the researchers to gather data from a relatively large number of participants at a specific point in time using a structured questionnaire. The descriptive survey method was suitable for drawing inferences and identifying patterns without manipulating any variables.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 3,980 people living with HIV/AIDS on anti-retroviral therapy (ART) attending HIV clinics at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (UUTH, Anti-Retroviral Therapy Unit, 2026).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 357 people living with HIV/AIDS was selected for the study using the convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where participants are selected based on their availability, accessibility, and willingness to participate at the time of the study. In this context, the researcher selected PLWHA who attended the ART clinic at UUTH during the study period and were willing to participate in the research (Etikan, 2016). The use of 357 sample size is appropriate based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for sample size determination, which recommends a minimum sample of 351 for a total population of 4,000.

Instrumentation

A researcher-made instrument entitled “Demographic Variables and Coping Strategies Questionnaire for People Living with HIV/AIDS (DVCSQPLWHA) was used for data collection. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A consisted of



demographic variables of PLWHA, namely age, employment status, and duration since diagnosis, while Section B consisted of 25 items that elicited responses from PLWHA on their coping strategies. The items were responded to on a four-point rating scale such as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was face-validated by three experts. Two of the experts were chosen from the Measurement and Evaluation Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, and one expert was selected from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Uyo, Nigeria. The face validation of the instrument was done in line with the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the research hypotheses. The researchers ensured that the suggestions and comments by the three experts were incorporated in the final version of the instrument before they were administered to PLWHA at UUTH, Uyo.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the research instrument, the internal consistency method was used to establish the reliability of the Demographic Variables and Coping Strategies Questionnaire for People Living with HIV/AIDS (DVCSQPLWHA). This method involves assessing the extent to which all items on the questionnaire measure the same underlying construct and produce consistent results. In this study, the questionnaire was administered to 30 PLWHA who were part of the population of the study but not included in the main study site. The responses from this pilot group were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the degree of internal consistency among the items. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = 0.74$, indicating a high level of internal consistency and suggesting that the instrument is reliable for use in the main study.

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Method of Data Collection

The researchers, with the help of two research assistants, administered the instrument on the selected PLWHA at UUTH, Uyo. The researcher sought permission from the UUTH Management Board, through a letter of introduction from the researcher's Head of Department, to carry out the study. The permission enabled the researcher to have access to PLWHA at UUTH, Uyo, for the purpose of responding to the items contained in the instrument. Though the researcher administered 375 copies of the questionnaire, only 357 copies were retrieved. The entire process lasted for two weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. All the hypotheses were tested using one-way analysis of variance. The null hypotheses were tested at the .05 alpha level of significance. All data were subjected to analysis using the statistical package for social science.

Decision Rule

The following decision rule guided the answering of all the research questions:

70 - 100 Very High Extent (VHE)

50 – 69.9 High Extent (HE)

40 – 49.9 Low Extent (LE)

25 – 39.9 Very Low Extent (VLE)

However, if the p-value is less than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected, but if the p-value is greater than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Results

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation scores of the influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

| Age | n | Mean | Standard Deviation | Remarks |
|------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|---------|
| 0 - 25 years | 179 | 31.17 | 1.02 | VLE |
| 26 - 35 years | 105 | 42.29 | 1.12 | LE |
| 36 – 45 years | 57 | 42.46 | 1.76 | LE |
| 46 years & above | 16 | 62.93 | 2.25 | HE |

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation scores on the influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. Participants aged 0–25 years (n = 179) had a mean score of 31.17 and a standard deviation of 1.02, indicating a very low extent of coping strategies with highly consistent responses. Those aged 26–35 years (n = 105) recorded a mean of 42.29 and a standard deviation of 1.12, reflecting a low extent of coping. Similarly, participants aged 36–45 years (n = 57) had a mean score of 42.46 and a standard deviation of 1.76, also indicating a low extent with more variation. In contrast, respondents aged 46 years and above (n = 16) had a mean score of 62.93 and a standard deviation of 2.25, indicating a high extent of coping strategies. Overall, the results suggest that coping strategies increase with age.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of the influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

| Employment status | n | Mean | Standard Deviation | Remarks |
|-------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|---------|
| Unemployed | 254 | 62.56 | 2.63 | HE |
| Government | 58 | 62.59 | 2.19 | HE |
| Private | 45 | 62.53 | 2.40 | HE |



Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation scores on the influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. Unemployed participants (n = 254) had a mean score of 62.56 and a standard deviation of 2.63, indicating a high extent of coping strategies with moderate variation. Participants employed in government positions (n = 58) recorded a slightly higher mean score of 62.59 and a standard deviation of 2.19, also reflecting a high extent with more consistent responses. Those employed in the private sector (n = 45) had a mean score of 62.53 and a standard deviation of 2.40, indicating a high extent of coping strategies as well. Overall, the results suggest that coping strategies are high across all employment groups, with only slight differences among them.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation scores of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital

| Duration since diagnosis Remarks | n | Mean | Standard Deviation | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|----|
| 0 - 2 | 116 | 45.41 | 1.68 | LE |
| 3 – 5 years | 84 | 46.49 | 1.74 | LE |
| 6 years & above | 157 | 63.58 | 2.12 | HE |

Table 3 presents the mean and standard deviation scores on the influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. Participants diagnosed within 0–2 years (n = 116) had a mean score of 45.41 and a standard deviation of 1.68, indicating a low extent of coping strategies. Those diagnosed for 3–5 years (n = 84) recorded a mean score of 46.49 and a standard deviation of 1.74, also reflecting a low extent with slightly more variation. In contrast, participants diagnosed for six years and above (n = 157) had a mean score of 63.58 and a standard deviation of 2.12, indicating a high

extent of coping strategies with very consistent responses. Overall, the results suggest that coping strategies improve as the duration since diagnosis increases.

Table 4: Summary of one-way analysis of variance on influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (n = 357)

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 317.242 | 3 | 105.744 | 8.33 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 11218.154 | 353 | 91.453 | | |
| Total | 11535.396 | 356 | | | |

Table 4 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to examine the influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. The mean square between groups (105.744) is higher than the mean square within groups (91.453), resulting in an F-value of 8.33, which is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). This indicates that there is a significant influence of age on coping strategies among participants of different age groups. In other words, there is a significant influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS. Further post-hoc analysis is conducted to determine which specific age groups differ from each other.

Table 5: Summary of one-way analysis of variance on influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (n = 357)

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|-------|
| Between Groups | 275.986 | 2 | 137.993 | 9.38 | 2.185 |
| Within Groups | 11259.410 | 354 | 95.114 | | |
| Total | 11535.396 | 356 | | | |



Table 5 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to examine the influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. The mean square between groups (137.993) is higher than the mean square within groups (95.114), resulting in an F-value of 9.38. However, the reported significance value ($p = 2.185$) is greater than 0.05, indicating that the difference in coping strategies among participants with different employment statuses is not statistically significant. This suggests that there is no significant influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Table 6: Summary of one-way analysis of variance on influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS in the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital (n = 357)

| Source of Variance | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | 262.666 | 2 | 131.333 | 2.43 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 11272.73 | 354 | 92.895 | | |
| Total | 11535.396 | 356 | | | |

Table 6 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA conducted to examine the influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS at the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital. The mean square between groups (131.333) is higher than the mean square within groups (92.895), resulting in an F-value of 2.43, which is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). This indicates that there is a significant influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies among participants. In other words, the length of time since being diagnosed with HIV/AIDS significantly influences the coping strategies adopted by participants, with some groups potentially developing more effective strategies than others over time. Further post-hoc analysis is conducted to determine which specific duration since diagnosis groups differ from each other.

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Discussion of Findings

The finding that there is a significant influence of age on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS based on age indicates that individuals' ability to manage the psychological and emotional demands of the illness varies across age groups. The result showed that adults aged 46 years and above exhibited the highest coping mean scores, followed by those aged 36 to 45 years, then those between 26 and 35 years, while the youngest group, aged 0 to 25 years, reported the lowest coping scores. This pattern suggests that coping improves with age, possibly because older individuals tend to possess greater emotional maturity, life experience, and stronger resilience, enabling them to handle stressful health conditions more effectively than younger persons. Older adults may also have more stable social support systems, such as family networks, long-term partners, or community affiliations, which can significantly enhance their coping capacity. Their longer exposure to health education, support groups, and sustained treatment routines may further strengthen their coping strategies. In contrast, younger people may struggle more due to limited life experience, weaker support structures, heightened fear of stigma, or difficulty adapting to the long-term demands of antiretroviral therapy. They may also face additional challenges related to identity formation, peer pressure, and emotional instability, which can hinder effective coping.

This finding is consistent with the work of Nduka and Chukwuma (2018), who examined coping responses among individuals living with chronic illnesses in Enugu and reported that older participants demonstrated more adaptive coping strategies than younger ones. They attributed this to accumulated life experiences and better emotional regulation. However, the current finding contradicts the study by Ogunleye and Salami (2017), who found no significant age differences in coping strategies among patients undergoing long-term medical treatment in Ibadan. Their research suggested that access to counselling and adherence support programs equalized coping outcomes across age groups. Differences between studies may be due to variations in sample size, cultural expectations, or the availability of supportive healthcare services.

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The finding that there is no significant influence of employment status on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS suggests that the type of work or occupational category does not substantially influence how individuals manage the psychological, emotional, and social challenges of living with the illness. Participants who were unemployed, government employees, or self-employed did not differ in their coping scores, indicating that access to resources, stress management, and emotional adjustment may be shaped more by personal resilience, social support, and health education than by employment type. This result may reflect the fact that people living with HIV/AIDS, regardless of employment status, have similar exposure to health information, counselling services, and antiretroviral therapy programs, which could standardize coping mechanisms across different occupational groups. Moreover, social and community support structures, as well as the availability of peer networks and treatment adherence programs, may mitigate the potential differences that employment status might create in access to resources or stress management opportunities.

This finding aligns with the study by Chukwu and Eze (2018), who reported no significant influence of occupational status on coping strategies among adults living with chronic illnesses in Enugu State. Their study emphasized that individual psychological factors, such as resilience, self-efficacy, and perceived social support, were stronger determinants of coping than employment category. However, the finding contrasts with that of Afolabi and Adeyemi (2017), who found that employment status significantly influenced coping among patients living with chronic conditions in southwestern Nigeria. They reported that employed individuals, particularly those in stable government positions, were more likely to adopt proactive coping strategies due to financial stability and access to healthcare benefits, whereas unemployed participants relied more on informal support networks. The difference may reflect variations in study context, sample characteristics, and the scope of social support available to participants.

The finding that there is a significant influence of duration since diagnosis on coping strategies of people living with HIV/AIDS based on duration since diagnosis indicates that the length of time an individual has been aware of their HIV status

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influences their ability to manage the psychological, emotional, and social challenges associated with the illness. Participants who had been diagnosed for six years and above demonstrated the highest coping scores, followed by those diagnosed for three to five years, while individuals diagnosed within zero to two years had the lowest scores. This pattern suggests that coping strategies improve with longer exposure to living with the condition, likely due to increased experience, adaptation, and familiarity with disease management. Individuals with a longer duration since diagnosis may have developed more effective routines for medication adherence, stress management, and seeking social or emotional support. They are also likely to have greater knowledge about HIV, more established relationships with healthcare providers, and stronger connections to peer support networks, all of which facilitate adaptive coping. In contrast, those recently diagnosed may still be adjusting to the diagnosis, experiencing heightened anxiety, uncertainty, and stigma, which can limit their ability to cope effectively.

This finding is consistent with the study by Okeke and Ogbu (2019), who reported that longer duration since diagnosis significantly predicted higher coping ability among adults living with chronic illnesses in southeastern Nigeria. Their study emphasized that sustained experience with disease management enhances emotional resilience and promotes more structured coping mechanisms. However, the finding contrasts with the report of Bello and Olatunde (2018), who observed no significant relationship between duration since diagnosis and coping strategies among patients with chronic illnesses in Lagos. Their study suggested that psychosocial support and access to counselling services were more critical than the length of "time since diagnosis" in determining coping ability. Differences between studies may reflect variations in healthcare infrastructure, availability of support programs, or cultural attitudes toward chronic illness.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study highlighted the importance of age-specific interventions and continuous support over time in enhancing coping abilities among



people living with HIV/AIDS. This implies that interventions should be tailored to meet the unique psychological, social, and health-related needs of individuals at different stages of life, as coping capacity tends to vary with age.

Implications for Guidance and Counselling

The findings of this study have several important counselling implications for professionals working with people living with HIV/AIDS. First, the finding that age significantly influences coping strategies indicates the need for age-sensitive counselling approaches. Older clients may have accumulated life experiences and established coping mechanisms, while younger clients may require additional support in developing emotional regulation and problem-solving skills. Counsellors should implement interventions that strengthen resilience among younger individuals and leverage the adaptive strategies of older clients as models for peer learning.

Secondly, the significant role of duration since diagnosis underscores the value of counselling and psychosocial support. Clients who are newly diagnosed may need intensive guidance to develop effective coping strategies, whereas those living with the diagnosis for longer periods may benefit from reinforcement and adaptation of existing coping skills to meet changing health or social circumstances. Finally, the finding that employment status does not significantly influence coping suggests that counselling interventions can be applied broadly across these groups without the need for major differentiation. However, counsellors should remain attentive to individual differences and provide support that is responsive to the client's unique psychological, social, and occupational context.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Healthcare providers in Akwa Ibom State, social workers, and community-based organizations should design support services that cater to people living with HIV/AIDS regardless of their age, gender, employment status, or duration since diagnosis. Interventions should focus on building personal resilience and coping



skills rather than assuming that coping mechanisms are uniform across demographic groups.

- ii. HIV/AIDS support organizations in Akwa Ibom State should ensure that psychosocial and economic support initiatives are accessible to all, regardless of the duration of living with HIV/AIDS. All individuals, whether newly diagnosed or long-term, should have equal access to counselling programs.
- iii. Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Youth and Social Development should facilitate employment opportunities and vocational training tailored to the abilities and contexts of people living with HIV/AIDS. This can include job placement services, skill development programs, and provision of microfinance or start-up capital for small businesses.

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DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND COPING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (DVCSQPLWHA)

Section A: Demographic Variables

Instruction: Tick the boxes as most applicable to you.

- 1. Age:** 0-25years () 26 – 35 years () 36 – 45 years () 46 years and above ()
- 2. Employment Status:** Unemployed () Government employed () Private employed ()
- 3. Duration since Diagnosis:** 0 – 2 years () 3 -5 years () 6 years and above ()

Section B: Coping Strategies

Instruction: Please, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the items by ticking () against any of the response options below.

- SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1. | I actively seek information about HIV/AIDS to help manage my condition. | | | | |
| 2. | I take care of problems related to my health instead of ignoring them. | | | | |
| 3. | I follow my antiretroviral therapy (ART) plan strictly. | | | | |
| 4. | I make efforts to improve my physical health through nutrition. | | | | |
| 5. | I set personal goals to stay motivated despite my HIV status. | | | | |

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|-----|--|--|--|--|--|
| 6. | I regularly attend health talk sessions about HIV. | | | | |
| 7. | I plan ahead to avoid hindrances to my treatment. | | | | |
| 8. | I try to think positively despite my health challenges. | | | | |
| 9. | I try as much as possible to cope with the challenges of HIV/AIDS. | | | | |
| 10. | I talk to someone when I feel emotionally stressed. | | | | |
| 11. | I calm myself down when I feel anxious. | | | | |
| 12. | I use relaxation techniques like deep breathing, music to manage stress. | | | | |
| 13. | I accept my emotions as part of my healing process. | | | | |
| 14. | I avoid dwelling on negative thoughts about my illness. | | | | |
| 15. | I avoid people who remind me of my HIV/AIDS status. | | | | |
| 16. | I sleep excessively to forget my problems. | | | | |
| 17. | I pretend as though I am not living with HIV/AIDS. | | | | |
| 18. | I delay going to the hospital when I feel sick. | | | | |
| 19. | I avoid listening to information about HIV/AIDS. | | | | |
| 20. | I do not need to kill myself because of my HIV/AIDS status. | | | | |
| 21. | I participate in HIV/AIDS support groups. | | | | |

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| | | | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|--|--|
| 22. | I feel better when I am surrounded by people who understand my situation. | | | | |
| 23. | I ask for help when I need support. | | | | |
| 24. | I listen to others who share similar experiences about HIV/AIDS. | | | | |
| 25. | I believe that my relationship with others help me to cope better. | | | | |

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Marital Disharmony and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Education Committee

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Abstract

This study aimed at determining the relationship between marital disharmony and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee. Two purposes and two research questions guided the study. A correlational survey design was adopted for the study, while the population of this study consisted of all 6,603 senior secondary two (SS2) students in the fifteen (15) public secondary schools in the study area. A sample size of 378 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students was selected for the study, representing 5 percent of the study population, using Taro Yamane sampling formulas. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Marital Disharmony and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (MDAASSSQ)" was used for data collection. Data generated were analysed using Pearson Product



Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics, and the finding revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between communication issues in marriage, financial disagreement, and the academic adjustment of secondary school students in the study area. A conclusion was drawn from the findings, and the researchers recommended, among other things, that husbands and wives should strive to maintain a friendly, happy, and peaceful family environment, avoiding painful conflicts that could lead to emotional and behavioural problems affecting students' academic adjustment.

Keywords: Marriage, Marital Disharmony, Academic Adjustment

Introduction

Marriage is a basic institution in every society. In every complete society governed by law, marriage exists as a public legal institution and not merely a private romantic declaration or religious rite. An institution that offers legitimacy to sexual relationships and reproduction for legitimate children. Marriage involves joining in matrimony two individuals of different genders to become one flesh as husband and wife, given the need for companionship, procreation, and continuing and sustaining family ties. Nevertheless, marital instability in present-day society is of immense concern, as it is associated with separation, divorce and widowhood.

Marriage is a legalising of a special relationship between a man and a woman to which the society gives approval, and it places partners under legal and social obligations to each other and the society. The family is the household and those who live in one house and a network of persons such as the couple, their offspring and kin intimately held together by a bond of social and kinship relationships. According to Lesmin and Sarker (2008), marital disharmony is the major cause of marital instability in the society. The author defined marital disharmony as a situation in which there are disagreements and unpleasant feelings between the husband and wife, which can result in marital instability. Marital disharmony can occur if the spouses do not spend sufficient time together or if they do not have common interests. Sexual dissatisfaction



with regard to various factors such as frequency, quality, interest, and enjoyment of the spouses, as well as extramarital affairs, may cause marital distress or problems.

Hence, the increasing incidence of marital disharmony such as the occurrence of divorce shows that there is marital instability in several families in the Nigerian context. Marital disharmony, according to Omorogiuwa and Omorogiuwa (2016), occurs as an attempt of one individual or partner to checkmate the behaviour and anticipations of the other. Marital disharmony threatens the household stability as well as the well-being of the children, as it often impacts their academic adjustment and achievement. The family stability often has a marked influence on the students' motivation for learning and on her to cope with academics. The home environment is a strong pointer to the academic adjustment and achievement of children. This is because a number of children's academic potentials are now confronted with increasing difficulties as a result of parental marital disharmony. The contact between the parents, teachers and students makes a lot of impact on the academic performances of the students. Castro-Martin and Bumpass (2009) found that those who do not regularly attend classes because of a lack of proper monitoring by the parents could experience challenges adjusting academically. Parents are thereby faced with the problem of enriching their home environment to establish a positive effect on the student's academic performance in schools.

Statement of the Problem

Strains in marriage interaction between couples living together are becoming common. In the Uyo Local Education Committee, the researcher observed that marital disharmony is on the rise because of communication issues, culture and tradition, infidelity, lack of trust, and economic depression among couples. As a result, anger, resentment, dissatisfaction, frustration and hopelessness take control of the relationship and at times break down the marriage irretrievably. These could threaten societal values and the academic adjustment of students.

It is disheartening to observe that in the Uyo Local Education Committee of Akwa Ibom State, some students usually roam the streets during school hours,



committing deviant offences such as bullying, stealing, drug abuse, cultism, smoking, assault, and excessive aggression against other students. Some students go as far as fighting teachers and parents. The rate of indiscipline and lack of respect for elders, parents, teachers and constituted authorities is alarming. Negative gang activities, such as cultism, are noticed on a regular basis.

Although many researchers have studied factors related to marital disharmony and students' academic adjustment, they have not examined the specific variables addressed in this study or focused on the present study area. Therefore, the present study sought to fill this gap by determining the relationship between marital disharmony and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between marital disharmony and the academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee. Specifically, the study sought to determine the following:

- i. The relationship between communication problems in marriage and the academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee.
- ii. The relationship between financial disagreements between spouses and the academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the relationship between communication problems in marriage and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee?



- ii. What is the relationship between financial disagreement and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee?

Theoretical and Conceptual Review

The Structural Theory of Marital Stability

The structural theory was propounded by Minuchin in 1974. The theory states that marital problems arise where the personality of one partner is swallowed up by the personality of the other partner, and problems also come up where one partner's interest is in conflict with the general interest in the marriage. It is a theory that focuses on marital stability, especially where one partner in the marriage has the irrational tendency to impose his or her wishes on the other partner and when his or her manner of approach to marital stability is panic-stricken.

The structural theory model places emphasis on marital stability when a problem arises and when couples find it impossible to interact positively in their relationship. It is a well-known theory for family and marital counselling, as it proposes that marital stability should be promoted so that it does not affect the social, academic and moral development of children. According to the theory, marital stability can only be achieved when one member's interest is in harmony with the general interests of the marriage. The sense is that people who are in a relationship or who wish to be in a relationship should ensure that the interests of one partner do not affect the other partner negatively, which can bring about marital disharmony to the general benefit of the relationship.

The theory of differential association is relevant to this work as it explains that marital disharmony can affect both the family members and the academic adjustment of children. The theory has clarified the fact that children learn to adjust positively to academic work through parents during the process of interaction or communication. A child needs to be taught moral values from parents in order to develop good behaviour and live a responsible life. If parents fail to model good behaviour and inculcate moral

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values into children's minds, the young ones may likely exhibit deviant behaviour and fail to adjust positively to the demands of academic activities.

Concept of Marital Disharmony

Academic and social exposure can either strengthen or weaken marital relationships. When couples lack adequate academic and social enlightenment, they may be more vulnerable to disharmony, misunderstandings, and the misinterpretation of issues within their marital life (Iheagwam, 2011). Marital disharmony, according to Ezeilo (2010), occurs when the suppression of feelings within the family becomes severe and when members are unable to effectively communicate their emotions.

Similarly, Omorogbe, Obetoh, and Odion (2010) describe marital disharmony as a situation in which communication between spouses becomes impaired and the husband-wife relationship is disrupted. Such disruption often results in tension, mistrust, doubt, reduced emotional closeness, limited sharing, decreased intimacy, and feelings of isolation. Consequently, spouses may become involved in negative experiences such as disagreements, quarrels, discord, friction, antagonism, and open conflicts, which are common characteristics of marital disharmony.

Marital disharmony may also arise when couples associate with individuals who influence them to adopt unhealthy approaches to resolving marital conflicts. Ibeh (2013) identified several additional causes of marital disharmony, including breach of trust, age at marriage, sexual deprivation, conflicts related to marital roles and finances, fertility challenges, and infidelity. Furthermore, in-laws and other external influences can exert either positive or negative effects on marital relationships. When in-laws impose excessive authority or interference in a marriage, it may generate resentment from either partner's family, thereby contributing to marital conflict. Gossip, criticism, and blame from in-laws or other external parties can also intensify tensions and lead to friction between spouses.

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Concept of Academic Adjustment

Academic adjustments are modifications to how students participate in classes and activities, which allow students to meet academic goals and expectations. Academic adjustments give students equal access to the educational opportunities. Academic adjustment also refers to students' ability to develop their coping skills and learning strategies aimed at achieving satisfactory academic results. According to Salami (2011), academic adjustment is the process of making friends, inclusion in campus life and social networking. It comprises those experiences that help to connect students to the school environment and aid in their psychosocial development. Malinga-Musamba (2014) added that academic adjustments are those experiences in academic life that contribute to students' overall satisfaction in their new environment, which promotes intra-personal growth.

Academic adjustment is important in helping students who may face problems related to language, finance and poor social support and have difficulties in adapting to their new roles. Students achieve academic adjustment through reaching a state of satisfaction with their academic performance, friendships with peers and teachers and the environment as a whole. It involves experiences that support academic development, encourage cognitive development, and enhance academic motivation in a meaningful way (Al-Khatib, Awamleh and Samwi, 2012). Academic adjustment involves the ability to be resilient in different settings. Brinkworth, McCann, Mathews and Nordstrom (2009) suggested that this relies on the ability of the student to make a quick adjustment to an environment, which requires greater autonomy than was expected in a school setting. This can be achieved through internalising the character, culture, and behavioural norms of the institution. The students' ability to set goals and achieve a balance between academic and social activities plays a critical role in their success and, ultimately, in their chances of graduating.

Communication Issues in Marriage and Students Academic Adjustment

'Communication issues in marriage' refers to some form of friction, disagreement, or discord arising between the husband and wife (Animasahum, 2014). Such conflict



usually arises when the beliefs, decisions or actions of both parties are either resisted or unacceptable (Malek, 2013). Violence between the husband and wife has some emotional implications. This is because emotions can quickly intensify discord. Family couples are expected to be involved in long-term relationships where mutual understanding and peaceful interaction prevail. If such a relationship is full of painful discord, it may likely lead to divorce or domestic violence, which is often fuelled by fighting between husbands and wives, sibling rivalry, parent-child power struggles, quarrelling among family members, spouse nagging, disagreement, and others.

Many families face difficult struggles that are often quite volatile and troubling. According to Animasahum (2014), discord is found in every kind of family, and it can reach extreme levels sometimes where the husband and wife fight each other. The author further added that adolescents who witness family violence face increased risk for such emotional and behavioural problems as anxiety, depression, poor school attendance and performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares and physical health complaints. Such emotional and behavioural problems sometimes make students show deviant acts such as being violent with students and teachers, cheating in examinations and disrupting the activities of the school.

In a study conducted by Gorman-Smith and Tolan (2008), the author noted that children are more likely to lose positive academic adjustment and resort to violence if severe conflict always occurs in their family. Families where these situations are in place will become unbalanced and unhealthy and fail to function normally, as difficult behaviours may result in one or all of the members of the family. Abdul (2016) further found that unpeaceful communication in marriage between couples reduces the likelihood of students becoming poorly adjusted to school life.

Financial Disagreement and Students' Academic Adjustment

Disagreement over financial spending may result in marital disharmony. Money and financial conflict have been one of the primary factors that eventually lead to separation and divorce as well as affecting children's social and academic wellbeing. Money is something that must be talked about before marriage; hence, many couples

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fail to do so. Financial problems within a family can lead to one spouse overspending, being stingy with finances, or feeling like they know better than their spouse on how to handle the monthly bills. Kamau (2013) stated that money has been found to be the topmost reason for dispute among secondary school teachers. Management of finance in a family can also instigate conflict among couples and hinder the stability of marriage.

Disagreement over financial spending may exert a negative influence on the academic adjustment of students in the school. In accounting for the relationship between financial disagreement and academic adjustment of students, Cummings and Davis (2014) noted disagreement over financial spending affects the children's academic adjustment directly through emotional stress and academic performance. A conflict-riddled marriage may be associated with low achievement of children because witnessing conflicts keeps them from focusing on schoolwork. Most times, disagreement over financial spending hinders the financing of children's education as well as the provision of adequate school learning materials for children. These children also learn inappropriate social problem-solving skills through modelling parental behaviours.

In a study conducted by Lee and Chung (2014), the authors found that financial disagreement has a strong association with students' school adjustment because such students are always in distress and distracted from academic work. The authors added that students of unstable homes due to financial issues scored lower than children from stable marriages on measures of academic success. In another study conducted by Inanga and Esther (2018), the authors found that families with severe financial issues are most likely to breed children who lack the ability to adjust to school activities and vice versa.

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Research Method

Research Design

The correlational survey design was adopted for the study. This design is used whenever a researcher wants to find out the magnitude and direction of the relationship that exists between the dependent and independent variables (Udoh and Joseph, 2005). Therefore, this design was considered suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to measure the relationship between marital disharmony and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee.

Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all the 6,603 senior secondary two (SS2) students in the fifteen (15) public secondary schools in the Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (Secondary Education Board, Research and Statistics Division 2021).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 378 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students was selected for the study, representing 5 per cent of the study population, using Taro Yamane sampling formulae. To get adequate sampled schools, the random sampling method was used to select 9 public secondary schools out of 15. Subsequently, 42 students were randomly selected from each of the sampled schools using the hat-and-draw method, resulting in a total of 378 respondents.

Instrumentation

A self-structured questionnaire titled “Marital Disharmony and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students Questionnaire (MDAASSSQ)” was used for data collection. The items were framed in line with the research questions and hypotheses. The instrument had two parts. Section (A) contained 15 items, that is, 5 items each on marital disharmony, while section (B) contained 8 items measuring academic adjustment of students. MDAASSSQ was measured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) =

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1. The respondents were requested to give their own opinions or views on the instrument using the symbol (\surd).

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, two copies were submitted to two validators from the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling at the University of Uyo. The validators assessed the suitability and clarity of the items contained in the instrument. Their observations, suggestions, and corrections, along with those provided by the researcher's supervisor, were incorporated in producing the final version of the instrument used for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used. Here, the instrument was administered to 40 SS2 students in a selected school not included in the population sample. The instrument was administered, and data were collated. Data was subjected to correlation, and Cronbach's alpha statistics were applied for testing the internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded the overall reliability coefficient of .82 for marital disharmony and .73 for items measuring students' academic adjustment, respectively. This index, according to Udoh and Joseph (2005), is a high reliability index since the reliability coefficient is above .50. Therefore, the instrument was deemed reliable for use in the study.

Method of Data Collection

The research instruments were personally administered to the respondents in their respective schools by the researcher together with two trained research assistants. In addition to items written on the questionnaire, the subjects were given verbal instructions and clarifications where necessary. All the 378 copies of questionnaires administered were filled properly according to instructions and collected instantly to avoid any loss.

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Method of Data Analysis

Data generated were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions. The same statistical tool (PPMC) was used for testing the null hypotheses by comparing the r-value with the critical r-value to determine the significance of the relationship between variables, all at the 0.05 level of significance. The research questions were answered using the decision rule for answering questions in a correlational study, as presented by Uzoagulu (2011) as follows:

Coefficient (r) - Relationship

± .00 to ± .20 – Negligible, weak, very low, little or none.

± .21 to ± .40 - Present, slight, but low.

± .41 to ± .60 - Average, moderately high, fairly high

± .61 to ± .1.00 - Very high

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between communication issues in marriage and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee?

Table 1: Correlation analysis of responses on the relationship between communication issues in marriage and academic adjustment of secondary school students

| Variables | N | $\sum x$ | $\sum x^2$ | $\sum xy$ | r-value | Remark |
|----------------------------------|-----|----------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------------------------|
| | | $\sum y$ | $\sum y^2$ | | | |
| Communication Issues in Marriage | 378 | 5768 | 90682 | | | |
| Students' Academic Adjustment | 378 | 12256 | 404126 | 190757 | 0.88 | Very High Positive Relationship |

The result in Table 1 shows a very high positive relationship between communication issues in marriage and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee. This is shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.88. The implication of this result is that students are most likely to be well adjusted to academic activities if mutual understanding and peaceful interaction exist among husbands and wives.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between financial disagreement and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee?

