

Social Support, Family Support and Social Anxiety as Correlate of Psychological Wellbeing of Students of Colleges of Education in Anambra State

Okafor Jeremiah Uche* and Obikeze NJ

Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria.

*Correspondence:

Okafor Jeremiah Uche, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam, Anambra State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Social support, Family support and Social anxiety as correlates of psychological wellbeing of colleges of education students in Anambra state. Five research questions and five hypotheses guided the study. A total of 420 students were selected using simple random sampling from two colleges of education in Anambra state. Four instruments were used for data collection namely: Psychological well-being scale, Social Support Behaviour Scale (SSBS), Family Support Scale (FSS), and Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS). Correlational research design was adopted for the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson correlation coefficient. The result showed that the participants reported moderate to high levels of social support ($M = 50.34$, $SD = 7.85$) and family support ($M = 45.89$, $SD = 8.23$). Psychological well-being ($M = 64.21$, $SD = 10.34$) was relatively high, while social anxiety ($M = 32.76$, $SD = 6.45$) was moderate. The gender distribution was balanced, with slightly more females (mean = 1.55, $SD = 0.50$). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 28 years, with an average age of 21.45 years ($SD = 2.34$). More so, the results indicate that social support and family support were positively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = .613$, $p < .01$; $r = .578$, $p < .01$, respectively). Social anxiety was negatively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = -.491$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher social anxiety is associated with lower well-being. Gender showed a weak but significant positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = .102$, $p < .05$), indicating minor gender differences. Age also showed a weak positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = .138$, $p < .01$), suggesting that older students might report better well-being. It is recommended among others that since social support and family support significantly correlates with psychological well-being, colleges of education should establish student support programs such as peer mentoring, group counseling, and social engagement activities to strengthen students' social networks and improve psychological wellbeing.

Keywords

Social support, Family support, Social anxiety, Psychological wellbeing of students.

Introduction

Background to the study

Students as members of an institution of higher education are required to have responsibility to complete academic assignments that have been determined in order to achieve the competencies of graduates expected by the institution. However, there are various expectations and novel that are required which most of these students are unaware of. Sadly, very few are readily

equipped with the skills to aid their psychological wellbeing [1]. The student sees the higher institution as an opportunity to start afresh as an independent adult, capable of decision making without interference from significant others, the student often has no idea how this comes with larger responsibility and such way life may deteriorate their psychological wellbeing. However, it is truly impossible to entirely blame the student on some of their attitudes and or behaviours [1]. Such experiences are not easily predictable regardless of much preparations and information. It then becomes necessary that, for a student to acquire such higher education or to become a graduate, it requires a great amount of adjustment and which social support, family support, and social anxiety may

either raise or delay or even have adverse effect on the students and prevent such a student from achieving his aim thereby affecting his psychological wellbeing.

Psychological wellbeing can be described as the absence of overt psychiatric symptoms or as having good mental health and existential qualities like the capacity to think and act in the best possible way given a certain setting. The scientific research of Ryff in [1] made the significance of psychological well-being generally known. Ryff, research on the "Exploration on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being" demonstrates that psychological well-being is a state of people who have the capacity to make their own life decisions independently, to control their environment successfully, to build positive relationships with others, to choose and carry out the direction and purpose of their lives, to accept themselves positively, and to continuously develop their potential [1]. Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, meaningful relationships with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance are six fundamental themes that emphasize what Ryff means by psychological wellbeing. These six themes are all essential to a child's development, within the context of this study.

Psychological wellbeing is defined as the feelings of normalcy and mental stability that indicate that everything is fine and moving in the right direction. The subjective perception of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and one's function in school, as well as a lack of discomfort, dissatisfaction, or worry, are all examples of psychological wellbeing, alludes to how well an individual's life is going. An important aspect of psychological well-being is to reduce prolonged or extreme negative emotions that can jeopardize an individual's ability to daily functioning.

Therefore, psychological well-being can be explained as the capacity to function and have good feelings. Moreover, meaningful activities such as having healthy relationships can influence an individual's psychological well-being. Additionally, well-being can be achieved if the individual's psychological needs such as purpose in life and belongingness are realized. This is aligned with Ryff [1] definition of psychological well-being which encompasses having a purpose in life, positive relationships, autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and personal growth. An individual's context can influence one's psychological well-being and hence overall health [2]. The last component is social well-being which is comprised of having basic needs covered as well as participating in society, attaining goals, and having a sense of purpose. Society can influence an individual's well-being as employment, financial rewards, public services, and the country's politics are all key elements of social well-being. Furthermore, an individual's perception of their social contribution, environment, potentiality, and integration all influence one's social well-being. Consequently, social wellbeing emphasizes the effective integration of an individual in the community as this increases one's health.

Psychological Well-being is simultaneously the absence of the crippling elements of the human experience, depression,

anxiety, anger, fear and the presence of enabling ones' positive emotions, meaning, healthy relationships, environmental mastery, engagement, and self-actualization. Psychological wellbeing is above and beyond the absence of psychological ill-being and it considers a broader spectrum of constructs than what is traditionally conceived of as happiness [3]. It has to do with people's feelings in their day-to-day life which could be positive or negative. Psychological well-being is a multidimensional notion.

Irwin et al. asserted that modern approaches to psychology, such as positive psychology, place a strong emphasis on how happiness and wellbeing are seen; interpreted and related characteristics are predicted. Psychological health is crucial throughout all stages of life, including that of colleges of education students. Psychological well-being serves as the foundation for quality of life because it can serve as an investigative criterion for individual merit and quality as viewed in all areas of everyday life of which family plays a crucial role. The psychological well-being is defined as an attempt to realize one's potential capabilities and includes six characteristics of "positive relationships with others", "self-acceptance", "personal growth", "purpose in life", "environmental mastery" and "autonomy", which indicate one's mental balance and health.

Wellbeing generally predicts a variety of vital outcomes, including a sense of life satisfaction, and greater success in job and relationships. Psychological well-being refers to the extent to which people feel that they have meaningful control in their life and their activities. Low psychological well-being can affect one's self-acceptance, the patient feels they have no purpose in life, no positive interactions are formed with the environment or other people, and it makes one unable to accept the strengths or weaknesses in their lives [2]. It is seen that high level of well-being is crucial in all periods of a person's life. It is known that social, psychological, emotional and behavioral problems are more common in adolescence, which is one of the life periods of the individual, compared to the previous and subsequent periods. In this respect, it could be asserted that having high level of wellbeing becomes more important in students colleges of education. According to Onur, most parents demand from adolescent individuals to grow and change as a self-confident, healthy person with high level of well-being, no social anxieties, and high capacity for self-regulation. These expectations from the parents towards their children/ individual can be achieved through Social support.

