

## **Social Activities and Manifest Anxiety among Freshmen in Tertiary Institutions in Lagos State**

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### **Abstract**

*A survey data collected from a total of 700 freshmen (350 males and 350 females) in tertiary institutions in Lagos state of Nigeria were analysed to determine the relationship between social activities and manifest anxiety. Social activities in the study were measured in terms of freshmen adjustment to religious activities and social organisations. The test instrument used were constructed and validated by the researcher. Two hypotheses were tested using analysis of variance statistics. The result of the data analysis showed that anxiety manifestation was significantly higher in respect of the freshmen who participated less in religious activities and social organisation activities. Based on the above findings, some recommendations were made including the fact that freshmen should be encouraged to join clubs or associations of their choice.*

**Keywords:** *Social Activities; Manifest Anxiety; Freshmen Adjustment.*

### **Introduction**

Social activities are those engagements outside the regular course of academic work. These activities include joining clubs/associations and participating in extra-curricular activities such as games and sports, and social gatherings such as birthday parties, as well as attendance at church and mosque services and fellowship. Universities/Colleges encourage social activities on campus provided they are duly registered through the Students' Affairs Units. Uka & Iji (1998:73) points out that,

*It is the policy of the university to encourage students of the university, who so desire, to organise themselves into, and join organisations which contribute to the academic, cultural, recreational and social life of the university. For this reason, the university encourages a network of student directed clubs and societies designed to provide education outside the classroom.*

The above privilege notwithstanding, some students who are too busy with class work and those who feel they are socially inadequate may not see a need to participate. The lower-class students are more likely to see themselves as socially unattractive to other students, and are hence more anxious about being rejected. They are, therefore, less inclined to become involved in extra-curricular activities and thus have fewer opportunities to learn the social skills that enable them to fit in better with their peers (Lindgreen, 1976: 22).

Many, of course, as a result of shyness may miss the opportunity of playing together, sharing together and exchange of views together in social activities. Zimbardo & Ruch (1980:333) assume that shyness is a multi-dimensional concept, and it is commonly used, it can include a variety of social anxieties; performance

difficulties in large group setting; public speaking anxieties; lack of assertiveness and anxieties about informal social contacts with members of both the same and opposite sexes.

Shyness is a tendency to avoid social situations, to fail to participate appropriately in social encounters and to feel anxious, distressed and burdened during inter-personal interactions (Zimbardo & Ruch, 1980). Shyness creates social problems, makes it difficult to meet new people, make new friends enjoy potentially good experiences. Research has shown that individuals who labelled themselves "shy persons" were less extraverted, less capable of monitoring their social behaviour, and more socially anxious than their non-shy peers. As shyness increases so does poor personal adjustment (Pilkonis, 1977a, 1977b).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most people are aware of the phenomenon of embarrassment, its consequences and relationship to other forms of social anxiety such as audience anxiety, shyness and shame.

Freshmen in their new environment need to participate in the activities going on around them. They need to attend Church services, weekly meetings, and the Muslim counterparts attend Mosque services. Some of which may be anxiety provoking. The measure of anxiety differs from one individual to another. This study therefore is aimed at unraveling how social activities could be used to explain freshmen's manifest anxiety on campuses.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between social activities and manifest anxiety of the freshmen in tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Specifically, the study is aimed at finding out.

1. The relation between freshmen's adaptation to religious organisation activities in tertiary institutions and their manifest anxiety.
2. The relation between freshmen's adaptation to social organisation activities in tertiary institutions and their manifest anxiety

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by these questions:

- i. Do freshmen that are high, moderate or low in participating in religious activities differ significantly with regard to their manifest anxiety?
- ii. Do freshmen that are high, moderate or low in participating in social organisations activities differ significantly with regard to their manifest anxiety?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested

- i. Freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in religious activities are not significantly different with regard to their manifest anxiety.
- ii. Freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in social organisations activities are not significantly different with regard to their manifest anxiety.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research design used for this study is the survey research design.

### **Population**

The population of the study were the freshmen (male and female) from the university of Lagos and Lagos State University. They were admitted during 2006/2007 academic session.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 700 freshmen that comprised the sample. Three hundred and fifty males and the same number of females were selected from each institution. Fifty students (25 males and 25 females) were taken from 7 department in each of the 7 faculties that made up the sample.