Table 2: Correlation analysis of responses on the relationship between financial disagreement and academic adjustment of secondary school students

| Variables | N | $\sum x$ | $\sum x^2$ | $\sum xy$ | r- | Remark |
|-------------------------------|-----|----------|------------|-----------|------|---------------------------------|
| | | $\sum y$ | value | | | |
| | | | $\sum y^2$ | | | |
| Financial Disagreement | 378 | 5771 | 90021 | | | |
| | | | | 189292 | | |
| Students' Academic Adjustment | 378 | 12256 | | | 0.73 | Very High Positive Relationship |
| | | | 404126 | | | |

The result in Table 2 reveals a very high positive relationship between financial disagreement and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee. This is shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.73. This implies that students would be well-adjusted academically if financial issues were adequately managed.



Discussion of Findings

The researchers presented a combined discussion of the findings from both the research questions and the hypotheses tested.

Results from research question one and hypothesis one revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between communication issues in marriage and the academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Gorman-Smith and Tolan (2008), which revealed that children are more likely to lose positive academic adjustment and may even resort to violent behaviour when severe conflicts frequently occur within the family. Families experiencing such situations often become unstable and unhealthy, thereby failing to function normally, as problematic behaviours may emerge in one or more family members.

This finding also aligns with the study conducted by Abdul (2016), which indicated that unpeaceful communication between couples in marriage increases the likelihood of students becoming poorly adjusted to school life. Therefore, the finding suggests that persistent misunderstandings and conflicts in marital communication can negatively influence students' academic adjustment.

Results from research question two and hypothesis two revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between financial disagreement and academic adjustment of secondary school students in the Uyo Local Education Committee. This finding is in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Lee and Chung (2014). The authors found that financial disagreement has a strong association with students' school adjustment because such students are always in distress and distracted from academic work. This finding is also in line with that of Inanga and Esther (2018), whose finding showed families with severe financial issues are most likely to breed children who lack the ability to adjust to school activities and vice versa. It is, therefore, observed from this finding that disagreement over financial spending may hinder the financing of children's education as well as the provision of adequate school learning materials for children, hence affecting students' academic adjustment negatively.

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Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, it is therefore concluded by the researcher that inadequate management of communication issues in marriage, financial disagreement, as well as the relationship between parents and their children can result in students' inability to adjust academically in schools.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made from the finding of the study:

- i. Husbands and wives should always maintain a friendly, happy and peaceful life within the family and ensure that painful conflicts that could cause emotional and behavioural problems to students' academic adjustment are avoided.
- ii. School counsellors should intensify efforts in counselling parents through PTA meetings on issues of financial management and communication stability.
- iii. Parents should ensure that they maintain a good relationship such that the children can easily approach them and disclose their feelings or thoughts. This will go a long way in reducing the tendency of students to become deviant in schools.

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Guidance Services and Academic Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between guidance services and academic adjustment of secondary school students in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study explored the extent to which information service, counselling service, and orientation service relate to students' academic adjustment. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 6,303 SS Two students in thirteen public secondary schools in Uyo and Itu local government areas with functional counselling units. A sample of 781 SS Two was selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Guidance Services and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (GSAAQ). The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, and an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic to answer the research questions and also to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that

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information service, counselling service, and orientation service all positively and significantly relate to the academic adjustment of secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was concluded that guidance services play a crucial role in promoting students' academic adjustment. It was recommended, among others, that secondary school administrators in Uyo Local Government Area should ensure that functional guidance and counselling units are established and adequately staffed with qualified counsellors to provide effective information, counselling, and orientation services.

Keywords: Guidance, Information service, Counselling service, Orientation service, Academic adjustment, Secondary school students.

Introduction

Secondary school students operate in a dynamic academic environment that requires continuous interaction with peers, teachers, counsellors, and school administrators. These interactions may demand adaptability, effective communication, and emotional stability to ensure successful functioning within the school system. Academic adjustment therefore becomes a vital factor in determining students' academic success and overall wellbeing. According to Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017), academic adjustment refers to the ability of students to cope with academic demands, adhere to school rules, and effectively manage learning challenges in a way that promotes academic performance and satisfaction. Academic adjustment involves students' ability to adapt to school routines, meet academic expectations, and maintain positive relationships within the school environment. Similarly, Kemdirim (2018) noted that academic adjustment encompasses behavioural and emotional responses that enable students to function effectively within academic settings. Poor academic adjustment among students may result in low academic performance, indiscipline, anxiety, and poor social relationships.

One major factor that may influence students' academic adjustment is guidance services. Guidance services are structured support systems provided in schools to assist students in understanding themselves, making informed decisions, and adjusting effectively to academic and social demands as explained by Ukaegbu (2022).

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According to Nelson and Nelson (2024), guidance services are essential components of the school system designed to promote students' personal, social, and academic development. Guidance services include information service, counselling service, orientation service, referral service, appraisal service, placement service, and evaluation/follow-up service (Ukaegbu, 2022). However, in this study, only three guidance services, namely information service, counselling service, and orientation service, were investigated.

'Information service' refers to the provision of relevant and timely academic, vocational, and personal information to students to aid decision-making and adjustment. It helps students to understand school rules, subject choices, career opportunities, and available support systems. Through effective information service, students are better equipped to make informed academic decisions, thereby enhancing their adjustment within the school environment (Ukaegbu, 2022).

'Counselling service' involves professional assistance provided by trained counsellors to help students understand themselves, overcome challenges, and develop coping strategies. Counselling enables students to address academic, emotional, and social issues that may hinder their adjustment. Through counselling, students develop problem-solving skills, emotional stability, and positive attitudes towards learning, which contribute to improved academic adjustment (Raymond, 2019).

'Orientation service', on the other hand, refers to programmes organised to familiarize new students with the school environment, rules, and expectations. It helps students to understand school culture, academic requirements, and available resources. Orientation service plays a vital role in easing students' transition into a new school environment, thereby promoting better academic adjustment (Ernest, 2022).

From the foregoing, there is need to focus on the academic adjustment of secondary school students because it is essential for their academic success, emotional stability, and effective functioning within the school environment. Students who are well-adjusted may likely cope with academic demands, while poor adjustment may lead to low performance and behavioural problems. Guidance services may play a vital role in enhancing academic adjustment by providing necessary support through information, counselling, and orientation services. It is against this background that this study investigates the relationship between guidance services and academic adjustment of

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secondary school students in Uyo and Itu local government areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Academic adjustment among secondary school students in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State has become a growing concern due to increasing cases of poor academic performance, indiscipline, emotional instability, and inability to cope with academic demands. Many students find it difficult to adapt to school routines, academic expectations, and social interactions within the school environment.

Despite the availability of guidance services in schools, many students still experience adjustment problems. This may be due to inadequate utilisation or ineffective implementation of guidance services such as information, counselling, and orientation services. Students who lack proper guidance may struggle with decision-making, emotional challenges, and adaptation to school life. Although previous studies have explored the influence of guidance services on students' development, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific components of guidance services (information, counselling, and orientation services) relate to academic adjustment of secondary school students, particularly in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. This gap necessitated the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between guidance services and academic adjustment of secondary school students in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

- i. The relationship between information service and academic adjustment of secondary school students.
- ii. The relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment of secondary school students.

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- iii. The relationship between orientation service and academic adjustment of secondary school students.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to students, teachers, school counsellors, school administrators, educational policymakers, and researchers. Students will benefit from the findings of the study by gaining improved support systems that enhance their academic adjustment and performance. Teachers will gain from the outcome of the study by understanding how guidance services can support students' learning and behaviour in the classroom. This will enable them to recognise the importance of information, counselling, and orientation services in addressing students' academic and behavioural challenges.

School counsellors will benefit from the findings of the study by having a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of guidance services in promoting students' academic adjustment, thereby enabling them to design better intervention strategies. School administrators will find the outcome of the study useful in strengthening guidance programmes and ensuring proper implementation of guidance services in schools.

Educational policymakers will benefit from the findings of the study by formulating and implementing policies that strengthen the provision and effectiveness of guidance services in secondary schools. The findings of the study will provide empirical evidence that can guide decision-making on resource allocation, recruitment of qualified counsellors, and integration of guidance programmes into the school curriculum.

In addition, the outcome of the study will contribute to existing literature by expanding knowledge on the relationship between guidance services and academic adjustment. This will serve as a useful reference material for future researchers who may wish to explore related variables or conduct further studies in similar or different contexts.

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Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between information service and academic adjustment of secondary school students?
- ii. What is the relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment of secondary school students?
- iii. What is the relationship between orientation service and academic adjustment of secondary school students?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- i. There is no significant relationship between information service and academic adjustment of secondary school students.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment of secondary school students.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between orientation service and academic adjustment of secondary school students.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on the relationship between guidance services and academic adjustment of secondary school students. Guidance services, namely information service, counselling service, and orientation service, served as the independent variables, while the dependent variable was academic adjustment. The study was delimited to senior secondary two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Uyo and Itu local government areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Person-Centred Theory by Carl Rogers (1951)

The Person-Centred Theory was developed by Carl Rogers in 1951. The theory emphasises the importance of providing a supportive and non-judgemental environment that enables individuals to understand themselves and develop their potential.

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According to Rogers, individuals possess an innate tendency toward growth, self-direction, and self-actualisation, which can be realised when they are placed in a psychologically safe and accepting environment. Central to this theory are three core conditions: empathy, genuineness (congruence), and unconditional positive regard. Empathy involves the counsellor's ability to understand the client's feelings and experiences from their perspective; genuineness refers to the counsellor being real, open, and transparent in the counselling relationship, while unconditional positive regard involves accepting the client without judgement or criticism.

Rogers also emphasised that individuals have a self-concept, which develops based on their experiences and interactions with others. When there is a discrepancy between a person's self-concept and actual experiences, it may result in anxiety or maladjustment. Through a supportive counselling environment, individuals are able to explore their feelings freely, reduce this incongruence, and develop a more accurate and positive self-concept. The theory further posits that learning and behavioural change occur best when individuals are actively involved in the process and feel valued and understood.

The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in its emphasis on guidance services as a means of promoting students' academic adjustment. The person-centred theory highlights the importance of creating a supportive, accepting, and non-judgemental environment through guidance services such as counselling, information, and orientation. Through effective counselling, students are able to understand their academic and personal challenges, develop appropriate coping strategies, and build confidence in their abilities. The empathetic and accepting approach of counsellors encourages students to express their concerns freely, thereby helping them to resolve internal conflicts and improve their self-concept. In addition, guidance services can provide students with relevant information and orientation that facilitate better understanding of school expectations and academic demands. As a result, students become more adaptable, motivated, and capable of functioning effectively within the school environment. Thus, the theory provides a strong framework for explaining how guidance services can enhance students' academic adjustment.

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Adjustment Theory by Jean Piaget (1964)

Jean Piaget's adjustment theory was propounded in 1964. The theory explains how individuals adapt to their environment through the processes of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation involves integrating new experiences into existing cognitive structures, while accommodation involves modifying existing structures to fit new experiences. According to Piaget, adjustment occurs when individuals achieve a balance between these two processes, leading to effective adaptation to environmental demands. This balancing process is referred to as equilibration, which serves as a regulatory mechanism that ensures cognitive stability while allowing for growth and learning.

A key tenet of the theory is that individuals are active participants in their learning process, continuously interacting with their environment to construct knowledge. Piaget emphasised that cognitive development occurs in stages, and at each stage, individuals use assimilation and accommodation to make sense of their experiences. When new information fits into existing schemas, assimilation occurs; however, when it does not fit, accommodation takes place, leading to the modification of those schemas. This dynamic interaction enhances intellectual development and promotes effective adjustment. Another important tenet is that learning and adjustment are gradual processes that occur through continuous interaction with the environment. As individuals encounter new challenges, they experience cognitive imbalance (disequilibrium), which motivates them to adjust their thinking through assimilation and accommodation until balance (equilibrium) is restored. This process enables individuals to cope with new academic and social demands effectively.

The relevance of this theory to the study lies in its explanation of how students adjust academically through continuous interaction with their school environment. Piaget's theory emphasises that students learn and adapt by actively engaging with new academic experiences, school rules, and social expectations. Guidance services such as information, counselling, and orientation play a crucial role in facilitating this adjustment process. Information service provides students with the necessary knowledge about academic requirements, subject choices, and school expectations, enabling them to assimilate new information into their existing understanding. The counselling service supports students in addressing personal and academic challenges,

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helping them to modify their thinking and behaviour through accommodation when faced with difficulties. Orientation service, on the other hand, helps students to become familiar with the school environment, thereby reducing confusion and easing their transition into new academic settings.

Review of Empirical Literature

A study which investigated the influence of information service on the academic adjustment of secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria, was conducted by Olatunji (2020). The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 9,987 senior secondary school students in the study area, from which a sample of 655 students was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Information Service and Academic Adjustment Scale (ISAAS). The instrument was validated by experts in guidance and counselling, and a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha method. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that information service significantly enhances students' academic decision-making and adjustment. It was recommended that schools should strengthen information service delivery to improve students' academic outcomes. Similarly, Brown (2021) explored the role of information service in predicting academic adjustment among secondary school students in the United Kingdom. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 1,200 students, with a sample of 250 selected through the simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using the Academic Support Services Questionnaire (ASSQ). The instrument was validated and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that information service alone does not significantly predict academic adjustment unless combined with counselling and orientation services. It was recommended that schools should adopt a holistic approach to student support services.

Adebola (2021) conducted a study on the influence of counselling services on academic adjustment and emotional stability among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 7,908 public secondary school students, with a sample of 520 students

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selected using multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using Counselling Service and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (CSAAQ). The instrument was validated and had a reliability coefficient of 0.85 using Cronbach Alpha method. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings showed that counselling services significantly improve students' academic adjustment and emotional stability. It was recommended that qualified counsellors should be employed in all secondary schools.

In a related study, Adams (2020) investigated the relationship between counselling services and academic adjustment among secondary school students in the United States. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 900 students, with a sample of 200 selected using random sampling technique. Data were collected using Student Counselling and Adjustment Inventory (SCAI). The instrument was validated and had a reliability coefficient of 0.76. Data were analysed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that counselling service alone does not significantly predict academic adjustment, as other factors such as family background and school environment also play important roles. It was recommended that schools should integrate counselling with other support systems.

Adewale (2020) examined the impact of orientation programmes on students' adjustment and academic performance in secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 11,827 students, from which a sample of 770 students was selected using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using Orientation Service and Academic Performance Questionnaire (OSAPQ). The instrument was validated and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that orientation programmes significantly enhance students' adjustment and academic performance. It was recommended that schools should organise regular orientation programmes for students. In a similar study, Okeke (2022) investigated the effectiveness of orientation service on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 28,195 students, with a sample of 1,250 selected using stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using Orientation and Adjustment Scale (OAS). The instrument was validated and had a

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reliability coefficient of 0.83. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that orientation service alone is not sufficient to ensure academic adjustment without continuous support from counselling and information services. It was recommended that schools should integrate orientation with other guidance services for better outcomes.

The need to conduct this present study in Uyo Local Government Area is justified by several existing gaps in empirical literature. Although previous studies have established the importance of guidance services such as information, counselling, and orientation in enhancing students' academic adjustment, most of these studies were carried out in other geographical locations outside Uyo LGA. As such, their findings may not adequately reflect the peculiar educational, social, and environmental realities of secondary school students in Uyo LGA. Differences in school structure, availability of guidance personnel, and students' socio-cultural background necessitated a context-specific investigation.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between guidance services (information service, counselling service, and orientation service) and academic adjustment among secondary school students. According to Wali (2004), a correlational research design is used to establish relationships among variables as they naturally occur. This design is therefore suitable for investigating how guidance services relate to academic adjustment of secondary school students in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 6,303 SS Two students in thirteen public secondary schools in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas with functional counselling units (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board, 2026).