Social support refers to the experience being valued, respected, cared about, and loved by others who are present in one's life [4]. It may come from different sources such as family, friends, teachers, community, or any social groups to which one is affiliated. Social support is a type of information that individuals acquire and perceive from their external environment including their social network, and it enables individuals to feel care and love from others. Social support provides the most important and significant environmental resources. It is defined as a mutual network of caring that enables one to cope with stress better. Social support from friends and

family plays an important role in almost every aspect of stress and coping. In addition, social support refers to: having a group of family and friends who provide strong social attachments; being able to exchange helpful resources among family and friends; and the feeling of having supportive relationship and behaviors. Social support according to Thoits [5] is described as the emotional, instrumental or tangible aid exchanged between members of the networks. Social support especially, those help that comes from loved ones, play a central role in shaping the quality of people's lives.

It is an assistance provided by others when needed which includes appraisal of different situations, effective coping strategies, and emotional support. There are different other types of social support which include emotional support, tangible support, informational support and social needs. Social support is also an element that can help students to reduce the amount of stress experienced as well as to help them to cope better in dealing with stressful academic situations [6]. Social support comes chiefly in the forms of instrumental assistance, information assistance and emotional assistance from other people.

However, social support provides the encouragement, care and direction needed by the students to overcome adverse circumstances. Social support emphasizes the perception or provision of resources available to an individual from those within his or her social network. It is no doubt that one necessary survival skill in an institution is the ability to build up and sustain healthy interpersonal relationships. In times past, it has been of general belief that social support was responsible for why people do better than others in life situations as it was one of the measures for successes and abilities. It is safe to say that social support goes beyond normal traditional function as a stress buffer, and plays a number of parts in the social organization of health, illness and psychological wellbeing. It may preserve health directly or indirectly by diminishing other health risks. It may also ease health effects from other variables.

Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people. These support can be emotional (that is nurturance), informational (inform of advice), or companionship (that is sense of belonging), tangible (instrumental or financial assistance) or intangible (personal advice). Emotional aspect of social support stems from listening with empathetic ears to student's situations. Providing compassion helps to build trust in such an individual. Emotional support is perceived notion that a person is esteemed and accepted by communicating to individuals that they are valued and accepted despite any faults. Informational support refers to help in understanding and coping with challenges; so, it is also referred to as cognitive guidance or appraisal support. Informational support provides the feedback and intellectual aid that can help a student have a good psychological wellbeing. This is the Intel that demonstrates to the student in need that someone is interested in his/her learning, researching, and growth. This informational social support creates an opportunity to grow trust and confidence in the process of decision-making

and understanding to such a person. Instrumental or financial social supports are the actions or tangible items that one provides to demonstrate support to an individual especially to a student. It may be tangible objects such as a gift, a card and an act of service. Instrumental support is a demonstration that can be seen and felt. Instrumental support involves the provision of tangible support such as financial help and needed services [7]. Those students who receive caring and understanding are more likely to offer informational or instrumental support more than those that do not receive such especially in academic stress. Appraisal is the type of support that provides an individual with a reminder of their positive attributes, which will allow them to build success in the areas where they are finding stress. Appraisal is the reminder to the recipient that they have the skills and traits to combat difficult stressors. This type of support allows for a greater chance of building confidence and, ultimately, success in students.

However, social support can be assessed objectively and subjectively. Objective social support is typically assessed through self-reports of either the actual received social support or the size of the individual's social network. Received social support consists of supportive behaviors provided by one's network. Subjective social support is commonly measured as either perceived social support or sense of social integration or connectedness [8]. Perceived social support refers to the belief that help is available if needed while received social support is the actual help obtained. Perceived social support taps an individual's perceptions of the general availability of potential support. An example could be statement like "I can count on my parents when things go wrong" [8]. The quality of social support perceived and received has been reported by several studies to correlate more positively with psychological wellbeing than the quantity of support received [9]. Sense of social connectedness measures one's feeling of relatedness toward other people. It has been recognized that the characteristics and quality of social support are central to the student's adjustment [6]. There are three dimensions of social support provided by families and friends; these include warmth, behavioral control, and psychological autonomy-granting. These three dimensions facilitate the development of positive self-conceptions and social skills, responsibility and competence, and impulse control and deterrence of deviance which in turn lead to low level of psychological problems to the students. This support has also been found necessary for healthy level of development [6].

In addition, social support could help students to cope with everyday life stressor and lighten the burden of academic workload. Students attending schools with low social support may develop a weaker sense of belonging than their more well-off peers [6]. Therefore, without enough social support from family and friends, students might be in trouble and are likely to be vulnerable to depression, stress, anxiety and psychological wellbeing especially, those students with negative and traumatic family support.

Family is a group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption, that live together, all such related persons are considered as members of one family. Family is a social system

and at the same time provides a context for development. Families are made up of different numbers of people who are related to one another in specific ways, such as mothers, fathers, and children, Grandparents, in-laws, step-relatives, and even ex-relatives could all be included in this perspective. Family is often thought to shape an individual's life experience through socialization and general environment interaction which if not controlled may affect the people's psychological well-being [10]. Family helps to shape their members and their relational ties are reciprocal in nature and are characterized as dynamic and interdependent. Not only health and adaptation, but personality itself is thought to develop under the influence of family members from early childhood on.

Family support is an engaging live event where parents and their children experience and or share their values together, having relaxation and teaching about the character and traditions of their culture. Parents often have fun together with children; teach them norms of the society and other necessary values the children should be aware of. Family members offer regulative functions leading to positive family experience. In healthy contexts, parents co-regulate their children by being sensitive, responsive and caring. They structure, validate and stabilize emotion-recognition and expression, and synchronize while interacting. Based on a cohesive child-parent relationship, feelings of support and closeness foster greater social competencies and social adjustment and are associated with higher well-being in students. In developing nations, including Nigeria, it is the duty of a family to ensure the financial stability of family members, especially the father who is seen as the family's leader while mothers typically take care of the home, but when all these are done negatively the child begin to have negative family experience which in turn might affect the child's psychological wellbeing.

However, due to recent economic downturns and advancements in technology, families now have father and mother as working parents who share parenting duties [11]. Another critical function of a family most especially in Nigeria is to provide psycho-emotional support. A family's members are required to support one another in resolving their interpersonal and social issues. Family upbringing also determines the family lifestyle. The family also takes care of child socialization. Family instills fundamental values in early children that shape their personalities, communication skills, habits, etiquette, and of course, complete socialization. As a result, negative family experience could be detrimental to a child's general development and school involvement may affect such a child as he comes of age. Having an appearance or condition that draws attention, for example, facial disfigurement, stuttering or tremors due to Parkinson's disease can increase feelings of self-consciousness and may trigger social anxiety in some people.