### **Instrumentation**

The instrument used for this study was “Social Activities and Manifest Anxiety Scale (SAMAS). The instrument was divided into 3 sections

#### **Section A**

This section elicited from the respondents, their personal information data such as where they live, sex and age.

#### **Section B**

This section was a 10 – item scale that measured the respondents level of participation in social activities. It has a Likert rating of 1 to 4 namely always (1) sometimes (2) often (3) and never (4) for the positive statements and the reverse for the negative.

#### **Section C**

The section of the questionnaire was 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. The scale measured 3 types of anxiety namely; reality anxiety, moral anxiety and neurotic anxiety. Each item has 4 alternative response of (i) completely false (ii) mostly false (iii) mostly true (iv) completely true.

The instrument was pilot tested on 60 subjects. It was administered twice on the respondents within a space of 2 weeks. Thereafter the data were analysed using test-retest reliability estimation. The co-efficient obtained were social organisation  $r=0.65$ , religious organisation ‘ $r$ ’ = 0.67, reality anxiety ‘ $r$ ’ = 0.62, moral anxiety ‘ $r$ ’ = 0.86 and neurotic anxiety ‘ $r$ ’ = 0.78. These coefficient were statistically significant and the scales 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. He 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 made it possible for those 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 questionnaire were collected and the researcher expressed his gratitude for the cooperation received from both the freshmen and their lecturers.

### Data Analysis

Data obtained from the research were analysed 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 level of participation in social activities. The MAS was also scored for (a) reality anxiety, (b) moral anxiety and (c) neurotic anxiety.

### Results

The first null hypothesis states that: There is no significant difference among freshmen who participate highly, moderately or lowly in social activities with regard to their manifest anxiety.

The result of the analysis is presented in table 1 (groups, ns  $\bar{x}$  and SDs) and (ANOVA results)

**Table 1: Analysis of Variance of the Effects of Freshmen's Level of Religious Organisation Activities on their Manifest Anxiety**

Variables	Groups	N		SD	
Neurotic Anxiety	Low	227	15.26	3.53	
	Moderate	250	14.27	3.63	
	High	223	14.25	3.47	
Reality Anxiety	Low	227	20.71	4.39	
	Moderate	250	19.85	4.39	
	High	223	20.69	4.71	
Moral Anxiety	Low	227	16.95	4.17	
	Moderate	250	16.22	3.76	
	High	223	15.88	3.91	
Overall Anxiety	Low	227	52.88	8.09	
	Moderate	250	50.28	7.36	
	High	223	50.66	8.06	

  

Variables	Source	SS	df	MS	F-ratios
Neurotic Anxiety	Between	155.40	2	77.702	6.16"
	Within	8782.62	697		
	Total	8938.02	699		
Reality Anxiety	Between	107.12	2	53.56	2.65
	Within	14085.07	697	20.20	
	Total	14192.19	699		
Moral Anxiety	Between	133.89	2	66.95	4.3*
	Within	10831.06	697	15.54	
	Total	10964.95	699		
Overall Anxiety	Between	289.90	2	144.95	6.59
	Within	46141.88	697	22.00	
	Total	46431.78	699		

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

As Presented in Table 1, the result of the data analysis shows that the calculated F-ratio for the overall anxiety ( $F=6.59$ ,  $df = 2,697$ ;  $p < 05$ ) is significantly greater than critical F value of 3.00. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the retention of the alternate hypothesis.

This means there are significant differences among freshmen who participated highly, moderately or lowly in religious organization activities with regard to their manifest anxiety.

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

- (a) For neurotic anxiety, a significant influence exist among the three groups ( $F=6.16$ ,  $df = 2,697$ ,  $p < 05$ ).
- (b) For reality anxiety a significant difference exist among the three groups ( $F = 2.65$ ,  $df 2,697$ ,  $p < 05$ ) and
- (c) For moral anxiety, a significant difference exist among the three groups ( $F = 4.31$ ,  $df 2,697$ ,  $p < 05$ )

Given significant F – ratio, post hoc analysis using Fisher’s Least Significant Difference (LSD) Multiple Comparison test was done to determine exactly which group differed significantly from the others in terms of participation in religious organisation activities with regard to their manifest anxiety. The result of the analysis is presented on Table 2. The overall results of the (LSD) analysis as presented in Table 2 showed that, freshmen who were low in participating in religious organisation activities manifested a significantly higher degree of anxiety than those who participated moderately ( $t = 6.19$ ;  $p < 05$ ) and than those who participated highly ( $t = 5.29$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, there was no significant difference between the freshmen who participated moderately and those who participated highly with regard to their anxiety manifestation ( $t = -0.09$ ;  $p > .05$ ).