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Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 581 secondary school students drawn from a population of 5,420 students in public secondary schools in Uyo and Itu Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for finite populations. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. The population was first stratified based on schools and location (Uyo and Itu), after which the sample was proportionately distributed according to the size of each stratum. Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the respective schools.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Guidance Services and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (GSAAQ)" developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of 15 items, with five items designed to measure each of the independent sub-variables of guidance services (information service, counselling service, and orientation service), while Section B consisted of 15 items which measured academic adjustment. The items were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, comprising two experts in Guidance and Counselling and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, all from the Faculty of Education. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, relevance, appropriateness of language, and adequacy in measuring the variables under study. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the instrument to ensure that it adequately measured guidance services and academic adjustment of secondary school students.

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Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using the internal consistency method. The instrument was administered to 30 secondary school students who were part of the population of the study but were not included in the sample. The data obtained were analysed using Cronbach's alpha statistic. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.80 for information service, 0.82 for counselling service, 0.79 for orientation service, and 0.85 for academic adjustment, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82. With these values, the use of the instrument for the study was justified.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers used a direct administration method in collecting data for the study. Permission was obtained from the sampled school principals before administering the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in their respective schools. The purpose of the study was explained to the students, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, after which the completed copies were collected immediately. Out of the 585 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 581 were correctly completed and returned, while 4 copies were not returned. The 581 returned copies were used for the analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics. The correlation coefficients (r-values) were used to answer all the research questions by determining the strength and direction of the relationship between guidance services variables and academic adjustment. The null hypotheses were tested using the associated p-values of the correlation coefficients at 0.05 level of significance. All data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

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Decision Rule

For the research questions, the value of Pearson's r was interpreted as follows:

- ± 0.10 - ± 0.39 Weak relationship
- ± 0.40 - ± 0.59 Moderate relationship
- ± 0.60 - ± 0.79 Strong relationship
- ± 0.80 - ± 1.00 Very strong relationship

More so, if the value of significant value is less than .05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld and vice versa.

Results

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient of the relationship between information service and academic adjustment of secondary school students (n = 581)

| Variables | n | r | p-value | Remark |
|---------------------|-----|------|---------|---|
| Information Service | 781 | 0.72 | .001 | Strong positive relationship; Significant. |
| Academic Adjustment | | | | |

The result presented in Table 1 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between information service and academic adjustment of secondary school students. The findings reveal a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.72 with a p-value of 0.001 at a sample size of 781. This indicates a strong positive relationship between information service and academic adjustment. The p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, which means that the relationship is statistically significant. This implies that as the provision and effectiveness of information services increase, students' academic adjustment also improves. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between information service and academic adjustment is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

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Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient of the relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment of secondary school students (n = 581)

| Variables | n | r | p-value | Remark |
|---------------------|-----|------|---------|---|
| Counselling Service | 781 | 0.89 | .000 | Very strong positive relationship; Significant. |
| Academic Adjustment | | | | |

The result presented in Table 2 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment of secondary school students. The findings reveal a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.89 with a p-value of 0.000 at a sample size of 781. This indicates a very strong positive relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment. The p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, which means that the relationship is statistically significant. This implies that as counselling services become more effective and accessible, students' academic adjustment improves significantly. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient of the relationship between orientation service and academic adjustment of secondary school students (n = 581)

| Variables | n | r | p-value | Remark |
|---------------------|-----|------|---------|---|
| Counselling Service | 781 | 0.83 | .001 | Very strong positive relationship; Significant. |
| Academic Adjustment | | | | |

The result presented in Table 2 shows the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment of secondary school students. The findings reveal a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.89 with a p-value of 0.000 at a sample size of 781. This indicates a very strong positive relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment. The p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, which means that the relationship is statistically

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significant. This implies that as counselling services become more effective and accessible, students' academic adjustment improves significantly. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between counselling service and academic adjustment is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of data on the extent to which information service relates to the academic adjustment of secondary school students revealed that information service highly contributes to academic adjustment. In addition, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that information service significantly relates to the academic adjustment of secondary school students, suggesting that access to relevant and timely academic information plays an important role in enhancing students' ability to adjust within the school environment. Information service enables students to understand school rules, subject combinations, academic expectations, and available opportunities, thereby helping them make informed decisions and cope effectively with academic demands. Students who are well-informed are more likely to develop confidence, remain focused, and adapt positively to school activities. This support helps to reduce confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty that may hinder academic performance. This finding is consistent with the study of Olatunji (2020), who found that information service significantly enhances students' academic decision-making and adjustment. According to the author, students who receive adequate information are better equipped to navigate academic challenges and achieve improved outcomes. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Brown (2021), who reported that information service alone may not sufficiently predict academic adjustment without the complementary support of counselling and orientation services.

The analysis of data on the extent to which counselling service relates to the academic adjustment of secondary school students revealed that counselling service contributes very highly to academic adjustment. In addition, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that counselling service significantly relates to the academic adjustment of secondary school students, suggesting that the availability and effectiveness of counselling services play a crucial role in helping students cope with academic and personal challenges. Counselling service provides students with

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emotional support, guidance, and problem-solving skills that enable them to manage stress, overcome difficulties, and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Students who benefit from counselling are more likely to be emotionally stable, motivated, and capable of adjusting effectively to academic demands. This support helps to reduce anxiety, improve concentration, and enhance students' overall academic functioning. This finding is consistent with the study of Adebola (2021), who found that counselling services significantly improve students' academic adjustment and emotional stability. According to the author, counselling helps students to develop coping strategies and resilience needed for academic success. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Adams (2020), who argued that counselling service alone may not fully predict academic adjustment, as other factors such as family background and school environment may also influence students' adjustment.

The analysis of data on the extent to which orientation service relates to the academic adjustment of secondary school students revealed that orientation service contributes very highly to academic adjustment. In addition, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that orientation service significantly relates to the academic adjustment of secondary school students, suggesting that proper orientation plays a crucial role in helping students adapt to the school environment. Orientation service familiarises students with school rules, academic expectations, available facilities, and support systems, thereby reducing uncertainty and anxiety associated with a new learning environment. Students who receive effective orientation are more likely to feel comfortable, confident, and prepared to meet academic demands. This support helps them to integrate smoothly into the school system, improve their participation in academic activities, and develop a positive attitude towards learning. This finding is consistent with the study of Adewale (2020), who found that orientation programmes significantly enhance students' adjustment and academic performance. According to the author, proper orientation helps students to understand their environment and reduces the challenges associated with transitioning into new school settings. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Okeke (2022), who reported that orientation service alone may not be sufficient to ensure academic adjustment without continuous support through counselling and information services.

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Conclusion

The researchers concluded that guidance services, namely information, counselling and orientation services, are indispensable in promoting students' academic adjustment. Therefore, effective implementation of guidance services in secondary schools is essential for enhancing students' academic adjustment.

The findings of this study have important implications for counselling practice in secondary schools, as school counsellors must recognise the critical role of information service in equipping students with relevant academic knowledge. Counsellors should ensure that accurate and up-to-date information about academic programmes, subject choices, and career opportunities is regularly disseminated to students.

Secondly, the significant influence of counselling services implies that counsellors should provide consistent emotional and psychological support to students. This includes helping students manage stress, develop resilience, and build positive attitudes toward learning. Counsellors must also adopt diverse counselling techniques such as individual and group counselling to address students' varying needs.

Furthermore, the importance of orientation service suggests that counsellors should actively organise comprehensive orientation programmes for new and continuing students. Such programmes should focus on familiarising students with school policies, academic expectations, and available support systems. Finally, the results emphasise the need for an integrated approach to guidance services. Counsellors should not treat information, counselling, and orientation services in isolation but should combine them to provide holistic support that enhances students' academic adjustment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Secondary school administrators in Uyo Local Government Area should ensure that functional guidance and counselling units are established and adequately staffed with qualified counsellors to provide effective information, counselling, and orientation services.

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- ii. School counsellors in Uyo Local Government Area should regularly organise orientation programmes and information sessions to keep students informed about academic requirements, school rules, and available opportunities.
- iii. Government of Akwa Ibom State and educational stakeholders should provide adequate funding, training, and resources to support the effective delivery of guidance services in secondary schools.

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GUIDANCE SERVICES AND ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (GSAAQ)

Instruction: Tick (✓) the option that best describes your opinion.

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Section A: Guidance Services

| S/N | Information Service | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | Information provided in my school helps me understand academic requirements. | | | | |
| 2 | I receive adequate information about subject combinations in my school. | | | | |
| 3 | School information service helps me plan my academic activities effectively. | | | | |
| 4 | I am well informed about examination schedules and requirements. | | | | |
| 5 | I receive information that helps me set realistic academic goals. | | | | |
| | Counselling Service | | | | |
| 6 | Counselling services in my school help me deal with academic stress. | | | | |
| 7 | Counselling service helps me manage my time effectively. | | | | |
| 8 | Counselling helps me overcome learning difficulties. | | | | |
| 9 | Counselling service helps me stay motivated in my studies. | | | | |
| 10 | Counselling service helps me develop problem-solving skills. | | | | |
| | Orientation Service | | | | |
| 11 | I was properly introduced to school facilities during orientation. | | | | |
| 12 | Orientation programmes reduce my anxiety when I enter a new class. | | | | |
| 13 | Orientation service improves my confidence in school. | | | | |
| 14 | Orientation service helps me feel comfortable in school. | | | | |
| 15 | Orientation programme helps me understand my | | | | |

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| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | academic responsibilities. | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|--|

Section B: Academic Adjustment

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | I am able to cope with academic demands in my school. | | | | |
| 2 | I complete my assignments on time. | | | | |
| 3 | I can concentrate during lessons. | | | | |
| 4 | I understand most of what is taught in class. | | | | |
| 5 | I manage my study time effectively. | | | | |
| 6 | I am able to adapt to new teaching methods. | | | | |
| 7 | I set academic goals and work towards achieving them. | | | | |
| 8 | I am motivated to succeed in my studies. | | | | |
| 9 | I am satisfied with my academic performance. | | | | |
| 10 | I attend classes regularly. | | | | |
| 11 | I am able to balance academic work with other activities. | | | | |
| 12 | I feel comfortable with my academic workload. | | | | |
| 13 | I can overcome academic challenges. | | | | |
| 14 | I adjust easily to changes in academic schedules. | | | | |
| 15 | I stay focused during academic tasks. | | | | |

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Marital Adjustment Strategies and Job Performance of Female Bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent to which marital adjustment strategies predict the job performance of female bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the extent to which spousal communication, spousal conflict resolution pattern, and spousal emotional support predict job performance. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 412 respondents comprising 327 married female bankers and 85 bank managers, and census sampling technique was used to include all members of the population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire by the researchers titled "Marital Adjustment Strategies and Job Performance Questionnaire (MASJPQ)." The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation, and its internal reliability was established with an overall coefficient of 0.82. Data collected were analyzed using simple regression analysis to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that spousal communication and spousal emotional support predict job performance to a moderate extent, while spousal conflict resolution predicts job performance to a high extent. All the variables were found to significantly predict job performance

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of married female bankers. Based on these findings, the study concluded that effective marital adjustment strategies play a significant role in enhancing job performance. It was recommended, among others, that married female bankers and their spouses should improve communication, adopt effective conflict resolution strategies, and provide emotional support to enhance job performance.

Keywords: marital adjustment, spousal communication, conflict resolution, emotional support, job performance, female bankers

Introduction

Job performance is a vital factor in determining the effectiveness, productivity, and success of employees within any organization, particularly in the banking sector, where efficiency, accuracy, and customer service are highly prioritized. In the context of married female bankers, job performance refers to the extent to which they are able to effectively carry out their assigned duties, meet organizational targets, maintain professional standards, and contribute to the achievement of institutional goals as highlighted by Adewale (2021). High job performance may be associated with attributes such as commitment, punctuality, productivity, attention to detail, and the ability to meet deadlines. Conversely, poor job performance may manifest in reduced efficiency, absenteeism, low productivity, errors in task execution, and inability to meet organizational expectations.

In contemporary society, the job performance of married female bankers has become an important concern due to the increasing demands of the banking profession, which requires long working hours, high levels of concentration, and the ability to manage stress effectively. Married female bankers are expected to perform optimally in their workplace despite facing various personal and family-related responsibilities. These demands may sometimes create pressure that affects their efficiency and effectiveness at work. As a result, the ability of married female bankers to perform effectively at work may depend largely on the marital adjustment strategies they adopt in managing their marital relationships.

Marital adjustment strategies refer to the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive approaches used by couples to maintain harmony, resolve conflicts, and sustain

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satisfaction within marriage (Ukaegbu & Ekott, 2025). According to Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017), adjustment strategies enable individuals to cope with marital demands, interpersonal differences, and role expectations in ways that promote stability and satisfaction. In the context of married female bankers, marital adjustment strategies may include effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support between spouses. Women who adopt effective marital adjustment strategies are more likely to experience marital stability, which may positively influence their job performance. On the other hand, poor marital adjustment may lead to stress, emotional instability, and reduced work efficiency.

Spousal communication refers to the process through which couples exchange information, express feelings, and resolve misunderstandings. Effective communication enhances mutual understanding, reduces conflicts, and promotes marital harmony. Married female bankers who engage in open and respectful communication with their spouses are more likely to experience emotional stability, which can enhance their focus and productivity at work. Conversely, poor communication may lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and emotional distress, which may negatively affect job performance (Ogunleye, 2023).

As stated by Ukaegbu and Ekpenyong (2025), spousal conflict resolution pattern refers to the ability of couples to manage disagreements constructively and reach mutually acceptable solutions. Effective conflict resolution strategies such as negotiation, compromise, and collaboration can help maintain peace and stability in marital relationships. Married female bankers who can resolve conflicts effectively may likely maintain emotional balance and concentration at work. In contrast, unresolved marital conflicts may lead to stress, distraction, and decreased job performance.

Spousal emotional support refers to the care, encouragement, and understanding that spouses provide to one another during challenging situations (Uko & Iwok, 2021). Emotional support can enhance psychological well-being and reduce stress. Married female bankers who receive adequate emotional support from their spouses are likely to feel motivated, confident, and capable of performing their job roles effectively. On the other hand, lack of emotional support can result in emotional strain and poor job performance.

From the foregoing, understanding how marital adjustment strategies influence job performance is essential for promoting both family stability and organizational

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productivity. Effective marital adjustment strategies can help married female bankers manage stress, maintain emotional balance, and perform efficiently at work. It is against this background that this study was carried out to investigate the relationship between marital adjustment strategies and job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State has become a growing concern, particularly due to the increasing demands of balancing marital responsibilities and professional obligations. Many married female bankers are faced with challenges such as marital conflicts, communication gaps, and lack of emotional support, which may affect their ability to function effectively in their workplace. These challenges may manifest in reduced productivity, absenteeism, lack of concentration, and decreased efficiency in job performance.

Despite the importance of marital adjustment strategies in maintaining stability within the family and enhancing work performance, there is limited empirical evidence on how these strategies relate to job performance among married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State. While some studies have focused on work-related factors influencing job performance, less attention has been given to the role of marital dynamics and adjustment strategies in shaping employees' effectiveness, especially among married women in the banking sector. This creates a gap in knowledge that needs to be addressed. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to investigate the extent to which marital adjustment strategies predict job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to married female bankers, their family members, bank management, counselors, policymakers, and researchers. Married female bankers will benefit from the study by gaining a better understanding of how effective marital adjustment strategies such as communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support can enhance their job performance. This awareness may help them manage marital challenges more effectively and maintain a balance between their family and work responsibilities.

Furthermore, family members, particularly spouses, will benefit from the findings by understanding the importance of cooperation, mutual support, and effective communication in maintaining marital stability. This may encourage spouses to actively contribute to creating a supportive home environment, which can reduce stress and enhance the work performance of married female bankers. Bank management will benefit from the findings of this study by gaining insight into how employees' marital stability can influence their performance at work. This will enable management to design policies and programs that promote work-life balance, employee well-being, and increased productivity within the banking sector.