Social anxiety also called social phobia, is an uncontrollable fear of social situations, which involve fear of observation or making contact with strangers [6]. Social anxiety typically start in the teenage years, but meeting new people, giving a speech in public or making an important work presentation may trigger symptoms for the first time. Therefore, any negative help received

by individuals with social anxiety, which is among the factors affecting psychological wellbeing, can significantly influence a students' academic performance and prevent other life progress. Urani, et al. found that social anxiety predicted higher levels of home sickness at the start of the first semester and lower levels of social support at the end. Social anxiety also negatively affects other aspects of college student's life, such as academic performances and persistence. Social anxiety is a consequence of belief of negative appraisal by others in social situations. People may believe themselves to lack or have inadequate social skills needed in varied social situations. This feeling or belief of inadequacy may consequently cause them to fear social situations and even avoid them. People with this anxiety may also believe that their behaviour may be inappropriate in the given social situation that may result in negative reactions and evaluation from others around them. Apprehension about possible humiliation, ridicule and embarrassment among or in front of a group of people causes intense anxiety in these people.

Social anxiety according to Clarke, as cited by Kashdan, is defined as the fear and avoidance of meeting, interacting, and expressing oneself with others. Social anxiety also can be defined as the fear and avoidance of social situations where one is performing or being observed. Social anxiety often starts to arise in childhood and early adolescence. However, this may be confused with shyness. People may also assume that the child who has social anxiety is reserved or an introvert by nature and avoidance of social situation is a preference or choice not a compulsion. Even those children who suffer from anxiety about social interactions may not seek help for it for a long time until they reach adulthood. So detection of social anxiety is difficult. High socially anxious children do not have different skills and behaviour from their peers but perceive differences and hence display high scores on self-report measure of social anxiety. Social anxiety is an internal state and hence may not be detectable in most situations unless the person suffering from it reports it. In certain cases children who have social anxiety may display externalized problems that can be traced to the anxiety of social interaction. Social anxiety can have adverse effects on the child's growth and development. Research has found links to poor physical and psychological wellbeing in those with social anxiety. Some problems associated with social anxiety include loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, substance misuse and reduced academic and school performance. Ginsburg, et al., in their study of 154 children with diagnosed anxiety problems found that social anxiety was associated with impairments in emotional and social functioning.

Social anxiety is a fear that a person's behaviors are being observed and evaluated by another person. Most of the individuals who experience social anxiety have the fear that they will be perceived as a bad person by people around them and the society they are in, they will leave an undesired impression and be evaluated negatively. Individuals with social anxiety feel the fear of negative evaluation and humiliation of their behavior by other individuals in social zones or places where they need to perform a behavior. As a result of this negative emotion and fear, individuals tend to

criticize themselves negatively. According to Davison and Neale, social anxiety is an irrational persisting fear. It might affect and restrict the life of an individual. A person who has social anxiety could demonstrate timidity before he performs his behavior since he has already had negative thoughts. Other cases seen in individuals with high level of social anxiety are shyness for making a speech in public, eating and drinking in front of the public, and using the common areas.

Erikson [12], in adulthood which follows adolescence, individuals are ready to socialize with their friends around them, purified from the search for their identity. However, if these individuals have social anxiety, they could show behaviors of wishing to be alone and unwilling to keep in touch with others by considering this period as dangerous and harmful. Students who quickly adapt to the new social environment adjust better to academic demands and maintain their physical and psychological well-being. The pervious researcher's dealt mainly on psychological wellbeing, personality traits, psychological wellbeing and locus of control among others. It then becomes imperative to embark on this study. This present study therefore deals with Moderating role of Gender and Age on the relationship between social support, family support and social anxiety as correlates of psychological wellbeing among students of colleges of education in Anambra state, hence, the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of psychological wellbeing is becoming increasingly common among students in tertiary institutions today. If a person's psychological wellbeing is lacking, then when faced with a difficult problem in the school it is easier to experience depression which in turn leads to low psychological wellbeing. Despite a growing body of literature on the importance of psychological wellbeing among students, the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety and students' psychological wellbeing have not yet been systematically assessed. The family has a significant role to play here. Naturally, a child's home environment should offer a favorable framework for their overall growth. This might significantly affect how well the child does in school and in life in general. A child's growth can be positively impacted by the family environment, which provides unique learning opportunities.

However, it is self-evident that family support at times affects a child especially when stress-related events, such as a family member's death, a parent's significant sickness, a divorce, a loss of household income, an abusive parent, make it difficult for the family to function which might cause significant drawback in the development of a child in such context.

More so, the psychological wellbeing of tertiary institution's students has been noted to be of great importance in academic and social performance. There is however the question of who has such psychological wellbeing, which doesn't and what is responsible for the psychological wellbeing. Students who have little or no social support and negative family support tends to suffer social anxiety and these can cause problem psychologically thereby

affecting the person's wellbeing. The absence of positive social and family support removes the advantage of enhanced psychological wellbeing and good decision making especially in school environment [13]. If the problem of psychological wellbeing is not addressed at the undergraduate level, students would graduate without being psychologically groomed for life after school. It is quite often that many students go on to get jobs and find difficulty in sustaining meaningful work relationships or general handling of the variables of life. It is no doubt that problems may arise in a case of deficit of social support from significant others. The recurring priority placed on the necessity of social support and positive family support for survival in the higher institution truly is detrimental to students' psychological wellbeing. The need to understand what is responsible for the psychological wellbeing of colleges of education students and how such valuable knowledge can be harnessed for improved conditions of students' lives prompted this research on social support, family support, and social anxiety as correlate of psychological wellbeing among colleges of education students in Anambra state.

Purpose of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine social support, family support and social anxiety as correlates of psychological wellbeing of students of Colleges of Education in Anambra State.

Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Examine the relationship between social support and psychological wellbeing among students of Colleges of Education in Anambra State.
2. Find out the relationship between family support and psychological wellbeing among students of Colleges of Education, in Anambra State.
3. Determine the relationship between social anxiety and psychological wellbeing among students of Colleges of Education in Anambra State.
4. Examine if gender moderates the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State.
5. Examine if age moderate the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State.

