

## **Social Relationships and Manifest Anxiety Among Freshmen in Tertiary Institutions in Lagos State**

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### **Abstract**

*This study measures the extent of anxiety manifestation among freshmen, specially, as it relates to student-student and student-staff relationships. Responses were obtained from 700 freshmen (350 males and 350 females). The three types of anxiety measured were reality anxiety, moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety using items adapted from Janet Taylor's manifest Anxiety scale while the test instruments used for the independent variables were constructed and validated by the researcher. Two hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance statistical technique. The results of the data analysis showed that anxiety manifestation was significantly higher in respect of the freshmen who are low in adapting to student-student and student-staff relationships. These findings suggest that freshmen need help to overcome high level of anxiety manifestation.*

**Keywords:** Social Relationships; Manifest Anxiety; Moral Anxiety.

### **Introduction**

The need to relate to others is basic to a great deal of human behaviour. Without some kind of positive relationship to other people we are "nobody", we can even experience a kind of "social hunger" if we are deprived of normal interpersonal contact (Lindgreen, 1976). The foundation of human societies is solidly laid upon the issue of adequate social interaction and reinforcing interpersonal encounters (Akinboye, 1984).

Feeling of loneliness is actually a kind of anxiety, a fear of being out of form from others. Anxiety is what Lindgreen (1976) terms "the fear of becoming nothing". The anxiety that manifests when we are alone is a reminder of how important others are to our very existence as "somebody". Without other people around, we sense the anxiety and fear of being "nothing" or "nobody".

The tertiary institution itself as a society comprises students (freshmen and old), academic and non-academic staff, restaurant and business workers among others. It is made up of people with diverse cultural and languages, this notwithstanding, there is need for mingling and interacting.. Kagan and Havemann (1980) believes that, "big or little, simple or complex, the society is a universal way of human life". Zimbardo and Rush (1980) point out that the

isolated individual is vulnerable to the pathologies of a self-centred existence, loneliness, depression, paranoia, suicide and antisocial relations”.

### **Statement of the problem**

Going away to university uproots young people from their immediate environment and deprives them of immediate support of their families. In this trying situation, they are obliged to make new adjustments, there is need to relate to others, make new friends and attend social gatherings.

For some people, social encounters may be anxiety provoking. Freshmen needs are numerous. This study therefore is aimed at determining how social relationship could be used in explaining students manifest anxiety on campuses.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between social relationships and manifest anxiety of freshmen in institutions of higher learning in Lagos State. Specifically, the study is aimed at finding out: -

- \* The relation between freshmen adaptation to student-student relationship in tertiary institutions and manifest anxiety.
- \* The relation between freshmen adaptation to student-staff relationship in tertiary institutions and manifest anxiety.

### **Research questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- \* Do freshmen that are high, moderate or low in establishing student-student relationships differ with regards to their manifest anxiety?
- \* Do freshmen that are high, moderate or low in establishing student-staff relationships differ with regards to their manifest anxiety?

### **Research hypotheses**

- \* Freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in student-student relationships are not significantly different with regard to their manifest anxiety.
- \* Freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in student-staff relationships are not significantly different with regard to their manifest anxiety.

### **Research design**

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey design. According to Kerlinger (1986), “survey design is the study of large and small population (or universe) by selecting and studying samples chosen from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables”. In this study, the existing conditions that predispose a child to manifest anxiety were described and the standards against which the existing conditions could be compared were also identified hence, the survey research design was the most appropriate design for this study. .

**Population**

The population of the study comprised of all male and female freshmen in the tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Specifically, the University of Lagos and the Lagos State University freshmen admitted during the 2005/2006 session.

**Sample and sampling technique**

The researcher used stratified random sampling techniques to select seven hundred freshmen to comprise the sample stratification.

They are made up of 350 males and 350 females from the federal and state universities in Lagos state. Fifty students (25 males and 25 females) were taken from seven department in each of the 7 faculties that made up the sample.

**Instrumentation**

The instrument used for this study was tagged “Social Relationship and Manifest Anxiety Scale” (SORMAS). It was divided into 3 sections.

Section A of the instrument elicited information on the respondent’s personal background such as names, department, age, sex and course of study.