Counselors will benefit from the findings of the study by using the information to design appropriate marital counseling and intervention programs for married female bankers and their spouses. Such programs can focus on improving communication, conflict resolution skills, and emotional support systems, thereby enhancing both marital stability and job performance. Educational policymakers will find the findings of the study useful in formulating policies that support married working women, particularly in creating family-friendly work environments and promoting employee welfare. This may contribute to improved job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness. Finally, the study will contribute to existing literature on marital adjustment and job performance and will serve as a reference material for future researchers who may wish to conduct further studies in related areas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which marital adjustment strategies predict job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the following:

- i. The extent to which spousal communication predicts job performance of married female bankers.
- ii. The extent to which spousal conflict resolution patterns predict job performance of married female bankers.

- iii. The extent to which spousal emotional support predicts job performance of married female bankers.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent does spousal communication predict job performance of married female bankers?
- ii. To what extent does a spousal conflict resolution pattern predict the job performance of married female bankers?
- iii. To what extent does spousal emotional support predict job performance of married female bankers?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- i. Spousal communication does not significantly predict job performance of married female bankers.
- ii. The spousal conflict resolution pattern does not significantly predict the job performance of married female bankers.
- iii. Spousal emotional support does not significantly predict the job performance of married female bankers.

Scope of the Study

The study focused on the relationship between marital adjustment strategies and job performance of female bankers in Akwa Ibom State. Spousal communication, spousal conflict resolution pattern, and spousal emotional support served as the independent variables, while job performance served as the dependent variable. The study was delimited to married female bankers working in commercial banks in Akwa Ibom State.

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Theoretical Framework

Marital Adjustment Theory by Locke and Wallace (1959)

Marital Adjustment Theory was developed by Locke and Wallace in 1959 and focuses on the degree of harmony, satisfaction, and stability within marital relationships. The theory posits that marital adjustment is achieved when couples are able to effectively manage their differences, communicate openly, resolve conflicts constructively, and maintain mutual understanding. According to Locke and Wallace, marital adjustment involves agreement on important issues such as finances, roles, values, and emotional expectations, as well as the ability to express affection and maintain positive interactions.

The theory further explains that successful marital adjustment depends on the strategies couples adopt in managing their relationship. These strategies include effective communication, conflict resolution, emotional support, and cooperation. Couples who adopt positive adjustment strategies are more likely to experience marital satisfaction and stability, while those who fail to adjust effectively may experience conflict, dissatisfaction, and emotional strain. Marital maladjustment can lead to stress, frustration, and reduced psychological well-being. Furthermore, marital adjustment theory emphasizes that the quality of marital relationships has a significant impact on individuals' overall functioning, including their work life. When individuals experience harmony and support in their marriage, they are more likely to be emotionally stable, focused, and productive. On the other hand, marital instability may lead to distraction, stress, and reduced efficiency in other areas of life.

The relevance of marital adjustment theory to the present study can be explained as follows: Married female bankers are required to balance their marital responsibilities with their professional duties. Effective marital adjustment strategies such as communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support may help them maintain stability in their marriages and reduce stress. This stability may enhance their concentration, commitment, and productivity at work. Conversely, poor marital adjustment may lead to emotional distress and reduced job performance. Therefore, Marital Adjustment Theory provides a suitable framework for understanding how marital adjustment strategies influence the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

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Expectancy Theory by Victor Vroom (1964)

Expectancy Theory was propounded by Victor Vroom in 1964 and focuses on the relationship between motivation and job performance. The theory posits that individuals are motivated to perform well when they believe that their efforts will lead to desirable outcomes. According to Vroom, motivation is influenced by three key components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy refers to the belief that effort will lead to improved performance; instrumentality refers to the belief that good performance will result in rewards; and valence refers to the value individuals place on those rewards.

The theory further explains that individuals are more likely to be committed and productive when they perceive a positive relationship between their efforts, performance, and rewards. When employees are motivated, they tend to exhibit higher levels of efficiency, dedication, and job performance. Conversely, lack of motivation may lead to poor performance, reduced productivity, and job dissatisfaction. In addition, Expectancy Theory highlights that external factors such as emotional well-being, work-life balance, and personal circumstances can influence employees' motivation and performance. Individuals who experience stress or dissatisfaction in their personal lives may have reduced motivation and concentration at work, thereby affecting their job performance.

The relevance of expectancy theory to the present study lies in its explanation of job performance among married female bankers. Marital adjustment strategies such as effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support can enhance emotional stability and reduce stress, thereby improving motivation and job performance. Married female bankers who experience stability and support in their marital relationships are more likely to be motivated, focused, and productive in their work roles. On the other hand, those experiencing marital conflict may have reduced motivation and performance. Therefore, Expectancy Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how marital adjustment strategies influence job performance among married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Empirical Literature

Ogunleye (2023) conducted a study on the relationship between spousal communication and job performance among married employees in selected organizations in Southwest Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 1,120 married employees, from which a sample of 280 respondents was selected using

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the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Spousal Communication and Job Performance Scale (SCJPS).” The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation, while a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation and regression analysis. The findings revealed that spousal communication significantly enhances job performance among married employees. Based on the findings, it was recommended that couples should maintain open and effective communication to improve both marital stability and work performance. Similarly, Brown (2021) investigated the influence of marital factors on job performance among working women in the United States. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 1,300 working women, while a sample of 325 respondents was selected using a random sampling technique. Data were collected using a standardized questionnaire titled “Marital Influence on Work Performance Inventory (MIWPI).” The instrument was validated and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that communication alone does not significantly predict job performance without the support of other factors such as emotional support and conflict management. The study recommended that multiple marital variables should be considered when addressing work performance issues among married women.

Nwoye and Okonkwo (2020) carried out a study on the relationship between conflict resolution and job performance among employees in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 1,250 employees, with a sample of 312 respondents selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Conflict Resolution and Job Performance Scale (CRJPS).” The instrument was validated and had a reliability coefficient of 0.83 using Cronbach's alpha. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that effective conflict resolution significantly enhances job performance. The study recommended that employees should be trained on conflict management skills to improve workplace productivity. In a related study, Ibrahim (2022) examined the relationship between marital conflict and job performance among civil servants in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study used a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 980 civil servants, from which a sample of 245 respondents was selected using

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a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled “Marital Conflict and Job Performance Questionnaire (MCJPQ).” The instrument was validated and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.77. Data were analyzed using regression analysis. The findings showed that marital conflict resolution does not significantly predict job performance in cases where work-related stress is dominant. The study recommended that organizational factors should also be considered alongside marital factors in improving job performance.

In their own study, Uko and Iwok (2021) explored the relationship between emotional support and job performance among married workers in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 1,150 married workers, while a sample of 290 respondents was selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used was a questionnaire titled “Emotional Support and Job Performance Scale (ESJPS).” The instrument was validated and had a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that emotional support significantly improves psychological well-being and job performance among married workers. The study recommended that spouses should provide adequate emotional support to enhance work efficiency. Okafor (2022) investigated the influence of emotional factors on job performance among employees in South-East Nigeria. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 1,050 employees, with a sample of 263 respondents selected using a random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Emotional Factors and Job Performance Inventory (EFJPI).” The instrument was validated and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that emotional support alone may not significantly predict job performance without supportive workplace conditions. The study recommended that both personal and organizational factors should be considered in enhancing job performance.

Despite numerous studies on marital adjustment and job performance, there is still limited research that specifically investigates how marital adjustment strategies predict the job performance of married female bankers, particularly in Akwa Ibom State. Most existing studies have focused on general employee populations without considering the unique demands of the banking sector and the dual roles of married women. This gap underscores the need for the present study to provide context-specific insights that can enhance both marital stability and job performance.

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Research Design

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), a correlational research design is used to determine the extent of relationship and prediction among variables as they naturally occur without manipulation. This design is therefore appropriate for investigating how marital adjustment strategies predict job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises 327 married female bankers and 85 bank managers in Akwa Ibom State working in 18 commercial banks in Akwa Ibom State (Central Bank of Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State, 2026). More so, the commercial banks have a total of 85 branches in Akwa Ibom State (Office of the Bank Managers, 2026).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 327 married female bankers and 85 bank managers, totalling 412. A census sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents because the population was relatively small and manageable, making it possible to include all members in the study. This technique ensured that every married female banker in the population had equal representation, thereby eliminating sampling bias and increasing the accuracy and generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the use of census sampling provided comprehensive data that enhanced the reliability of the results, since no subgroup within the population was excluded.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire by the researchers titled “Marital Adjustment Strategies and Job Performance Questionnaire (MASJPQ)” developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of 15 items designed to measure the independent variables (communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support), with five items for each variable. Section B consisted of 15 items that measured job performance. The items were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1,

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respectively. While the items in section A were responded to by married female bankers, the items in section B were responded to by the bank managers.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, comprising two experts in Guidance and Counselling and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, all from the Faculty of Education. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, relevance, appropriateness of language, and adequacy in measuring the variables under study. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the instrument to ensure that it adequately measured marital adjustment strategies and job performance of married female bankers.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using the internal consistency method. Although the census sampling technique was adopted for the main study, the instrument was pilot tested on respondents who possessed similar characteristics to the study population but were not part of the study area. Specifically, the instrument was administered to 30 married female bankers and 10 bank managers in commercial banks outside Akwa Ibom State. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.79 for communication, 0.81 for conflict resolution, 0.78 for emotional support, and 0.84 for job performance, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.81. With these values, the use of the instrument for the study was justified.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers used a direct administration method in collecting data for the study. Permission was obtained from the management of the selected banks before administering the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in their respective workplaces. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, after which the completed copies were collected immediately. Out of the 412 copies of

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the questionnaire distributed, 406 were correctly completed and returned, while 6 copies were not returned. The 406 returned copies were used for the analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The regression coefficients were used to answer the research questions by determining the extent to which each of the marital adjustment strategies (communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support) predicts job performance. The null hypotheses were tested using the associated p-values at the 0.05 level of significance. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Decision Rule

The following decision rule guided the answering of all the research questions:

0.80 - 1.00 Very high extent

0.60 - 0.799 High extent

0.40 - 0.599 Moderate extent

0.20 - 0.399 Low extent

0.00 - 0.199 Very low extent

If the value of significant value is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld and vice versa.

Results

Table 1: Simple regression analysis on the extent to which spousal communication predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State (n = 406)

| Model | R | R Square | Adj. R Square | Std. Error of Estimate | Remarks |
|-------|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | .738 | .544 | .512 | 11.48763 | Moderate Extent |

The result in Table 1 shows that spousal communication predicts the job performance of married female bankers to a moderate extent. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.738$) indicates a strong positive relationship, while the R^2 value of 0.544 implies that 54.4% of the variation in job performance is explained by spousal communication. The adjusted R^2 of 0.512 confirms the model's reliability, indicating that spousal communication is a significant predictor of job performance.

Table 2: Simple regression analysis on the extent to which spousal conflict resolution patterns predict the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State (n = 406)

| Model | R | R Square | Adj. R Square | Std. Error of Estimate | Remarks |
|-------|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | .817 | .667 | .609 | 11.54691 | High Extent |

The result in Table 2 shows that spousal conflict resolution pattern predicts the job performance of married female bankers to a high extent. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.817$) indicates a very strong positive relationship, while the R^2 value of 0.667 implies that 66.7% of the variation in job performance is explained by spousal conflict resolution patterns. The adjusted R^2 of 0.609 further confirms the strength of the model, indicating that it is a strong predictor of job performance.

Table 3: Simple regression analysis on the extent to which spousal emotional support predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State (n = 406)

| Model | R | R Square | Adj. R Square | Std. Error of Estimate | Remarks |
|-------------|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|----------|
| 1 Extent | .765 | .585 | .538 | 11.32324 | Moderate |

The result in Table 3 shows that spousal emotional support predicts the job performance of married female bankers to a moderate extent. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.765$) indicates a strong positive relationship, while the R^2 value of 0.585 implies that 58.5% of the variation in job performance is explained by spousal emotional support. The adjusted R^2 of 0.538 further confirms that the model is a reliable predictor of job performance.

Table 4: Summary of simple regression analysis on the extent to which spousal communication predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State (n = 406)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 13986.05 | 1 | 13986.05 | 56.78 | .001 |
| Residual | 58784.26 | 404 | 91.65 | | |
| Total | 72770.31 | 405 | | | |

The result in Table 4 shows that spousal communication significantly predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State. The F-value of 56.78 with a significance level of 0.001, which is less than 0.05, indicates that the prediction is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that spousal communication significantly predicts job performance of married female bankers.

Table 5: Summary of simple regression analysis on the extent to which spousal conflict resolution patterns predict the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State (n = 406)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 15009.77 | 1 | 14875.83 | 82.12 | .000 |
| Residual | 57760.54 | 404 | 94.33 | | |
| Total | 72770.31 | 405 | | | |

The result in Table 5 shows that the spousal conflict resolution pattern significantly predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State. The F-value of 82.12 with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicates that the prediction is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that spousal conflict resolution patterns significantly predict job performance of married female bankers.

Table 6: Summary of simple regression analysis on the extent to which spousal emotional support predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State (n = 406)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Regression | 14875.68 | 1 | 14117.66 | 98.91 | .001 |
| Residual | 57894.63 | 404 | 93.73 | | |
| Total | 72770.31 | 405 | | | |

The result in Table 6 shows that spousal emotional support significantly predicts the job performance of married female bankers in Akwa Ibom State. The F-value of 98.91 with a significance level of 0.001, which is less than 0.05, indicates that the prediction is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, implying that spousal emotional support significantly predicts job performance of married female bankers.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of data on the extent to which spousal communication predicts the job performance of married female bankers revealed that spousal communication predicts

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job performance to a moderate extent. In addition, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis indicated that spousal communication significantly predicts job performance.

This suggests that effective communication between spouses plays an important role in enhancing the work performance of married female bankers. Spousal communication promotes understanding, reduces misunderstandings, and helps couples manage marital responsibilities effectively, thereby reducing emotional stress that may interfere with work. Married female bankers who engage in open and supportive communication with their spouses are more likely to be emotionally stable, focused, and productive in their workplace. This finding is consistent with the study of Ogunleye (2023), who found that effective spousal communication enhances emotional stability and work efficiency among married employees. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Brown (2021), who argued that communication alone may not significantly influence job performance without the support of other marital factors such as emotional support and conflict resolution.

The analysis of data on the extent to which spousal conflict resolution pattern predicts the job performance of married female bankers showed that spousal conflict resolution predicts job performance to a high extent. Furthermore, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that spousal conflict resolution significantly predicts job performance. This implies that the ability of couples to resolve conflicts constructively is a major determinant of job performance among married female bankers. Effective conflict resolution strategies such as negotiation, compromise, and collaboration help to maintain peace and stability in marriage, thereby reducing stress and distractions that may affect work performance. Married female bankers who are able to manage marital conflicts effectively are more likely to maintain concentration, commitment, and efficiency in their job roles. In the context of the study area, spousal conflict resolution appears to be a strong predictor of job performance. This finding agrees with Nwoye and Okonkwo (2020), who found that effective conflict management enhances individuals' productivity and workplace performance. However, this finding disagrees with the study of Ibrahim (2022), who reported that conflict resolution may not significantly predict job performance in situations where work-related stress is predominant.

The analysis of data on the extent to which spousal emotional support predicts the job performance of married female bankers indicated that spousal emotional support

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predicts job performance to a moderate extent. More so, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that spousal emotional support significantly predicts job

performance. This suggests that emotional support from spouses contributes to the psychological well-being and motivation of married female bankers, which in turn enhances their job performance.

Emotional support helps reduce stress, build confidence, and provide encouragement, enabling married female bankers to perform their duties effectively. Those who receive adequate emotional support from their spouses are more likely to be motivated, focused, and resilient in their work environment. In the context of the study area, spousal emotional support plays a significant role in enhancing job performance. This finding is in line with the study of Uko and Iwok (2021), who found that emotional support improves psychological well-being and work performance. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Okafor (2022), who reported that emotional support alone may not significantly influence job performance without other supportive workplace factors.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the ability of married female bankers to maintain effective communication, resolve conflicts constructively, and receive emotional support from their spouses plays a crucial role in enhancing their efficiency, productivity, and overall job performance. Therefore, stable and well-adjusted marital relationships contribute positively to workplace effectiveness among married female bankers.