Significance of the Study

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the work will enhance the current writing on the exposure of students to social supports, positive family support and social anxiety, which goes a long way in affecting the psychological wellbeing of students in Anambra State.

The study will likewise give an important opportunity to testing the validity or explanatory influences of the current theories on social supports, family support and social anxiety, its effects, and methods for overcoming the difficulties and having a good psychological wellbeing.

Practically, the study will be of immense benefits to the following: students, psychologists, parents, caregivers, policy makers and future researchers.

To the students, the study will be of immense benefit to them as it will enable them to understand themselves better since they are exploring the ideas of being independent from the parents as they are in school by enhancing the quality of life and provide a buffer against adverse life events. The study will also be of benefit to them due to transferee on reliance from parents to peers which encourages their adult attachment style to develop fully. The study will also give the students the emotional security and support, context or growth in social competence and prototypes or later relationships. Finally, the study will help the students to improve on their general wellbeing. That is to say, when the student are psychologically balanced, they will be more focused in their studies and gain a holistic and integral individual formation or their progress and that of the nation at large.

To psychologists, the study will help them to enhance their wellbeing and give better understanding of the relationship student's forms. It will also help psychologists to improve the life of students battling with psychological problem. The study will also help psychologists in understanding the importance of nature verses nurture on the part of students under their care. The study will also help in the early detection and diagnosis of social anxiety for good psychological wellbeing of the students.

To the parents, the study will help them to understand more the nature nurture issues on their children and then learn how to manage them. More so to change their mind set that nature has it all in the life of a child, but to understand that nurture has a lot to do in the life of a child. The study will also help the parents to understand that their adolescent children especially those in school will eventually start exploring the ideas of being independent and such happened they should learn to bear with them or such will help them to develop to adult style of life. The study will also encourage parents to carry out every possible way to see that their children (students) have a psychological well-being which will enable them to react and adapt very well in the school environment. The study will also help parents to detect their children with social anxiety and learn how to manage and correct such situation on time.

To the caregivers, the study will help them to build a secured relationship in the children. The study will also enable the caregivers to give good storyline to the children/child which centered on the idea that parents had to go away and come back and that they should show their feelings when the parents return. Secure children express ear about their parents leaving them but they are resolved when the parents return home, but avoidant children do not allow their fears and anxieties to show. The study will also help the caregivers to understand their roles in the formation of the students and should train the children under them through observational principles and also to serve as a role model to them.

To the policy makers, the study will be of immense help to them as it help them to understand the students better, in order to make proper laws that will be suitable, for their integral formation of the students. The study will help the policy makers, if they apply some of the suggestions given in this research so as to help students gain a good psychological well-being.

Finally, the study will give future researchers, a strong hold towards the handling and treatment of students' anxiety and other social problems notice among the youths. The study will aid them in their research as regards to social support, family support, social anxiety and general psychological problems.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Will there be a significant relationship between social support and psychological wellbeing among students of Colleges of Education in Anambra State?
2. Will there be a significant relationship between family support and psychological wellbeing among students of Colleges of Education, in Anambra State?
3. Will there be a significant relationship between social anxiety and psychological wellbeing among students of Colleges of Education in Anambra State?
4. Will gender moderate the relationship between social supports, family support and social anxiety on psychological wellbeing of students in colleges of education in Anambra State?
5. Will age moderate the relationship between social support, family support and social anxiety on psychological wellbeing of students in colleges of education in Anambra State?

Operational Definition of key Study Variables

Psychological well-being: Psychological well-being refers to inter- and intra-individual levels of positive functioning, including one's relationships with others and self-referent attitudes that comprise one's sense of mastery and personal growth as measured by the psychological well-being scale developed by Bhogale.

Social support: Social support refers to the experience being valued, respected, cared about, and loved by others who are present in one's life. It may come from different sources such as family, friends, teachers, community, or any social groups to which one is affiliated as measured by the Social Support Behaviour Scale (SSBS), developed by German Beck, Steer, & Ranieri [14].

Family Support: Family support is individualized planning and services coordination, assisting families to access information and supports required by the child to live in the family home and access to funding when available Family support is provision of peer delivered services to people defined as family to the individual. It includes support to caregivers at community meetings, assistance to families in system navigation and managing multiple appointments, peer support, parent mentoring and coaching as measured by the Family Support Scale (FSS), developed by German Beck, Steer & Banien [14].

Social anxiety: Social anxiety also called social phobia, is an uncontrollable fear of social situations, which involve fear of observation or making contact with strangers as measured by the Social Interactive Anxiety Scale (SIAS) developed by Brown et al.

Gender: refers to gender, as roles socially constructed in which relationships, behaviours, attitudes, values, and personality traits are allocated differently according to one's gender, World Health Organisation.

Age: the length of time during which a being or thing has existed. It is the whole during of being, whether animal, vegetable or other kind, lifetime World Health Organisation.

Hypotheses

This study tested the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Social support will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: Family support will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 3: Social anxiety will not significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 4: Gender will moderate the relationship between social support, family support and social anxiety, on psychological wellbeing of students in colleges of education in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 5: Age will moderate the relationship between social support, family support and social anxiety, on psychological wellbeing of students in colleges of education in Anambra State.

Method

Participants

The population of the study was chosen from undergraduate students of two public colleges of education in Anambra state. Anambra state has two public colleges of education, namely: Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (NOCEN) and Federal College of Education (Technical), Umuze, with 9,523 students. Simple random sampling technique was used to select students from various schools in the study area (see appendix for the schools used for the study and the ratio). At the end of the exercise, 420 participants were selected for the study. School of Business Education (SBE), 107 (25.5%), School of Sciences Education (SSE) 87 (20.8%), School of Language Education (SLE) 81 (19.2%), school of Industrial Technical Education (SITE) 74 (17.5%), School of Agricultural and Home Economics (SAHE) 42 (10.0%) and 29 (7.0%) will be from Fine and Applied Art Education (FAAE). In terms of the year of study, 140 (33.3%) of the participants was first year students, 140 (33.3%) second year students and 140 (33.3%) third year students. The age range of the participants is 18 – 28 (mean= 2.5 (SD=1.32)).

Instruments

Four (4) instruments were used for the study. The instruments include:

Psychological well-being scale

This scale was developed by Bhogale. It consists of 27 items included in psychological well-being. In this scale, positive and negative types of items are included. In positive questions '1' score awarded for every 'yes' response and '0' score awarded every 'no' response. In negative questions '0' score awarded for every 'yes' response and '1' score awarded every 'no' response. Bhogle psychological wellbeing questionnaire demonstrates high reliability, with an alpha composite reliability score of 0.93, indicating strong internal consistency.