This finding indicates that the freshmen who were low in participating in religious organisation activities are more anxious than freshmen who participated moderately and highly.

**Table 2: Fisher’s (LSD) multiple comparison test of subjects who were low, moderate or high in religious organisation activities with regard to their manifest anxiety**

Variables	Groups	Low	Moderate (n = 227)	High (n=250) (n = 223)
Neurotic Anxiety	Low	15.26 <sup>a</sup>	0.99 <sup>b</sup>	0.02
	Moderate	3.19*	14.27	1.01
	High	0.06	3.26*	14.25
Reality Anxiety	Low	20.71 <sup>a</sup>	0.86 <sup>b</sup>	0.75
	Moderate	2.51c*	19.85	-0.11
	High	1.88	-0.28	20.60
Moral Anxiety	Low	16.95 <sup>a</sup>	0.73 <sup>b</sup>	1.07
	Moderate	20.09 <sup>c</sup>	16.22	0.34
	High	2.89*	0.97	15.88
Overall Anxiety	Low	52.88 <sup>a</sup>	2.6 <sup>b</sup>	2.22
	Moderate	6.19c*	50.28	-0.38
	High	5.29*	-0.90	50.66

<sup>a</sup>Group means are placed along the diagonal

<sup>b</sup>Difference among group means are placed above the diagonal

<sup>c</sup>Fisher’s (LSD) t-values are placed below the diagonal

\*Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant difference among freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in social activities with regard to their manifest anxiety. The results of this analysis are presented in table 2.

**Table 3: Analysis of variance of the effects of freshmen's level of social organization activities on their manifest anxiety**

Variables	Groups	n	x	SD
Neurotic	Low	269	14.70	3.49
	Moderate	131	15.25	3.71
	High	300	14.11	3.49
Reality	Low	269	17.39	4.80
	Moderate	131	17.22	4.56
	High	300	17.19	4.72
Moral	Low	269	17.37	4.64
	Moderate	131	16.97	4.61
	High	300	16.82	4.64
Overall	Low	269	49.46	9.71
	Moderate	131	49.44	8.62
	High	300	48.32	8.33

  

Variables	Source	SS	df	MS	F-ratios
Neurotic Anxiety	Between	123.18	2	61.59	4.94*
	Within	8683.95	697	12.46	
	Total	8807.13	699		
Reality Anxiety	Between	186.12	2	68.74	7.63
	Within	11516.23	697	17.18	
	Total	11692.35	699		
Moral Anxiety	Between	150.13	2	55.93	4.81*
	Within	9072.7	697	1931	
	Total	9222.83	699		
Overall Manifest Anxiety	Between	391.69	2	195.51	10.54*
	Within	61441.86	697	21.82	
	Total	61833.55	699		

\*p < 0.05; df = 2, 697; crit. F-value = 3.00

As depicted in Table 2, the result of the data analysis show that the calculated F- ratio for the overall anxiety (F = 13.54; df 2, 697; p < 0.05) was significantly greater than the critical F-value of 3.00. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and the retention of the alternative hypothesis. This means freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participation in social organization activities are significantly difference with regard to their manifest anxiety.

This means freshmen who are high, moderate or low in participating in social organization activities are significantly difference with regard to their manifest anxiety. A breakdown of the analysis in respect of the sub units of anxiety shows that:

- (a) For neurotic anxiety, a significant difference exists among the low anxious, moderate anxiety and high anxious groups (F = 4.94, df 2,697; p < 05)
- (b) For reality anxiety, a significant difference exists among the low anxious, moderate anxiety and high anxious groups ( F = 7.63, df 2,697; p < 05)
- (c) For moral anxiety, a significant difference exists among the low anxious, moderation anxious and high anxious groups (F= 4.81, df 2,697; p < 05).

Given the significant F – ratio, post hoc analysis using LSD multiple Comparison test was done to determine exactly which group differed significantly from the others in terms of participation in social organisation activities with regard to their manifest anxiety. The result of the analysis is presented in table 4.