Implications for Counseling

The findings of this study have important implications for counseling practice. Counselors, particularly marriage and family counselors, need to recognize that marital stability is closely linked to employees' job performance. Therefore, counseling services should focus on helping married female bankers and their spouses develop effective marital adjustment strategies such as communication skills, conflict resolution techniques, and emotional support systems.

Furthermore, workplace counselors and organizational psychologists should incorporate family-related issues into employee support programs, recognizing that

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personal and marital challenges can affect work performance. Counsellors can also organize workshops and seminars aimed at improving marital relationships and promoting work-life balance among married female bankers.

In addition, group counseling sessions can be used to provide a platform for married female bankers to share experiences, learn coping strategies, and develop skills for managing both marital and work-related challenges. Overall, counseling interventions should aim at strengthening both family relationships and workplace productivity.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Married female bankers should be encouraged to improve spousal communication by engaging in open, honest, and respectful discussions with their spouses to enhance marital harmony and job performance.
- ii. Couples should be trained on effective conflict resolution strategies such as negotiation, compromise, and collaboration to reduce marital conflicts and improve emotional stability.
- iii. Spouses should provide consistent emotional support to married female bankers to help them manage stress and perform effectively in their job roles.
- iv. Professional counsellors should design marital counseling programmes that focus on improving communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support among couples to enhance both marital stability and job performance.

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MARITAL ADJUSTMENT STRATEGIES AND JOB PERFORMANCE QUESTIONNAIRE (MASJPQ)

Instruction: Choose your response from the number of alternatives by ticking appropriately in the box provided.

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Section A: Marital Adjustment Strategies

| S/N | Spousal Communication | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | I discuss important issues openly with my spouse. | | | | |
| 2 | My spouse listens to me when I express my feelings. | | | | |
| 3 | My spouse and I discuss our daily activities regularly. | | | | |
| 4 | I feel understood by my spouse during conversations. | | | | |
| 5 | My spouse and I talk about our future plans together. | | | | |
| | Spousal Conflict Resolution Pattern | | | | |
| 6 | My spouse and I resolve conflicts calmly. | | | | |
| 7 | My spouse and I cooperate in resolving disagreements. | | | | |
| 8 | Our conflict resolution approach strengthens our relationship. | | | | |
| 9 | My spouse and I forgive each other after resolving conflicts. | | | | |
| 10 | My spouse and I settle disagreements without involving outsiders unnecessarily. | | | | |
| | Spousal Emotional Support | | | | |
| 11 | I feel emotionally secure in my marriage. | | | | |
| 12 | I can rely on my spouse for emotional encouragement. | | | | |
| 13 | My spouse helps me maintain emotional balance. | | | | |
| 14 | I feel encouraged by my spouse during difficult times. | | | | |
| 15 | My spouse provides emotional support when I am stressed. | | | | |

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Section B: Job Performance

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | She maintains consistency in her performance. | | | | |
| 2 | She contributes to team success at work. | | | | |
| 3 | She adapts to changes in the workplace easily. | | | | |
| 4 | She performs her duties with minimal supervision. | | | | |
| 5 | She collaborates well with her colleagues at workplace. | | | | |
| 6 | She shows initiative in performing her duties. | | | | |
| 7 | She works effectively under pressure. | | | | |
| 8 | She maintains accuracy in her work. | | | | |
| 9 | She meets deadlines in her work tasks. | | | | |
| 10 | She handles customers professionally. | | | | |
| 11 | She manages her time effectively at work. | | | | |
| 12 | She is punctual at work. | | | | |
| 13 | She meets her job targets consistently. | | | | |
| 14 | She maintains high standards in her work. | | | | |
| 15 | She completes her assigned tasks efficiently. | | | | |

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Social Adjustment Strategies and Mental Well-Being of Secondary School Students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent to which social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The study population consisted of 7,864 SS2 students in public secondary schools. A sample of 650 SS2 was selected for the study using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Social Adjustment Strategies and Mental Well-being Questionnaire (SASMWQ)" developed by the researchers. The instrument was face validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using the internal consistency method, and reliability coefficients obtained were 0.79 for emotional regulation, 0.82 for social support, 0.76 for problem-solving ability, and 0.81 for mental well-being, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.80. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression statistics. The analysis of data revealed that the three social

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adjustment strategies investigated, namely emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving, significantly predicted the mental well-being of secondary school students. It was concluded that effective improvement of students' mental health requires a holistic approach that integrates emotional, social, and cognitive support systems within the school environment. Based on the major findings of the study, three recommendations were made, among which is that secondary schools in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State should integrate structured emotional regulation training and counseling services into their guidance programs to help students develop effective coping strategies for stress and emotional challenges.

Keywords: social adjustment, strategies, emotional regulation, social support, problem-solving, well-being

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical stage of human development during which young people experience rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes that may influence their thoughts, feelings, and general well-being. Within the school environment, students are expected to cope with academic demands, peer pressure, family expectations, and personal identity challenges. These pressures may sometimes create emotional strain and psychological difficulties that can affect students' mental health and overall functioning. Mental well-being refers to the state in which students are able to manage their emotions, cope with stress, maintain positive self-perception, and function effectively in their daily activities, as highlighted by Ojiofor (2021). When students possess healthy mental well-being, they are more likely to demonstrate emotional stability, resilience, and positive attitudes toward life. On the other hand, poor mental well-being may lead to anxiety, stress, depression, and emotional instability, which may hinder students' academic and personal development.

However, students' mental well-being may depend largely on the social adjustment strategies they adopt in responding to the various challenges encountered in school and in their personal lives. Social adjustment strategies refer to the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive approaches students use to interact effectively with others, manage social demands, and cope with interpersonal challenges. According to Ukaegbu

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and Nnaji (2025), adjustment strategies help individuals respond to stressful situations, environmental demands, and social difficulties in ways that promote psychological balance. In the context of secondary school students, social adjustment strategies may include emotional regulation, seeking social support, and applying problem-solving skills in social situations. Students who possess effective social adjustment strategies are better able to manage stress, build supportive relationships, and maintain emotional stability. On the other hand, students who lack these strategies may struggle with anxiety, emotional distress, and poor mental well-being (Ukaegbu & Obikoya, 2017).

One important social adjustment strategy that can influence students' mental well-being is emotional regulation. Emotional regulation refers to the ability of individuals to recognize, understand, and manage their emotional responses in different situations (Ukaegbu & Nnaji, 2025). Students who regulate their emotions effectively are more likely to cope with stress, manage anxiety, and maintain psychological balance. Emotional regulation helps students control feelings such as anger, frustration, and fear, thereby reducing the risk of emotional instability. Conversely, poor emotional regulation may result in heightened stress, anxiety, and emotional disturbances, which can negatively affect students' mental well-being (Graham & Graham, 2022).

Another important social adjustment strategy is social support. Social support refers to the ability of students to seek and receive assistance, encouragement, and guidance from others during periods of stress or difficulty. According to Uko and Iwok (2021), students who receive support from teachers, counselors, parents, and peers are more likely to experience emotional comfort and psychological stability. Supportive relationships provide opportunities for students to share their concerns, receive reassurance, and reduce feelings of loneliness or anxiety. When students feel supported, they are more likely to develop confidence and maintain good mental health. In contrast, lack of social support may lead to isolation, stress, and poor mental well-being (Olaolu, 2020).

Problem-solving ability is also an important social adjustment strategy that may influence students' mental well-being. Problem-solving refers to the ability of individuals to identify challenges, analyze possible solutions, and take appropriate actions to resolve difficulties encountered in their daily lives (Ukaegbu & Nnaji, 2022). Students who possess effective problem-solving skills are better able to manage stress and handle life challenges in a constructive manner. Such students are more likely to approach problems

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with confidence and rational thinking, thereby reducing anxiety and emotional distress. On the other hand, students who lack problem-solving skills may feel overwhelmed by challenges, leading to frustration and poor mental well-being (Nkanang & Okafor, 2021).

From the foregoing, understanding how social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of students is essential for promoting emotional stability and psychological health among adolescents. Effective adjustment strategies can help students cope with stress, manage emotions, and maintain positive mental health. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the extent to which social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

The mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, has become a growing concern, as it affects students' ability to manage emotions, cope with stress, and function effectively within the school environment. In these areas, there are increasing observations of students experiencing anxiety, emotional instability, stress, and other psychological challenges that may affect their overall well-being. These issues suggest possible deficiencies in students' ability to adjust socially and cope with the demands of adolescence.

Despite the importance of social adjustment strategies in enhancing students' mental well-being, there is limited empirical evidence on how these strategies predict students' psychological functioning. While several studies have examined academic and social outcomes, less attention has been given to the role of social adjustment strategies in shaping mental well-being, particularly within the context of secondary schools in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. This creates a gap in knowledge that needs to be addressed. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the extent to which social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

- i. The extent to which emotional regulation predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students.
- ii. The extent to which social support predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students.
- iii. The extent to which problem-solving ability predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent does emotional regulation predict the mental well-being of secondary school students?
- ii. To what extent does social support predict the mental well-being of secondary school students?
- iii. To what extent does problem-solving ability predict the mental well-being of secondary school students?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

- i. Emotional regulation does not significantly predict the mental well-being of secondary school students.
- ii. Social support does not significantly predict the mental well-being of secondary school students.
- iii. Problem-solving ability does not significantly predict the mental well-being of secondary school students.

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Scope of the Study

The study examined how social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas, Akwa Ibom State. Emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving ability were the independent variables; mental well-being was the dependent variable. The study focused on Senior Secondary Two students in public secondary schools during the 2025/2026 academic session.

Theoretical Framework

Social Support Theory by Sidney Cobb (1976)

Social Support Theory was propounded by Sidney Cobb in 1976 and focuses on the importance of supportive relationships in promoting individuals' psychological health and social adjustment. The theory emphasizes that individuals who receive emotional, informational, and instrumental support from significant others such as family members, friends, teachers, and community members are better able to cope with stressful situations and maintain positive mental and social well-being. Social Support Theory explains that supportive interactions provide individuals with a sense of belonging, reassurance, and acceptance within their social environment. These supportive relationships help individuals manage emotional stress, build confidence, and develop positive coping mechanisms when confronted with life challenges. According to Cobb, social support functions in several ways, including emotional support, which involves expressions of empathy, care, and understanding; informational support, which involves guidance, advice, or knowledge that helps individuals solve problems; and instrumental support, which involves tangible assistance that helps individuals cope with difficulties. When individuals perceive that they are valued and supported by others, they tend to develop stronger emotional stability and better interpersonal relationships. Conversely, individuals who lack adequate social support may experience feelings of isolation, stress, and poor social adjustment.

The relationship between Social Support Theory and this study can be explained as follows: Secondary school students often encounter social and emotional challenges as they interact with peers, teachers, and family members. Social adjustment strategies such as social support from trusted individuals may help students manage stress, resolve

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interpersonal conflicts, and develop healthy relationships. Students who receive adequate support from teachers, counselors, and peers may develop a sense of belonging and social acceptance within the school environment. This support may enhance their mental well-being by promoting positive interactions and emotional stability. Therefore, Social Support Theory provides a useful explanation of how adjustment strategies involving social support can predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Self-Determination Theory by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985)

Self-Determination Theory was propounded by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985 and focuses on the role of basic psychological needs in promoting individuals' mental well-being and optimal functioning. The theory emphasizes that individuals' psychological health depends on the satisfaction of three fundamental needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. According to Deci and Ryan, when these needs are adequately satisfied, individuals are more likely to experience emotional stability, personal growth, and positive mental well-being. However, when these needs are not met, individuals may experience psychological distress, anxiety, and reduced well-being.

Self-Determination Theory explains that autonomy refers to the individual's ability to regulate their own behavior and make independent decisions; competence involves the ability to effectively handle challenges and achieve desired outcomes, while relatedness refers to the need to feel connected, accepted, and supported by others. These needs are essential for maintaining psychological balance and emotional health. When individuals perceive that they have control over their actions, feel capable in their activities, and experience supportive relationships, they tend to develop higher levels of self-confidence, emotional stability, and mental well-being. Conversely, lack of autonomy, competence, and relatedness may result in stress, low self-worth, and poor mental health.

The relationship between Self-Determination Theory and this study can be explained as follows: Secondary school students are constantly exposed to social and emotional challenges that require effective social adjustment strategies such as emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving ability. Emotional regulation enables students to manage their feelings and maintain self-control, thereby promoting autonomy. Problem-solving ability helps students develop competence by enabling them

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to handle challenges effectively. Social support enhances relatedness by fostering a sense of belonging and connection with peers, teachers, and family members. When these adjustment strategies are effectively utilized, they help satisfy students' psychological needs, leading to improved mental well-being. However, students who lack these adjustment strategies may experience emotional instability, stress, and poor mental health. Therefore, Self-Determination Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how social adjustment strategies such as emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving ability can predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in the Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Empirical Literature

In their study, Nwoye and Okonkwo (2020) investigated the influence of social support on the mental well-being of secondary school students in Enugu State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was 5,100 students, and a sample of 510 students was selected using the stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled Social Support and Mental Well-being Scale (SSMWS). The reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained using Cronbach's alpha, while validity was established through expert review. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed that social support significantly predicts students' emotional stability and mental well-being. Students who received support from peers, teachers, and parents demonstrated better psychological outcomes. The study recommended strengthening school-based support systems and peer mentoring programs.

Eze and Nwachukwu (2021) explored the relationship between problem-solving ability and mental well-being among secondary school students in Abia State. The study used a correlational research design. The population consisted of 3,200 students, from which 320 students were sampled using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Problem-Solving and Mental Health Scale (PSMHS). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.88 using Cronbach's alpha, and validity was ensured through expert validation. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and regression analysis. Findings indicated that students with strong problem-solving skills experienced lower levels of stress and better mental health outcomes.

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Another study by Oladele (2022) investigated problem-solving ability and mental well-being among secondary school students in Oyo State. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 4,000 students, with a sample of 400 selected through a stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire titled Problem-Solving Skills and Well-being Inventory (PSSWI). The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.81 using the test-retest method, while validity was ensured through expert judgment. Data were analyzed using regression and ANOVA. Findings revealed that although problem-solving ability contributes to mental well-being, it does not independently predict it, as emotional intelligence and social relationships also play significant roles. The study concluded that mental well-being is influenced by multiple interacting variables. It recommended a holistic approach to student development that integrates cognitive, emotional, and social skills. Smith and Smith (2023) carried out a study on social support and mental well-being among adolescents in the United Kingdom. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. The population consisted of 2,500 adolescents, with a sample of 300 selected using a systematic sampling technique. Data were collected using standardized instruments including the Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS) and Mental Health Inventory (MHI). Reliability coefficients of 0.82 and 0.85 were reported, respectively. Data were analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis. Findings showed that while social support contributes to well-being, it does not always directly predict mental health outcomes, as individual coping styles and personality traits significantly moderate the relationship.

Ezekwem (2024) investigated emotional regulation as a predictor of mental well-being among secondary school students in Imo State. The study employed an ex-post facto research design. The population comprised 3,800 students, with a sample of 380 selected using a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Emotional Regulation and Mental Health Inventory (ERMHI). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.79 determined through the test-retest method, while validity was confirmed by specialists in measurement and evaluation. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings indicated that emotional regulation alone is not a strong predictor of mental well-being, as other factors such as social support and environmental influences showed stronger effects. The study concluded that mental well-being is multidimensional. It recommended that interventions should focus on a combination of emotional, social, and environmental factors. Nnaji (2025) conducted a study on the emotional self-regulation

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and psychological well-being of secondary school students in Anambra State. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of 4,200 senior secondary school students, out of which a sample of 420 students was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Emotional Regulation and Well-being Scale (ERWS). The reliability coefficient of the instrument was established using the Cronbach alpha method and yielded 0.84, while face and content validity were ensured by experts in educational psychology. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and simple regression analysis. The findings revealed that emotional self-regulation significantly enhances students' psychological functioning and mental well-being. It was concluded that students who effectively regulate their emotions experience reduced stress and improved mental health outcomes.