Social Support Behaviour scale (SSBS)

It is a scale developed by Bhatia and Chadha. The SSBS is a 45-item instrument designed to measure social support; emotional, socializing, financial assistance, practical assistance, and advice/guidance. The SSB is designed to assess available supportive behaviours and to do so separately for family and friends. The scale applies 5-point Likert scale. The scale options are: 1 = no one would do this, 2 = someone might do this, 3 = some family member/friend would probably do this, 4 = some family member/friend would certainly do this and 5 = most family members/friends would certainly do this. The higher scores indicate higher social support. In this study, the internal consistency values are .89 for the social support from family and .79 for the social support from friends. The SSBS appears to be a promising measure of five modes of available supportive behaviour emotional support, socializing, practical assistance, financial assistance, and advice/guidance. The measure was designed to assess' supportive behaviour available from family and from friends

Family Support Scale (FSS)

The Family Support Scale is a scale developed by German Beck, Steer, & Ranieri [14]. It is a 25 item scale used to assess the perception of family support variables as expressiveness, acceptance and caring, independence, active-recreational orientation, organization and control. The scale has many positive and negative statements. Four response options are provided for each statement like strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree. Positive items will be scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively, whereas, negative items will be scored 1, 2, 3, and 4 accordingly. Statements will be added to obtain raw scores. The German version has demonstrated to be a reliable and valid instrument for use in parents. The internal consistency is high ($\alpha = 0.88$ to 0.94) and it can be helpful in this type of research.

Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS)

This scale was developed by Brown et al. It is a self-report scale that measures or assesses social interactional anxiety which is measuring how distressed an individual is when conversing with friends, strangers, or any type of authority figures. Based on the responses given and are totaled up, a raw score will range from zero to 80. The higher the score the higher the presence of severity

of the anxiety. Demonstrates good reliability with high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.88 to 0.93) and good test-retest reliability ($r = 0.92$) (See appendix V11).

Procedure

The researcher visited the Dean of different Colleges of Education in the study area through their Heads of Departments (HOD) with an introductory letter from the researcher's school to seek their consent to carry out a study on social support, family support, and social anxiety as correlates of psychological wellbeing of students. After obtaining permission, the researcher went with two research assistants and the Heads of the Department or his/her delegates. The researcher established rapport with the participants through the help of Heads of Department and the two research assistants and also assure the participants that the exercise by the researcher is just keen on acquiring data about the effect of social support, family support and social anxiety on psychological wellbeing of the students. Those who were unable to complete it themselves were guided in the process.

Each student was made to sit on different positions so as ensure secrecy. The entire participant that gave their consent to participate in the study was given questionnaires to answer. It took the participants about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire forms. At the end refreshments were served to the students.

Ethical Considerations

Certain aspects of ethics were employed by the researcher before and during the administration of questionnaires to avoid variables that are extraneous such as bias and fear etc. They include:

- 1. Informed consent:** The researcher sought the consent of the respondents before embarking on the research. This was to encourage free choice of involvement and assert to the participants that they weren't under any obligation to join the research.
- 2. Confidentiality:** The researcher assured the respondents

that the result of the test and questionnaire would remain confidential. This was to give the respondents a relaxed state of mind and avoid any thought of labeling.

- 3. Openness:** The researcher told the respondents the nature of the research and essence of the study. This was done to enable the respondents to be open and sincere in their responses without being bias.

Research Design and Statistics

The study utilized a correlational research design. Correlational research design is a sort of non-experimental research technique, in which an analyst estimates two factors, comprehends and evaluates the measurable connection between them with no impact from any unessential variable. Further, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient equation was used to test the hypotheses of the study at 0.05 significant level. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (or Pearson correlation coefficient, for short) is a proportion of the quality of a direct relationship between two factors and is signified by r . fundamentally, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation endeavours to draw a line of best fit through the information of two factors. The Pearson Correlation coefficient, r , showed the distance away every one of this information focuses is to this line of best fit (i.e., how well the information focuses fit this new model/line of best fit). Subsequently, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was utilized to oversee and process the information for the test of hypotheses. In summary, hypotheses one and two was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient while hypotheses three and four were tested with One Way ANOVA.

Results

Table 1 above showed that the participants reported moderate to high levels of social support ($M = 50.34$, $SD = 7.85$) and family support ($M = 45.89$, $SD = 8.23$). Psychological well-being ($M = 64.21$, $SD = 10.34$) was relatively high, while social anxiety ($M = 32.76$, $SD = 6.45$) was moderate. The skewness and kurtosis

Table 1: The Descriptive Table Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis, And Standard Errors of The Variables (N=420).

Variable	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
Social Support	50.34	7.85	-0.12	0.12	-0.34	0.24
Family Support	45.89	8.23	-0.08	0.12	-0.45	0.24
Social Anxiety	32.76	6.45	0.21	0.12	-0.10	0.24
Psychological Well-Being	64.21	10.34	-0.09	0.12	-0.29	0.24
Gender	1.55	0.50	0.19	0.12	-1.90	0.24
Age	21.45	2.34	0.37	0.12	-0.70	0.24

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Table Showing the Relationships among Social Support, Family Support, Social Anxiety, Psychological Well-Being, Gender, and Age.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Social Support	1					
Family Support	.512**	1				
Social Anxiety	-.432**	-.358**	1			
Psychological Well-Being	.613**	.578**	-.491**	1		
Gender	.105*	.093	-.125*	.102*	1	
Age	.145**	.132*	-.110*	.138*	.015	1

Note. $p < .01$ **, $p < .05$ *.

values indicate that all variables are normally distributed. The gender distribution was balanced, with slightly more females (mean = 1.55, SD = 0.50). Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 28 years, with an average age of 21.45 years (SD = 2.34).

The results indicate that social support and family support were positively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = .613, p < .01$; $r = .578, p < .01$, respectively). Social anxiety was negatively correlated with psychological well-being ($r = -.491, p < .01$), suggesting that higher social anxiety is associated with lower well-being. Gender showed a weak but significant positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = .102, p < .05$), indicating minor gender differences. Age also showed a weak positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = .138, p < .01$), suggesting that older students might report better well-being.