Section B is a 10-item scale that measured the respondent’s extent of social relationship. It has a Likert rating of 1 to 4 namely; always (1), sometimes (2), often (3) and never (4) for the positive statement and the reverse for the negative.

Section C of the questionnaire is a 20-item Likert – type Manifest Anxiety Scale (MAS). The scale was constructed by the researcher using modified items from Taylor’s 1953 Manifest Anxiety Scale. This scale measured 3 types of anxiety; reality anxiety, moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Each item has four alternative responses of (i) completely false (ii) mostly false (iii) mostly true and (iv) completely true.

The instrument was pilot tested on 60 subjects. The instrument was administered twice on the respondent with space of two weeks in between the administrations. Thereafter, the data were analyzed using test-retest reliability estimation. The co-efficient obtained were student-student relationships  $r = 0.92$ , student-staff  $r = 0.72$ , reality anxiety  $0.62$ , neurotic anxiety  $r = 0.78$  and moral anxiety  $r = 0.86$  which were considered to be reasonably stable overtime hence, acceptable for use in the study.

**Procedure**

The researcher visited each of the departments involved to administer the questionnaire. The researcher worked with the lecturers who were directly teaching the freshmen. The names of the students that were randomly selected from the admission list were given to lecturers before the day of administration of the questionnaire. This enabled these lecturers to inform the respondents about the date, the venue, and the time for the exercise.

A brief introduction was made before the commencement of the exercise. The subjects were informed of the importance of the study. They were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and were urged not to skip any of the items. At the end of the exercise in each department, the completed questionnaires were collected and the researcher expressed his gratitude for the cooperation received from both the freshmen and their lecturers.

### **Data analysis**

Data obtained for the research were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA). Each hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. After scoring the questionnaire, students were first divided into 3 groups – high, moderate and low with respect to their extent of social relationships. The questionnaire in MAS was also scored for (i) reality anxiety (ii) neurotic anxiety and (iii) moral anxiety.

### **Results**

The first null hypothesis stated that, there are no significant differences among freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in student-student relationships with regard to their manifest anxiety. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. (Groups, ns, X and SDs) and (ANOVA results).

As presented in table 1, the result of the data analysis shows that the calculated F-ratio for the overall anxiety ( $F = 22.48$ ,  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p < .05$ ) is significantly greater than critical F-value of 3.00. This leads to the rejection of the alternative hypothesis. This means that freshmen who are high, moderate or low in establishing student-student relationships are significantly different with regard to their manifest anxiety.

A breakdown of the analysis in regard of the sub-units of anxiety shows that:

- a) For neurotic anxiety, a significant difference exists among the low anxious, moderate anxious and high anxious groups ( $F = 18.00$ ,  $df = 2, 697$ ;  $p < .05$ ).
- b) Concerning reality anxiety, significant difference exists among the low anxious, moderate anxious, and high anxious groups ( $F = 57.11$ ,  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and
- c) For moral anxiety, there are significant differences among the low anxious, moderate anxious and high anxious groups ( $F = 11.46$ ,  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

The second null hypothesis stated that there are no significant differences among freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in student-staff relationships with regard to their manifest anxiety. The results of the analysis are presented in table 2.

**Table I: Analysis of variance of the effects of freshmen level of student-student relationships on their manifest anxiety**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Groups</b>	<b>n</b>	<b><math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>
Neurotic Anxiety	Low	311	15.33	3.72
	Moderate	166	14.45	3.44
	High	223	14.42	3.53
Reality Anxiety	Low	311	31.22	4.63
	Moderate	166	20.15	4.20
	High	223	19.68	4.37
Moral Anxiety	Low	311	17.10	3.94
	Moderate	166	15.75	3.97
	High	223	15.65	3.90
Overall Anxiety	Low	311	53.59	9.01
	Moderate	166	50.30	7.73
	High	223	49.70	7.08

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F-ratio</b>
Neurotic Anxiety	Between	421.53	2	210.769	18.00*
	Within	8161.26	697	3.53	
	Total	8582.79	699		
Reality Anxiety	Between	299.26	2	149.63	57.11*
	Within	1436.46	697	2.62	
	Total	1735.72	699		
Moral Anxiety	Between	326.58	2	163.29	57.11*
	Within	9929.62	697	14.25	
	Total	10256.2	699		
Overall Anxiety	Between	975.73	2	487.87	22.48*
	Within	45518.11	697	21.71	
	Total	46493.83	699		