More so, Ukaegbu and Nnaji (2025) investigated the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 5,076 students offering government as a subject in 25 public senior secondary schools in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample of 346 senior secondary two students offering government was selected for the study using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two researcher-made instruments, entitled "Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire" (SASQ) and "Government Achievement Test" (GAT), were used for data collection. The Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire was face validated, while the Government Achievement Test was content validated. The internal consistency reliability of the instruments was established, which yielded reliability coefficients of .73 and .75 for SASQ and GAT, respectively. The Pearson product-moment correlation statistic was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses. Analysis of data revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between peer interaction, help-seeking behavior, emotional self-regulation, and academic achievement of secondary school students in the government in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Despite numerous studies on mental well-being and its predictors, there is still limited research that specifically investigates the extent to which social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and

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Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas, considering their unique socio-cultural and school environments. This gap underscores the need for the present study to provide context-specific insights that can guide effective interventions and improve students' psychological and social outcomes.

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between social adjustment strategies and mental well-being of secondary school students. According to Nworgu (2015), correlational research design is used to establish relationships among variables as they naturally occur. This design is therefore suitable for investigating how social adjustment strategies predict the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of 7,864 SS Two students in public secondary schools in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. There are 22 public secondary schools in the area of the study (Akwa Ibom State Secondary Schools Board, 2026).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 650 SS Two students drawn from a population of 7,864 SS Two students in public secondary schools in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The sample size was derived using Taro Yamane's formula for a finite population. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. The population was first stratified based on the two local government areas, after which the sample was proportionately distributed according to the size of each stratum. Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the respective schools.

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Instrumentation

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled “Social Adjustment Strategies and Mental Well-being Questionnaire (SASMWQ)” developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely Section A and Section B. Section A consisted of 18 items designed to measure the independent sub-variables of social adjustment strategies (emotional regulation, social support, and problem-solving ability), while Section B consisted of 15 items that measured respondents’ mental well-being. The items were structured on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, comprising two experts in guidance and counseling and one expert in measurement and evaluation, all from the Faculty of Education. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, relevance, appropriateness of language, and adequacy in measuring the variables under study. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the instrument to ensure that it adequately measured the social adjustment strategies and mental well-being of secondary school students.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using the internal consistency method. The instrument was administered to 30 SS Two students in a public secondary school outside the study area but with similar characteristics. The data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.79 for emotional regulation, 0.82 for social support, 0.76 for problem-solving ability, and 0.81 for mental well-being, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.80. These values indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher used a direct administration method in collecting data for the study. Permission was obtained from the school authorities before administering the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents in their

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respective schools. The purpose of the study was explained to the students, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The respondents were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire, after which the completed copies were collected immediately to ensure a high return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using simple linear regression statistics. The R values of simple linear regression statistics were used to answer all the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using the F-ratio associated with the simple linear regression coefficient at a .05 alpha level of significance. All data were subjected to analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

Decision Rule

The following decision rule guided the answering of all the research questions:

0.80 - 1.00 Very high extent

0.60 - 0.799 High extent

0.40 - 0.599 Moderate extent

0.20 - 0.399 Low extent

0.00 - 0.199 Very low extent

Therefore, if the value of significant value is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was upheld and vice versa.

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Results

Table 1: Simple regression analysis on the extent to which emotional regulation predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (n = 650)

| Model | R | R Square | Adj. R Square | Std. Error of Estimate | Remarks |
|-------|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | .634 | .427 | .415 | 9.77224 | Moderate Extent |

Table 1 presents the result of the simple regression analysis on the extent to which emotional regulation predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. The R-squared value of 0.427 means that emotional regulation accounts for 42.7% of the variation in students' mental well-being. This implies that the prediction of the mental well-being of secondary school students by emotional regulation is moderate.

Table 2: Simple regression analysis on the extent to which social support predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (n = 650)

| Model | R | R Square | Adj. R Square | Std. Error of Estimate | Remarks |
|-------|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | .877 | .769 | .753 | 9.65492 | High Extent |

Table 2 presents the result of the simple regression analysis on the extent to which social support predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. The R-squared value of 0.769 shows that social support accounts for 76.9% of the variation in students' mental well-being. This indicates that social support is a strong predictor of the mental well-being of secondary school students.

Table 3: Simple regression analysis on the extent to which problem-solving predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (n = 650)

| Model | R | R Square | Adj. R Square | Std. Error of Estimate | Remarks |
|-------|------|----------|---------------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | .869 | .755 | .719 | 9.55071 | High Extent |

Table 3 presents the result of the simple regression analysis on the extent to which problem-solving predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State. The R square value of 0.755 shows that problem-solving accounts for 75.5% of the variation in students' mental well-being. This indicates that problem-solving significantly predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students.

Table 4: Summary of simple regression analysis on the extent to which emotional regulation predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (n = 650)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Regression | 17856.42 | 1 | 17856.42 | 187.63 | .000 |
| Residual | 61792.15 | 648 | 95.37 | | |
| Total | 79648.57 | 649 | | | |

Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that emotional regulation significantly predicts students' mental well-being.

Table 5: Summary of simple regression analysis on the extent to which social support predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (n = 650)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Regression | 31245.68 | 1 | 31245.68 | 327.54 | .001 |
| Residual | 61802.92 | 648 | 95.43 | | |
| Total | 93048.59 | 649 | | | |

Since the p-value of .001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that social support significantly predicts students' mental well-being.

Table 6: Summary of simple regression analysis on the extent to which problem-solving predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State (n = 650)

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|------|
| Regression | 29876.54 | 1 | 29876.54 | 313.42 | .000 |
| Residual | 61792.03 | 648 | 95.35 | | |
| Total | 91668.57 | 649 | | | |

Since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that problem-solving significantly predicts students' mental well-being.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of data on the extent to which emotional regulation predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students revealed that emotional regulation contributes moderately to mental well-being. In addition, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that emotional regulation significantly predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students, suggesting that the ability of students to manage and control their emotions plays an important role in maintaining psychological stability. Emotional regulation enables students to cope with stress, reduce anxiety, and respond appropriately to challenging situations within the school environment. Students who are able to regulate their emotions are less likely to experience emotional disturbances such as anger, frustration, or fear, which could negatively affect their mental health. This ability helps them maintain calmness, improve concentration, and develop resilience when faced with academic and social pressures. In the context of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas, emotional regulation serves as a coping mechanism that supports mental well-being, although its influence is moderate, suggesting that other factors may also contribute to students' mental health. This finding is consistent with the study of Ukaegbu and Nnaji (2025), who found that emotional self-regulation significantly enhances students' psychological functioning and well-being.

According to them, students who can effectively manage their emotions tend to exhibit lower levels of stress and better mental health outcomes. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Ezekwem (2024), who reported that emotional regulation

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alone may not be a strong predictor of mental well-being, as other factors such as social support and environmental influences may have stronger effects on students' psychological health.

The analysis of data on the extent to which social support predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students showed that social support contributes highly to mental well-being. Additionally, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis indicated that social support significantly predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students, suggesting that the presence of supportive relationships plays a crucial role in enhancing students' psychological health. Social support provides students with emotional comfort, encouragement, and a sense of belonging, which are essential for maintaining mental well-being. Students who receive support from peers, teachers, parents, and counselors are more likely to feel valued and accepted, thereby reducing feelings of loneliness and emotional distress. This support system helps students to cope with stress, share their concerns, and develop positive self-concepts. In the context of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas, social support appears to be a strong determinant of mental well-being, highlighting the importance of positive interpersonal relationships in students' lives.

This finding agrees with Nwoye and Okonkwo (2020), who found that students who actively seek and receive social support demonstrate better emotional stability and mental well-being. According to them, supportive relationships enhance students' ability to cope with stress and improve their overall psychological functioning. However, this finding disagrees with the study of Smith and Smith (2023), who argued that while social support is beneficial, it may not always directly predict mental well-being, as individual coping styles and personality traits may influence how support is perceived and utilized.

The analysis of data on the extent to which problem-solving ability predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students indicated that problem-solving ability contributes highly to mental well-being. More so, the test of the corresponding null hypothesis showed that problem-solving ability significantly predicts the mental well-being of secondary school students, suggesting that students who can effectively identify and resolve challenges are more likely to maintain good mental health. Problem-solving ability enables students to approach difficulties with confidence, analyze possible solutions, and take appropriate actions to overcome obstacles. This reduces feelings of helplessness and frustration, thereby promoting emotional stability and psychological

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balance. Students with strong problem-solving skills are more likely to manage academic and social challenges effectively, which enhances their overall mental well-being.

In the context of secondary school students in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Astan Local Government Areas, problem-solving ability serves as a key factor in helping students cope with everyday challenges and maintain positive mental health. This finding is in line with the study of Eze and Nwachukwu (2021), who found that students with effective problem-solving skills experience lower levels of stress and better mental health outcomes. According to them, problem-solving ability enhances students' confidence and resilience in dealing with life challenges. However, this finding contrasts with the work of Oladele (2022), who reported that problem-solving ability alone may not fully predict mental well-being, as emotional and social factors may also play significant roles in influencing students' psychological health.

Conclusion

The study concluded that effective improvement of students' mental health requires a holistic approach that integrates emotional, social, and cognitive support systems within the school environment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Secondary schools in Uyo and Ibesikpo/Asutan Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State should integrate structured emotional regulation training and counseling services into their guidance programmes to help students develop effective coping strategies for stress and emotional challenges.
- ii. School administrators in area of study should strengthen social support systems by promoting peer mentoring, teacher-student relationships, and parental involvement to enhance students' sense of belonging and psychological well-being.
- iii. Curriculum planners in Nigeria should incorporate problem-solving and life skills education into school programmes to equip secondary school students with the competencies needed to manage academic and social pressures effectively.

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SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT STRATEGIES AND MENTAL WELL-BEING QUESTIONNAIRE (SASMWQ)

Instruction: Choose your response from the number of alternatives by ticking appropriately in the box provided.

Keys: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Section A: Social Adjustment Strategies

| S/N | Emotional Regulation | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | I am able to control my emotions in challenging situations. | | | | |
| 2 | I remain calm when I am under pressure. | | | | |
| 3 | I can manage my anger without hurting others. | | | | |
| 4 | I can adjust my feelings to suit different situations. | | | | |
| 5 | I stay emotionally balanced even when things go wrong. | | | | |
| 6 | I can handle frustration without losing control. | | | | |
| | Social Support | | | | |
| 7 | I have friends who care about me. | | | | |
| 8 | People around me provide encouragement when I need it. | | | | |
| 9 | I have someone to talk to when I feel stressed. | | | | |
| 10 | I receive help from family members when I need assistance. | | | | |
| 11 | I feel accepted by my peers. | | | | |
| 12 | I am satisfied with the support I receive from people around me. | | | | |
| | Problem-Solving Skills | | | | |
| 13 | I identify problems before trying to solve them. | | | | |
| 14 | I think of different ways to handle a problem. | | | | |
| 15 | I am confident in my ability to solve difficult problems. | | | | |
| 16 | I persist until I find a solution to a problem. | | | | |
| 17 | I seek information that can help me solve problems. | | | | |

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| | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 18 | I approach problems with a mindset. | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|

Section B: Mental Well-Being

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | I feel happy with my life as a student. | | | | |
| 2 | I am satisfied with my daily activities in school. | | | | |
| 3 | I am able to cope with academic stress effectively. | | | | |
| 4 | I feel confident in my abilities as a student. | | | | |
| 5 | I maintain a positive outlook on life. | | | | |
| 6 | I feel relaxed during school activities. | | | | |
| 7 | I am able to manage my worries effectively. | | | | |
| 8 | I feel comfortable participating in group activities. | | | | |
| 9 | I sleep well and feel refreshed for school activities. | | | | |
| 10 | I rarely feel anxious about schoolwork. | | | | |
| 11 | I can balance my academic and personal life. | | | | |
| 12 | I feel hopeful about my future. | | | | |
| 13 | I usually concentrate well during lessons. | | | | |
| 14 | I can control negative thoughts about myself. | | | | |
| 15 | I feel mentally strong when dealing with challenges. | | | | |

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Marketing Educational Services in a Multilingual Society: Challenges and Opportunities for Language Institutes in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges and opportunities associated with marketing educational services in a multilingual society, with particular focus on language institutes in Nigeria. Nigeria's linguistic diversity, characterized by the coexistence of indigenous languages, English, and foreign languages, presents both constraints and prospects for educational service providers. The study explores how language institutes navigate communication barriers, cultural diversity, and market segmentation while leveraging digital platforms and globalization trends to expand their reach. Using a qualitative-quantitative approach, the study analyses the effectiveness of marketing strategies such as multilingual communication, digital marketing, and culturally responsive branding. Findings indicate that while linguistic diversity poses challenges in message delivery and audience targeting, it also creates opportunities for niche specialization and increased demand for language acquisition. The study concludes that institutions that adopt adaptive, culturally sensitive, and digitally driven marketing strategies are better positioned to succeed. The study recommends the integration of multilingual marketing approaches, investment in digital platforms, and the development of culturally inclusive communication strategies.

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Keywords: Multilingualism, educational marketing, language institutes, Nigeria, digital marketing, cultural diversity

Introduction

The marketing of educational services has become increasingly complex in contemporary societies characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity. In Nigeria, a country with over 500 indigenous languages alongside English as the official language, the educational landscape presents unique challenges and opportunities for service providers. Language institutes, in particular, operate within a highly dynamic environment where communication, identity, and market demand intersect.

Multilingualism in Nigeria reflects both a rich cultural heritage and a practical reality shaped by globalization, migration, and socio-economic mobility. As individuals seek proficiency in international languages such as French, Chinese, and Spanish for academic and professional advancement, language institutes have experienced growing demand. However, effectively marketing these services requires navigating linguistic diversity, cultural sensitivities, and varying levels of digital literacy among target audiences.

Traditional marketing approaches are often insufficient in such contexts, as they may fail to address the diverse linguistic backgrounds of potential learners. Consequently, language institutes are increasingly adopting digital marketing strategies, multilingual communication, and culturally adaptive branding to engage a broader audience. These strategies are essential not only for visibility but also for building trust and credibility among prospective students.

Despite the growing importance of this issue, there is limited empirical research examining how multilingual contexts influence the marketing of educational services in Nigeria. Most existing studies focus on general educational marketing without adequately addressing the specific challenges faced by language institutions.

This study therefore seeks to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with marketing educational services in a multilingual society, with a focus on language institutes in Nigeria. By doing so, it contributes to both educational marketing literature and practical strategies for institutional growth.

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Literature Review

Multilingualism and Communication Barriers

Multilingualism is a defining feature of many African societies, particularly Nigeria, where linguistic diversity significantly shapes communication patterns and social interactions. With over 500 indigenous languages coexisting alongside English as the official language, communication within educational and institutional contexts often involves navigating multiple linguistic realities (Bamgbose, 2021; Ethnologue, 2023). While multilingualism reflects cultural richness, it also presents challenges in the effective dissemination of information, especially in marketing communication.

Recent studies (2020–2025) indicate that language differences can create barriers to message clarity, audience segmentation, and engagement. According to Adegbija (2022), communication in multilingual societies often requires strategic adaptation to avoid misinterpretation and exclusion. Similarly, Emenanjo (2021) argues that linguistic diversity complicates the design of uniform communication strategies, particularly in formal and commercial settings. In the context of educational marketing, these challenges are amplified, as institutions must communicate complex information such as course offerings, admission requirements, and benefits, to audiences with varying linguistic competencies.