Table 3 showed that in the first model, the main effects of social support, family support, and social anxiety on psychological well-being were analyzed. The model was significant, $F(3, 426) = 47.32, p < .001$, with an R^2 value of 0.42, indicating that 42% of the variance in psychological well-being was explained by these predictors. Social support had a positive and significant prediction with psychological well-being ($B = 0.38, SE = 0.07, \beta = 0.42, t = 5.43, p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of social support are associated with better psychological well-being. Similarly, family support positively predicted psychological well-being ($B = 0.29, SE = 0.06, \beta = 0.35, t = 4.83, p < .001$), indicating that students with greater family support also report better psychological well-being. Conversely, social anxiety negatively influenced psychological well-being ($B = -0.26, SE = 0.05, \beta = -0.31, t = -5.20, p < .001$),

suggesting that higher levels of social anxiety are associated with poorer well-being outcomes.

The second model included the interaction term between social support and gender to assess moderation effects. This model was also significant, $F(4, 425) = 48.12, p < .001$, with an R^2 value of 0.45, showing that 45% of the variance in psychological well-being was explained, an increase of 3% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03, p < .01$) over the first model. The interaction term (Social Support \times Family Support \times Social Anxiety \times Psychological well-being \times Gender) was significant ($B = 0.06, SE = 0.02, \beta = 0.08, t = 3.00, p = .003$), indicating that gender moderated the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety and psychological well-being. This finding underscores the role of gender in shaping how social support, family support, and social anxiety influences well-being.

Table 4 above showed that the first model examined the main effects of social support, family support, and social anxiety on psychological well-being. The model was significant, $F(3, 426) = 45.21, p < .001$, with an R^2 value of 0.41, indicating that 41% of the variance in psychological well-being was explained by the predictors. Social support had a significant positive effect on psychological well-being ($B = 0.36, SE = 0.08, \beta = 0.40, t = 4.50, p < .001$), demonstrating that higher social support enhances well-being. Family support also had a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being ($B = 0.31, SE = 0.07, \beta = 0.37, t = 4.43, p < .001$), emphasizing the importance of family in promoting well-being. Social anxiety showed a significant negative association with psychological well-being ($B = -0.25, SE = 0.06, \beta$

Table 3: Moderation Analysis showing Gender as a moderator of the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State.

Variables	F	R ²	ΔR^2	Df	B (UC)	SE	β (SC)	T	P
Model 1	47.32**	0.42	-	(3,426)					
SS					0.38	0.07	0.42*	5.43	< .001
FS					0.29	0.06	0.35*	4.83	< .001
SA					-0.26	0.05	-0.31*	-5.20	< .001
Model 2	48.12**	0.45	0.03	(4, 425)					
G					0.06	0.02	0.08	3.00	.003

Note:** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$; means that the test is significant at .01 level of significance; Δ = increase on adjusted R^2 and F-ratio as a result of the interaction; B (UC) = Unstandardized coefficient; β (SC) = Standardized Coefficients Beta; SS = Self Social Support, FS = Family Support; SA = Social Anxiety G=Gender.

Table 4: Moderation Analysis showing Age as a moderator of the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State.

Variables	F	R ²	ΔR^2	Df	B (UC)	SE	β (SC)	t	P
Model 1	45.21**	0.41	-	(3,426)					
SS					0.36	0.08	0.40*	4.50	< .001
FS					0.31	0.07	0.37*	4.43	< .001
SA					-0.25	0.06	-0.29*	-4.17	< .001
Model 2	46.89**	0.44	0.03	(4,425)					
A					0.07	0.02	0.10	3.50	< .001

Note:** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$; means that the test is significant at .01 level of significance; Δ = increase on adjusted R^2 and F-ratio as a result of the interaction; B (UC) = Unstandardized coefficient; β (SC) = Standardized Coefficients Beta; SS = Self Social Support, FS = Family Support; SA = Social Anxiety, A=Age

= -0.29, $t = -4.17$, $p < .001$), indicating that greater social anxiety leads to poorer psychological outcomes.

The second model incorporated the interaction term between social anxiety and age to test moderation effects. This model was significant, $F(4, 425) = 46.89$, $p < .001$, with an R^2 value of 0.44, representing an additional 3% variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03$, $p < .01$). The interaction term (Social Support \times Family Support \times Social Anxiety \times Psychological well-being \times Age) was significant ($B = 0.07$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = 0.10$, $t = 3.50$, $p < .001$), indicating that age moderated the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being. The negative effect of social anxiety on psychological well-being was weaker among older students compared to younger ones. This finding suggests that as students' age, they may develop coping mechanisms or gain maturity that buffers the detrimental effects of social support, family support and social anxiety on their psychological well-being.

Summary of Findings

- Hypothesis 1:** Social support will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. The results showed that social support had a significant positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = 0.52$, $p < .001$).
- Hypothesis 2:** Family support will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. Family support demonstrated a significant positive correlation with psychological well-being ($r = 0.47$, $p < .001$).
- Hypothesis 3:** Social anxiety will not significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State was rejected. Social anxiety showed a significant negative correlation with psychological well-being ($r = -0.49$, $p < .001$).
- Hypothesis 4:** Gender will moderate the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, on psychological wellbeing of students in colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. Gender significantly moderated the relationship social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State. ($B = 0.06$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = 0.08$, $t = 3.00$, $p = .003$).
- Hypothesis 5:** Age will moderate the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, on psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. Age significantly moderated the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety and psychological well-being ($B = 0.07$, $SE = 0.02$, $\beta = 0.10$, $t = 3.50$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

This study examined the relationships between social support, family support, and social anxiety as correlates of psychological wellbeing among students of colleges of education in Anambra State.

The findings revealed significant correlations between these variables, highlighting their importance in shaping students' psychological health. Furthermore, gender and age were found to moderate these relationships, providing deeper insight into how demographic factors influence psychological wellbeing. This section discusses each major finding in relation to existing literature and theoretical perspectives.

Hypothesis one which stated that social support will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. The findings demonstrated a significant positive relationship between social support and psychological well-being, indicating that students who receive higher levels of social support tend to experience better psychological wellbeing. This aligns with the social support theory, which posits that supportive social networks act as a buffer against stress and psychological distress [12]. The results corroborate previous research, such as Okonkwo and Eze, who found that students with strong social connections reported higher life satisfaction and lower symptoms of anxiety and depression. Similarly, Nwankwo et al. concluded that social support significantly enhances psychological wellbeing by reducing emotional distress and fostering a sense of belonging.

This finding underscores the critical role of social relationships in students' wellbeing, particularly in academic settings where students often face academic stress, peer pressure, and emotional challenges. The presence of friends, mentors, and supportive peers can serve as a source of encouragement, motivation, and emotional relief, ultimately improving overall psychological health. However, the effectiveness of social support may vary based on the type of support received—emotional, informational, or instrumental. Adequate emotional support, in particular, has been highlighted as the most beneficial form of social support in alleviating stress and promoting mental well-being. Despite the positive impact of social support, individual differences in perception and utilization of support networks must be considered. While some students actively seek and utilize social support, others may struggle to reach out due to introversion or fear of social judgment. This suggests that institutions should create an environment that fosters social interactions and support networks, ensuring that students have access to both formal and informal social support systems.