\*p < .05; df 2, 697; crit. F-value = 3.00

**Table II: Analysis of variance of the effects of freshmen level of student-staff relationships on their manifest anxiety**

Variables	Groups	n	$\bar{x}$	SD
Neurotic Anxiety	Low	329	15.33	3.74
	Moderate	99	14.20	3.25
	High	272	14.38	3.61
Reality Anxiety	Low	329	20.68	4.57
	Moderate	99	19.25	4.56
	<b>High</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>20.03</b>	<b>5.25</b>
Moral Anxiety	Low	329	17.60	3.85
	Moderate	99	16.25	3.79
	High	272	16.67	4.22
Overall Anxiety	Low	329	54.21	8.16
	Moderate	99	50.3	7.06s
	High	272	50.3	9.08

  

Variables	Sources	SS	df	MS	F-ratio
Neurotic Anxiety	Between	100.16	2	50.08	3.78*
	Within	9230.01	697	13.24	
	Total	9330.17	699		
Reality Anxiety	Between	339.11	2	169.57	8.20*
	Within	14389.81	697	20.69	
	Total	14728.93	699		
Moral Anxiety	Between	244.54	2	122.27	8.03*
	Within	10458.22	697	15.22	
	Total	10702.76	699		
Overall Anxiety	Between	585.64	2	292.82	13.07*
	Within	46742.86	697	22.41	
	Total	47328.5	699		

\*p &lt; .05; df 2, 697; crit. F-value = 3.00

As revealed in Table 2, the results of the data analysis showed that, the calculated F-ratio for the overall manifest anxiety ( $F = 12.07$ ;  $df = 2,697$ ,  $p < .05$ ) is significantly greater than critical F-value of 3.00. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the retention of the alternative hypothesis. This means that freshmen who are high, moderate or low in establishing student-staff social relationships are significantly different with regard to their manifest anxiety.

A further breakdown of the analysis in respect of the sub-units of anxiety reveals that:

- a) For neurotic anxiety, there were significant differences among the low anxious, moderate anxious and high anxious ( $F = 3.78$ ;  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p < .05$ ).
- b) For reality anxiety, significant differences exist among the low anxious, moderate anxious and high anxious groups ( $F = 8.03$ ;  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p .05$ ).
- c) For moral anxiety, significant difference exists among the low anxious, moderate anxious and high anxious groups ( $F = 8.03$ ;  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p .05$ ).

### **Discussion of Results**

The outcome of this study showed that the level of involvement in student-student relationship has significant influence on students' (freshmen) manifest anxiety. The need to relate to others is basic to a great deal of human behaviour. Among recent arrival to a campus environment, there are common needs of help, information giving and adjustment to the new environment. These cannot be achieved without interacting with others. A tree cannot make a forest. Many students especially the freshmen experience anxiety at the initial stage. The intensity will depend on the individual. It may be high, moderate or low.

The findings of Hall and Goldberg (1977) proves supportive in this study, his study was designed to investigate the hypothesized relationship between social anxiety and social behaviour in both psychiatric and non-clinical subjects. He found an association between high social anxiety and social interaction difficulties.

The finding in hypothesis two shows that the level of involvement in student-staff relationship has a significant influence on freshmen manifest anxiety. Majority of the freshmen do not find things easy at their initial stage. This might go on more than a semester, and to complicate the matter, some of the staff may be hostile. The findings of the study are in consonance with that of Heimberg and Barlow (1988), they found that individuals who are socially anxious might avoid seeking help, as the idea of talking about themselves and their difficulties may itself be anxiety provoking and distressing.

Some of the freshmen would avoid speaking in public, eating with others, and interacting with staff. This may be as a result of shyness and audience anxiety and the tendency to avoid embarrassment. In some cases, some Lecturers don't help situations, they contribute immensely to the problems of the freshmen.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that moderate involvement in student-student and student-staff relationships while on campus is very important to maximally reduce level of anxiety among freshmen.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: -

1. Freshmen should be encouraged to join clubs or associations (approved by the college authority) of their choice. This will help in reducing level of anxiety among them and encourage friendship.
2. The college authority in their effort to reduce the level of anxiety among freshmen and promote interaction should make provision for the establishment of recreational facilities.

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