**Table 4: Fishers LSD multiple comparison tests of subjects who were low, moderate or high in social organisation activities with regard to their manifest anxiety**

Variables	Groups	Low	Moderate (n = 269)	High (n=131)(n = 300)
Neurotic Anxiety	Low	14.70 <sup>a</sup>	-0.55 <sup>b</sup>	0.59
	Moderate	1.41 <sup>c</sup>	15.25	1.14
	High	1.97*	3.08*	14.11
Reality Anxiety	Low	17.39 <sup>a</sup>	0.17 <sup>b</sup>	0.2
	Moderate	0.38 <sup>c</sup>	17.22	0.03
	High	0.57	0.09	17.19
Moral Anxiety	Low	17.37 <sup>a</sup>	0.4 <sup>b</sup>	0.55
	Moderate	0.83	16.97	0.15
	High	1.49	0.33	16.82
Overall Anxiety	Low	49.46 <sup>a</sup>	0.02	1.14
	Moderate	0.04 <sup>c</sup>	49.44	1.12
	High	2.92*	2.29*	48.32

<sup>a</sup>Groups means are placed along the diagonal

<sup>b</sup>Differences among group means are placed above the diagonal

<sup>c</sup>Fisher’s (LSD) t-values are placed below the diagonal

\*Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The overall result of the LSD analysis as presented in table 4 showed that freshmen who participated moderately in social organisation activities manifested a significantly higher degree of anxiety than those who participated highly (t = 2.92; p < .05) and than those who participated highly (t = 2.29; p < .05).

However, there was no significant difference between the freshmen who participated lowly and those who participated moderately with regard to their anxiety manifestation (t = 0.04; p > .05). These findings indicate that the freshmen that participated moderately in social organisation activities are more anxious than freshmen that participated lowly and highly.



### **Discussion of Results**

The finding of this study shows that the level of participating in religious organisation has significant influence on freshmen anxiety manifestation. Many students shy away from active participation in their religious organisations so as to avoid embarrassment. Anxiety manifestation can be easily noticed in such situation. The freshmen that have been taken part in social activities prior this time can flourish smoothly in their new environment at least with low level of anxiety.

The finding of this study is in agreement with those of Bryant & Trower (1974) and Zimbardo (1977). They believe that social situations are one class of situations in which anxiety frequently occurs and where such anxiety is often a significant problem.

Twentyman and McFall (1979) identified lack of social skills as one of the causes of social anxiety. In a situation whereby individual does not possess the necessary behavioural repertoire to meet the demand or the role expected of him, he or she may manifest anxiety. The role may include praying, evangelism, preaching and singing in the church. Arkowitz et.al., (1975), Twentyman and Mcfall (1979) summed it up that social anxiety in this case may arise as a reaction to a problematic situation brought about by one's inability to handle the social demands of a particular encounter.

The outcome of hypothesis two shows that the level of involvement in social organisation activities has a significant influence on freshmen manifest anxiety. Most of the freshmen know their inadequacies when it comes to social activities, hence they avoid tactically from participating in activities that can expose them. They only attend lectures, study in the library and go to their hostels. These category of students device means to cover up their shortcomings socially.

The findings of Bryant and Trower again lend support to this study. in a survey of sophomore college students in Britain, they found hat 10% of students had great difficulty with or avoided a number of common social situations. Zimbardo (1977) found that 42% of a sample of American college described themselves as shy.

Many freshmen, of course, as a result of shyness and anxiety may miss the opportunity of playing together, sharing together and exchange views together in social activities. The freshmen who find it difficult to participate in social organisation activities will be lonely and unhappy. Zimbardo and Ruch (1980) points out that "the isolated individual is vulnerable to the pathologies of a self-centered existence, loneliness, depression, paranoia, suicide, and antisocial relations". From the result of this study it was found that freshmen who were low in attending parties, drama outings, taken part in games and the likes manifested more anxiety than their counterparts who attended moderately and highly and participated actively in social activities.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion drawn from the results of the study were as follows:

1. Moderate participation in religious activities while on campus is essential in reducing anxiety among freshmen.
2. Moderate participation in social organisations while on campus is essential in reducing the level of anxiety among freshmen.



### **Recommendations**

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.
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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