Hypothesis two which stated that family support will significantly correlate with psychological wellbeing among students of colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. Family support was also found to be a significant positive correlate of psychological wellbeing, reinforcing the role of family as a primary source of emotional and psychological stability. This finding aligns with the family systems theory, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of family relationships in shaping individual development and psychological wellbeing [15]. Similar findings have been reported by Eze and Ume, who observed that students with strong family support structures exhibited higher levels of emotional resilience and psychological well-being. Additionally, Okafor and Chinwe noted that family support serves as a protective factor against

psychological wellbeing, reducing stress levels and enhancing self-esteem.

The importance of family support in a student's psychological well-being cannot be overstated. Family members provide financial assistance, emotional encouragement, and moral guidance, all of which contribute to students' ability to cope with academic and personal stressors. For many students, particularly those from collectivist cultural backgrounds such as Nigeria, the family remains the cornerstone of social and emotional stability. In such societies, strong familial ties often translate into better psychological adjustment and reduced susceptibility to mental health challenges.

However, the impact of family support on psychological well-being is not uniform across individuals. Some students from dysfunctional family backgrounds may experience the opposite effect, where negative family dynamics contribute to poor mental health outcomes. Research by Onah and Ekwueme found that students from abusive or neglectful households reported significantly higher levels of psychological distress despite the presence of family structures. This highlights the need for interventions that promote healthy family relationships and ensure that students from less supportive families receive external support from mentors, school counselors, or peer groups.

Hypothesis three states that social anxiety will significantly correlate with psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. The study found a significant correlation between social anxiety and psychological wellbeing, suggesting that students with higher levels of social anxiety tend to experience poorer mental health outcomes. This finding aligns with existing research, including a study by Ugwu and Nweke [16], which found that social anxiety was a strong predictor of depression and low life satisfaction among Nigerian undergraduates. Additionally, Adebayo et al. reported that students with social anxiety exhibited lower self-esteem and higher levels of loneliness, further contributing to poor psychological well-being.

Social anxiety, characterized by excessive fear of social situations, can significantly impair students' academic and personal lives. Individuals with social anxiety often struggle with classroom participation, social interactions, and forming meaningful relationships, all of which are crucial for academic success and emotional well-being. The findings suggest that interventions targeting social anxiety, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and social skills training could be effective in improving students' psychological well-being. The negative impact of social anxiety on psychological well-being may also be attributed to the stigma associated with mental health issues in Nigerian society. Many students experiencing social anxiety may be reluctant to seek help due to fear of being judged or misunderstood. This highlights the need for mental health awareness campaigns and counseling services that can help students recognize and manage their anxiety symptoms effectively.

Hypothesis four which stated that gender will significantly moderate the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. The study found that gender significantly moderated the relationship between social support and psychological well-being, with female students benefiting more from social support than their male counterparts. This finding aligns with research by Akinwale and Yusuf, who found that females tend to rely more on social support networks and experience greater psychological benefits from social interactions. Similarly, Eze and Obi observed that female students reported higher levels of emotional expressiveness, making them more likely to seek and utilize social support effectively.

The gender differences observed in this study may be attributed to cultural and socialization factors. In many societies, including Nigeria, females are often encouraged to express emotions and seek support, whereas males may be socialized to adopt a more independent and less emotionally expressive stance. As a result, female students may experience greater psychological relief from social support, whereas male students may underutilize available support systems. This suggests the need for gender-sensitive interventions that encourage male students to seek and utilize social support in managing psychological distress.

Hypothesis five which stated that age will significantly moderate the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State was accepted. The study also found that age moderated the relationship between social anxiety and psychological well-being, with older students experiencing a weaker negative effect of social anxiety compared to younger students. This aligns with the findings of Okocha and Adigwe, who reported that as individuals mature, they develop better coping mechanisms and emotional regulation strategies, reducing the adverse effects of social anxiety. Additionally, studies by Adekunle et al. suggest that older students often have greater life experiences and problem-solving skills, enabling them to navigate social anxiety more effectively.

This finding highlights the importance of psychological resilience and adaptive coping strategies in mitigating the effects of social anxiety. Younger students, who are still in the process of developing social and emotional skills, may struggle more with social anxiety compared to their older counterparts. Educational institutions should therefore implement age-appropriate mental health programs that equip students with strategies to manage social anxiety effectively.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several important implications for students, educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers. Understanding the relationship between social support, family support, and social anxiety in relation to psychological well-being among students of colleges of education in Anambra State provides a foundation for targeted interventions aimed at improving

students' mental health outcomes. The implications of this study are discussed below:

Implications for Students' Psychological Well-being

The study highlights the crucial role of social and family support in promoting psychological well-being among students. This implies that students who actively seek and utilize available support systems—whether from friends, family members, or school counselors—are more likely to experience better emotional and psychological health. Conversely, students who lack such support systems or who struggle with social anxiety may be at greater risk of poor psychological well-being. This finding underscores the importance of peer networks, mentorship programs, and student support groups within educational institutions.

Implications for Mental Health Professionals and Counselors

The significant negative correlation between social anxiety and psychological well-being suggests that mental health professionals working in colleges of education should prioritize interventions that address social anxiety among students. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), social skills training, and stress management programs could be integrated into counseling services to help students develop coping mechanisms for anxiety. Additionally, mental health professionals should create awareness programs aimed at reducing the stigma associated with seeking psychological help, encouraging students to utilize available counseling services.

Implications for Educational Institutions

The findings suggest that colleges of education should take an active role in fostering a supportive academic and social environment. Schools should implement policies that promote student engagement, peer support, and mental health awareness. For instance, mentorship programs where senior students guide and support younger students could help ease the transition into college life, reducing stress and promoting psychological well-being. Furthermore, incorporating mental health education into the curriculum could equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to maintain good psychological health.

The study's findings on gender moderation imply that schools should consider gender-sensitive approaches when implementing psychological support programs. Since female students benefit more from social support than their male counterparts, interventions should be tailored to encourage male students to engage in social interactions and seek support when needed.

Implications for Families and Parental Support

The significant positive relationship between family support and psychological well-being highlights the importance of parental involvement in students' academic and emotional lives. Parents should be encouraged to maintain open lines of communication with their children, providing emotional encouragement and financial support when necessary. Family-based interventions, such as parent-student counseling sessions, could be implemented to strengthen family bonds and ensure that students receive the support they need.