However, multilingualism is not solely a constraint; it also offers opportunities for inclusive communication and market expansion. Scholars such as Olateju and Oyebade (2023) emphasize those institutions that adopt multilingual communication strategies can enhance accessibility and reach underserved populations. Thus, multilingualism functions as both a barrier and a resource in marketing educational services.

Educational Service Marketing

Educational services differ fundamentally from physical goods, as they are intangible, experience-based, and often involve long-term engagement. As a result, marketing educational services requires building trust, credibility, and perceived value (Kotler & Fox, 2021). In recent years, the marketing of educational services has evolved significantly, driven by increased competition, globalization, and technological advancements.

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Contemporary research highlights that institutions must adopt student-centered marketing approaches that emphasize value creation and relationship building (Ivy, 2020; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2022). In the Nigerian context, language institutes operate within a competitive environment where differentiation is essential. According to Okeke and Nwankwo (2023), effective marketing strategies in education include branding, digital engagement, and personalized communication.

Furthermore, the concept of service quality plays a critical role in influencing student choice. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's SERVQUAL model, though developed earlier, continues to inform recent studies on educational service delivery (Yousapronpaiboon, 2021). Students increasingly evaluate institutions based on perceived quality, responsiveness, and reliability, which are often communicated through marketing channels.

Cultural Identity and Consumer Behavior

Cultural identity significantly influences consumer behavior, particularly in contexts where language and culture are closely intertwined. In multilingual societies, language is not merely a communication tool but also a marker of identity, belonging, and social status (Hall, 1990; Appiah, 2020). This has important implications for marketing, as consumers tend to respond more positively to messages that reflect their cultural and linguistic realities.

Recent studies suggest that culturally responsive marketing enhances engagement and trust. According to De Mooij (2021), marketing strategies that align with cultural values and communication styles are more effective in influencing consumer decisions. In Nigeria, where cultural diversity is pronounced, language institutes must consider how cultural identity shapes learners' preferences and motivations.

In addition, consumer behavior in educational contexts is influenced by social factors such as family expectations, peer influence, and perceived career benefits (Kaur & Medury, 2022). These factors interact with cultural identity to shape enrollment decisions. For instance, the choice to learn a foreign language may be driven not only by economic considerations but also by social prestige and global exposure. Thus, understanding cultural identity is essential for designing marketing strategies that resonate with diverse audiences in multilingual settings.

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Digital Marketing in Diverse Societies

The rise of digital technologies has transformed marketing practices across sectors, including education. Digital marketing offers institutions the ability to reach wider audiences, personalize communication, and measure engagement in real time (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). In multilingual societies, digital platforms provide unique opportunities to overcome traditional communication barriers.

Recent research indicates that digital tools such as social media, websites, and online advertising are particularly effective in engaging diverse audiences (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Bala & Verma, 2021). These platforms allow for multilingual content delivery, targeted advertising, and interactive communication, which are essential in linguistically diverse contexts.

In Nigeria, the rapid growth of internet usage and mobile connectivity has further enhanced the relevance of digital marketing (DataReportal, 2024). Language institutes increasingly rely on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp to communicate with prospective students. According to Eze and Bello (2024), digital engagement significantly influences students' perceptions and enrollment decisions. However, challenges remain. Digital inequality, varying levels of digital literacy, and infrastructural limitations can affect the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies (Ogunleye & Adebisi, 2023). Despite these challenges, digital marketing remains a powerful tool for navigating the complexities of multilingual communication.

The reviewed literature highlights that multilingualism presents both challenges and opportunities for marketing educational services. While language diversity can hinder communication and audience targeting, it also enables institutions to reach broader and more diverse populations. Educational service marketing requires adaptive, culturally sensitive approaches, particularly in multilingual contexts where identity and communication are closely linked.

Furthermore, digital marketing has emerged as a key strategy for overcoming linguistic barriers and enhancing engagement. However, most existing studies focus on general educational institutions, with limited attention to language institutes as specialized providers operating within multilingual environments. This gap underscores the need for this study, which seeks to examine the specific challenges and opportunities associated with marketing educational services in a multilingual society, with a focus on language institutes in Nigeria.

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Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in cultural identity theory, market segmentation theory, and communication accommodation theory, which together provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of marketing educational services in a multilingual society. These theories are particularly relevant in explaining how language, culture, and communication strategies influence the effectiveness of marketing efforts and shape students' enrollment decisions in language institutes in Nigeria.

Cultural Identity Theory provides a foundational perspective for understanding how individuals' linguistic and cultural affiliations influence their perceptions and responses to marketing messages. Rooted in the work of Stuart Hall (1990), the theory conceptualizes identity as fluid, socially constructed, and shaped by historical and cultural contexts. In multilingual societies such as Nigeria, language functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a key marker of identity, belonging, and social positioning. As a result, marketing messages that align with the cultural and linguistic identities of target audiences are more likely to resonate and foster trust.

In the context of this study, cultural identity theory suggests that language institutes must design marketing strategies that reflect the cultural realities of their diverse audiences. The use of culturally relevant symbols, language choices, and narratives can enhance audience connection and engagement. Conversely, culturally insensitive or linguistically exclusive communication may alienate potential learners. Thus, this theory explains how cultural alignment influences students' attitudes toward educational institutions and their subsequent enrollment decisions.

Complementing this perspective is market segmentation theory, which emphasizes the importance of dividing a heterogeneous market into distinct groups based on shared characteristics such as language, culture, and consumer behavior. According to Philip Kotler and Keller (2016), effective segmentation enables organizations to tailor their products and marketing strategies to specific audience needs, thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

Applied to this study, market segmentation theory highlights the need for language institutes in Nigeria to recognize and address the diversity of their target market. In a multilingual environment, segmentation based on linguistic background, educational goals, and socio-economic factors becomes essential. For instance, prospective students seeking to learn French for academic purposes may differ significantly from those learning

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Mandarin for business opportunities. By identifying and targeting these distinct segments, institutions can develop more precise and relevant marketing strategies, thereby improving enrollment outcomes.

Further enriching the framework is Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), developed by Howard Giles (1973), which explains how individuals adjust their communication styles to align with others in order to achieve effective interaction. The theory distinguishes between convergence (adapting communication to become more similar) and divergence (emphasizing differences). In multilingual settings, convergence often involves adapting language, tone, or style to suit the audience's linguistic preferences.

Within this study, CAT provides insight into how language institutes can adapt their communication strategies to engage diverse audiences. For example, the use of multiple languages in advertisements, simplified messaging, or culturally familiar expressions can enhance comprehension and relatability. Such accommodation strategies are particularly important in overcoming communication barriers associated with linguistic diversity. Failure to adapt communication may result in misunderstanding, reduced engagement, and ultimately lower enrollment.

The integration of these three theoretical perspectives provides a holistic framework for analyzing the marketing of educational services in a multilingual society. Cultural Identity Theory explains how cultural and linguistic affiliations shape audience perceptions; Market Segmentation Theory accounts for the strategic targeting of diverse groups; and Communication Accommodation Theory addresses the adaptation of communication to enhance effectiveness.

Summing it all, these theories demonstrate that successful marketing in multilingual contexts requires more than visibility—it demands cultural sensitivity, strategic targeting, and adaptive communication. This integrated framework therefore underpins this study's examination of the challenges and opportunities faced by language institutes in Nigeria, offering a nuanced understanding of how multilingualism influences marketing effectiveness and student enrollment decisions.

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Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the challenges and opportunities associated with marketing educational services in a multilingual society. The qualitative approach is appropriate as it enables an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations within their real-life contexts. It is particularly suited to examining complex and context-dependent phenomena such as language, culture, and communication, which cannot be adequately captured through quantitative methods. The study was conducted among selected language institutes located in major urban centers in Nigeria, including Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt. These locations were chosen due to their high levels of linguistic diversity and the growing demand for language education services. Participants were drawn from two key groups: administrators or marketing personnel of language institutes and students or prospective learners. A total of 15–25 participants were selected to provide rich and relevant insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to identify participants with adequate knowledge and experience in digital marketing practices and multilingual communication within the educational context. This sampling approach is consistent with qualitative research traditions, where the emphasis is on obtaining detailed and meaningful data rather than achieving statistical generalization.

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants the flexibility to express their views while ensuring that key themes relevant to the study were addressed. The interview guide focused on issues such as multilingual communication challenges, marketing strategies adopted by language institutes, cultural considerations in marketing, the use of digital platforms, and the perceived effectiveness of these strategies. Interviews were conducted either face-to-face or virtually, depending on participants' availability, and each session lasted approximately 30–45 minutes. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to capture contextual details and non-verbal cues.

The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-step procedure outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, generation of initial codes, identification, review of emerging themes, and the definition and naming of final themes. Thematic analysis was

selected for its flexibility and its ability to reveal patterns and meanings across qualitative data sets, thereby providing deeper insight into the research problem.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, several strategies were employed. Credibility was enhanced through member checking, whereby participants were given the opportunity to review and validate the findings. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a clear and systematic audit trail of the research process. Confirmability was achieved by grounding interpretations in participants' responses, thereby minimizing researcher bias. Transferability was addressed through the provision of thick descriptions, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar contexts.

Results and Findings

The analysis of interview data generated several themes that reflect the challenges and opportunities associated with marketing educational services in a multilingual society. The themes are presented under four major categories: communication barriers, culturally responsive marketing, digital marketing as an adaptive tool, and multilingualism as a market opportunity.

Theme 1: Communication Barriers in Multilingual Contexts

One of the most prominent findings of this study is that linguistic diversity presents significant challenges in marketing communication. Participants noted that differences in language proficiency often lead to difficulties in conveying clear and consistent marketing messages.

Administrators highlighted that the use of English as the primary medium of communication does not always guarantee comprehension among all target audiences. As one participant explained:

Many prospective students struggle to fully understand our adverts, especially when technical terms are used. Sometimes we have to simplify or translate our messages.

Students also expressed similar concerns, indicating that language barriers can affect their understanding of course offerings and admission processes. This finding suggests that

multilingual contexts complicate message delivery and may reduce the effectiveness of traditional marketing approaches.

Theme 2: Importance of Culturally Responsive Marketing

The findings further reveal that cultural identity plays a crucial role in shaping how marketing messages are received. Participants emphasized that culturally relevant communication enhances engagement and trust.

Marketing personnel noted that incorporating local languages, symbols, and culturally familiar expressions into promotional materials improves audience connection. One respondent stated:

“When we use examples or expressions that people can relate to culturally, they respond better. It makes the message feel more personal.”

Students also indicated a preference for institutions that demonstrate cultural awareness and inclusivity in their communication. This suggests that culturally responsive marketing strategies are essential for effective engagement in multilingual societies.

Theme 3: Digital Marketing as a Strategic Tool

Another key finding is the significant role of digital marketing in overcoming communication barriers. Participants identified social media platforms, websites, and messaging applications as critical tools for reaching diverse audiences.

Administrators explained that digital platforms allow for flexible communication, including the use of multiple languages, visuals, and interactive content. As one participant noted:

“With social media, we can post in different languages or even use videos to explain things better. It helps us reach more people.”

Students also reported that digital platforms provide easier access to information and facilitate decision-making. This finding indicates that digital marketing enhances communication effectiveness and broadens institutional reach.

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Theme 4: Multilingualism as a Market Opportunity

While multilingualism presents challenges, the findings also highlight its potential as a strategic advantage. Participants observed that linguistic diversity creates demand for language learning, thereby expanding the market for language institutes.

Administrators noted that the increasing need for foreign language proficiency in education and employment has driven enrollment. One respondent explained:

“People are now more interested in learning languages like French and Chinese because of job opportunities. This has increased demand for our services.”

Students similarly expressed motivations related to career advancement, international mobility, and personal development. This suggests that multilingualism not only complicates marketing but also creates opportunities for institutional growth.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that marketing educational services in a multilingual society involves navigating both constraints and opportunities. Communication barriers and cultural differences pose significant challenges, requiring institutions to adopt adaptive and inclusive strategies. At the same time, multilingualism creates a growing demand for language education, which can be leveraged through effective marketing practices.

In all, the results demonstrate that successful marketing in multilingual contexts depends on the ability to integrate culturally responsive communication, digital tools, and strategic positioning to engage diverse audiences and enhance enrollment outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the complexities of marketing educational services within a multilingual society. The themes identified include communication barriers, culturally responsive marketing, digital marketing as an adaptive tool, and multilingualism as a market opportunity, demonstrate that linguistic diversity simultaneously constrains and enhances marketing effectiveness.

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The finding that multilingualism creates communication barriers aligns with existing literature that highlights the challenges of message clarity and audience engagement in linguistically diverse contexts (Adegbija, 2022; Bamgbose, 2021). Participants' experiences confirm that reliance on a single language, particularly English, may limit comprehension among diverse audiences. This supports the argument that multilingual environments require more flexible and inclusive communication strategies. From a theoretical standpoint, this finding is consistent with communication accommodation theory, which posits that effective communication depends on the ability to adapt language and style to suit the audience. The need to simplify, translate, or localize marketing messages observed in this study reflects processes of communicative convergence aimed at enhancing understanding and engagement.

The importance of culturally responsive marketing further reinforces the relevance of cultural identity theory. Participants emphasized that culturally familiar expressions and locally grounded messaging improve audience connection and trust. This finding is in line with De Mooij (2021), who argues that marketing effectiveness increases when communication aligns with the cultural values and identities of the target audience. In the Nigerian context, where language is closely tied to identity and social belonging, culturally insensitive marketing may alienate potential learners. Thus, the study extends existing literature by demonstrating how cultural identity shapes not only consumer perception but also institutional credibility in educational marketing.

The role of digital marketing as a strategic tool for overcoming communication barriers is another significant finding. This supports recent studies that highlight the capacity of digital platforms to facilitate personalized and multilingual communication (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). Participants' emphasis on social media and interactive platforms reflects the growing importance of digital engagement in educational marketing. These findings also resonate with earlier research in the Nigerian context (Eze & Bello, 2024), which shows that digital platforms significantly influence student decision-making. Digital tools, therefore, serve as mechanisms for both communication accommodation and market expansion.

Furthermore, the identification of multilingualism as a market opportunity aligns with market segmentation theory, which emphasizes the strategic division of diverse markets into distinct segments. The findings suggest that linguistic diversity creates demand for specialized language services, particularly in response to globalization and

career advancement needs. This supports the work of Kotler and Keller (2016), who argue that effective segmentation enhances organizational competitiveness. In this study, language institutes that recognize and target specific linguistic and cultural segments are better positioned to attract and retain students.

Overall, the findings validate the integration of Cultural Identity Theory, Market Segmentation Theory, and Communication Accommodation Theory as a comprehensive framework for understanding marketing in multilingual contexts. They demonstrate that effective marketing requires not only technological tools but also cultural sensitivity and strategic audience targeting.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the challenges and opportunities associated with marketing educational services in a multilingual society, with a focus on language institutes in Nigeria. The findings reveal that while linguistic diversity presents significant communication challenges, it also creates opportunities for market expansion and institutional growth.

The study contributes to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence on how multilingualism shapes marketing practices within the Nigerian educational context. It extends theoretical discourse by integrating cultural, communicative, and marketing perspectives to explain student engagement and enrollment behavior.

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the need for language institutes to adopt multilingual and culturally responsive marketing strategies. Institutions should move beyond one-size-fits-all communication approaches and instead tailor their messages to reflect the linguistic and cultural realities of their target audiences. The strategic use of digital platforms is also essential, as these tools enable flexible, interactive, and inclusive communication.

The study shows the importance of market segmentation, encouraging institutions to identify and target specific learner groups based on their linguistic needs and motivations. This approach not only improves marketing effectiveness but also enhances institutional competitiveness in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

For policymakers and educational stakeholders, the findings emphasize the need to support digital infrastructure and promote inclusive communication practices within the

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education sector. As multilingualism continues to shape Nigerian society, institutions that effectively navigate linguistic diversity will be better positioned to thrive.

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