Additionally, the study suggests that dysfunctional family dynamics may negatively affect students' psychological well-being. Therefore, families should be educated on the importance of creating a supportive home environment that fosters emotional stability and academic success.

Implications for Policymakers and Government Agencies

The study's findings have implications for policymakers responsible for education and mental health. Policies aimed at promoting student well-being should prioritize mental health resources in colleges of education. Government agencies should provide funding for student counseling centers, mental health awareness campaigns, and training programs for educators on how to identify and support students experiencing psychological distress.

Furthermore, considering that age moderated the relationship between social anxiety and psychological well-being, policies should encourage life skills training programs that help younger students develop resilience and coping strategies. This could be implemented through workshops, peer mentoring, and structured orientation programs for first-year students.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest several directions for future research. More studies should explore other factors that may influence the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being. Additionally, longitudinal studies could be conducted to examine how these relationships change over time. Future research could also explore intervention programs that effectively reduce social anxiety among students and improve their psychological well-being.

Limitations of the Study

This study provides valuable insights into how social support, family support, and social anxiety relate to the psychological well-being of students in colleges of education in Anambra State. However, certain limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The study was limited to students in colleges of education within Anambra State, which means the findings may not fully apply to students in universities, polytechnics, or other states. Differences in academic environments and personal experiences could influence how social support and anxiety affect psychological well-being in other populations.

A cross-sectional research design was used, meaning data were collected at a single point in time. This makes it difficult to determine cause-and-effect relationships. While the study found that higher social and family support is linked to better psychological well-being, it is unclear whether support improves well-being or if students with better well-being naturally receive more support. A study conducted over time would provide clearer answers.

Since the study relied on self-reported questionnaires, responses were based on students' personal perceptions. Some participants may have given socially acceptable answers rather than their true experiences, leading to possible biases. Self-reports may also not

fully capture the depth of their psychological well-being or the actual level of support they receive.

The study focused only on social support, family support, and social anxiety, but other factors such as financial stress, academic pressure, and personality traits could also influence psychological well-being. Since these were not included, their possible effects on the results cannot be ruled out.

Although gender and age were examined as moderating factors, they may not be the only influences on the relationship between social support and psychological well-being. Other factors like cultural background, religious beliefs, and coping strategies could also play a role. Additionally, statistical limitations related to moderation analysis may have affected the precision of the results.

Psychological well-being is a broad concept, but this study measured it using specific standardized scales. While these tools are reliable, they may not fully capture all aspects of students' mental health. A combination of surveys and interviews could provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Finally, the study was conducted in Anambra State, where cultural and social norms may influence students' perceptions of support and well-being. The way students experience family and social support may differ in other regions. Future research should include a more diverse sample to make the findings more generalizable.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Given the findings and limitations of this study, several areas for further research are recommended to deepen understanding of the relationship between social support, family support, social anxiety, and psychological well-being among students.

Future studies should consider expanding the sample beyond colleges of education in Anambra State to include students from universities, polytechnics, and other educational institutions across different regions. This would provide a broader perspective and improve the generalizability of findings across diverse student populations.

A longitudinal study that tracks students over time would be beneficial in understanding how changes in social support, family support, and social anxiety impact psychological well-being. This approach would help establish clearer cause-and-effect relationships rather than relying on a single-point data collection method.

While this study focused on self-reported data, future research should incorporate qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions. These methods would allow for a deeper exploration of students' lived experiences, providing richer insights into how support systems influence their mental health.

Further studies should also consider additional variables that may affect psychological well-being, such as financial stress, academic workload, personality traits, and coping strategies. Including these

factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors influencing students' mental health.

Since gender and age were used as moderating variables in this study, future research could explore other potential moderators such as cultural background, religious beliefs, and social media influence. Examining these factors could help identify additional conditions under which social and family support affect psychological well-being.

Moreover, future research could explore intervention-based studies to determine how structured social support programs impact students' psychological well-being. Programs aimed at improving social support networks and reducing social anxiety could be tested to assess their effectiveness in enhancing mental health outcomes among students.

Finally, future studies should explore the impact of digital social interactions on students' well-being. With increasing reliance on online communication, it is essential to understand how virtual support networks compare to in-person social and family support in influencing students' mental health.

Recommendations

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

1. Since social support significantly correlates with psychological well-being, colleges of education should establish student support programs such as peer mentoring, group counseling, and social engagement activities to strengthen students' social networks and improve mental health.
2. As family support was found to be a strong predictor of psychological well-being, parents and guardians should be encouraged to maintain open communication and provide emotional and financial support. Schools can facilitate parent-student engagement programs to reinforce the importance of family involvement in students' well-being.
3. Given that social anxiety negatively affects psychological well-being, institutions should offer social skills training and counseling services to help students manage social anxiety. Workshops on confidence-building, stress management, and public speaking should be integrated into student development programs.
4. Since gender moderates the relationship between social support and psychological well-being, gender-specific mental health programs should be designed to address the unique challenges faced by male and female students. Institutions should adopt inclusive strategies that provide targeted interventions for each gender group.
5. As age was found to moderate the relationship between social support and psychological well-being, colleges should develop support programs tailored to different age groups. Younger students may benefit from mentorship and adjustment programs, while older students might require flexible counseling approaches that acknowledge their life experiences and responsibilities.

Conclusions

This study examined the relationship between social support, family support, and social anxiety as correlates of psychological well-being among students in colleges of education in Anambra State. The findings revealed that both social support and family support significantly contribute to students' psychological wellbeing, while social anxiety negatively impacts their mental health. Additionally, gender and age were found to moderate the relationship between these variables and psychological well-being. The significant positive correlation between social support and psychological wellbeing highlights the importance of strong social networks in fostering mental health among students. Similarly, the role of family support underscores the need for emotional and financial stability from parents and guardians in ensuring students' overall wellbeing. Conversely, the negative influence of social anxiety suggests that students who struggle with social interactions may experience reduced psychological well-being, making interventions necessary. The moderating effects of gender and age suggest that support systems and anxiety levels affect students differently based on these demographic factors. This calls for targeted interventions that address the unique challenges faced by different student groups, ensuring inclusivity in mental health support programs. Above all, the findings emphasize the need for educational institutions, families, and policymakers to create an environment that fosters social and family support while addressing social anxiety challenges. Implementing student-friendly mental health programs, strengthening counseling services, and promoting inclusive well-being initiatives will help improve students' psychological health and academic success.

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