

# Psychosocial Factors as Correlate of Learning Behaviours of Undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined psychosocial factors as correlate of learning behaviours among undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. The research focused on key psychosocial variables, as motivation, self-esteem, peer linkage, and teacher-student relationship, and their influence on students' learning behaviours as attention and concentration, participation, study habits, self-discipline, curiosity, and collaboration. The researcher observed that psychosocial factors significantly influence students' learning behaviours. Specifically, motivation and self-esteem were noted to positively enhance students' academic engagement, participation, and persistence, while peer linkage and teacher-student relationships played both supportive and inhibitory roles depending on their nature. The study also highlighted those negative psychosocial conditions, as low self-esteem, poor motivation, and unhealthy peer influence, contribute to poor study habits, lack of concentration, and reduced academic performance. Based on these findings, the study concludes that psychosocial factors are strong determinants of learning behaviours among undergraduates. It therefore recommends the provision of effective counselling services, improved teacher-student interaction, and the promotion of positive peer relationships to enhance students' academic outcomes. The study contributes to existing literature by providing a holistic understanding of how psychological and social factors interact to influence learning behaviours in higher education.

**Key Words:** Psychosocial, Learning Behaviours, Undergraduates, Southwest, Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of students' learning behaviours has continued to attract considerable attention in educational research, particularly within the context of higher education where academic demands are increasingly complex and competitive. Learning behaviours refer to the observable patterns of actions, attitudes, and habits that students exhibit in the process of acquiring knowledge. These behaviours, which include attention and concentration, participation, study habits, self-discipline, curiosity, and collaboration, play a crucial role in determining academic success. However, it has become evident that students' academic outcomes are not solely dependent on cognitive ability or intellectual capacity, but are also significantly influenced by a range of psychosocial factors that shape how they engage with learning tasks.

Psychosocial factors encompass the interaction between psychological characteristics and social environmental influences that affect an individual's behaviour. In the context of undergraduate education, these factors include elements such as motivation, self-esteem, peer linkage, and teacher-student relationships. These variables collectively influence how students think, feel, and behave within the academic environment. For instance, a student's level of motivation can determine the effort and persistence they invest in their studies, while self-esteem influences their confidence in participating in academic activities. Similarly, peer interactions can either encourage or discourage positive study behaviours, and the quality of the relationship between students and lecturers can affect students' level of engagement and academic commitment.

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the learning behaviours of undergraduates in Nigerian universities, particularly in the Southwest region. Despite increased access to higher education, many students

struggle with poor study habits, lack of concentration, low participation in class activities, and inadequate academic engagement. These challenges are often manifested in poor academic performance, high rates of academic probation, and, in some cases, withdrawal from academic programmes. While several studies have examined structural and institutional factors such as inadequate facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and curriculum issues, there is a need to pay closer attention to the psychosocial dimensions that influence students' learning behaviours.

Southwest Nigeria, which comprises states such as Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti, is home to a large number of universities, including federal, state, and private institutions. The region is known for its relatively high level of educational development; however, students in these institutions are not immune to psychosocial challenges. Economic pressures, family expectations, societal values, and peer group dynamics all interact to shape students' academic experiences. For example, financial difficulties may affect students' motivation and concentration, while social distractions and peer pressure may influence their study habits and participation in academic activities. Additionally, the nature of teacher-student relationships in many universities, often characterized by large class sizes and limited interaction, may further impact students' engagement and willingness to learn.

Motivation is one of the most critical psychosocial factors influencing learning behaviour. It drives students to initiate and sustain academic activities, determine their level of effort, and persist despite challenges. Students who are highly motivated are more likely to demonstrate positive learning behaviours such as regular attendance, active participation, and effective study habits. In contrast, low motivation can lead to disengagement, procrastination, and poor academic outcomes. Similarly, self-esteem plays a vital role in shaping students' perceptions of their abilities and their confidence in handling academic tasks. Students with high self-esteem are more likely to take initiative, participate actively, and cope effectively with academic challenges, while those with low self-esteem may withdraw and exhibit negative learning behaviours.

Peer linkage is another important factor that cannot be overlooked. The university environment provides a social setting where students interact closely with their peers, forming relationships that can significantly influence their attitudes and behaviours. Positive peer influence can foster collaborative learning, encourage discipline, and enhance academic performance. On the other hand, negative peer influence can lead to poor study habits, absenteeism, and reduced academic focus. Furthermore, the teacher-student relationship plays a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment. When students perceive their lecturers as supportive, approachable, and fair, they are more likely to engage actively in learning activities. Conversely, poor relationships characterized by lack of communication or perceived bias can hinder students' participation and motivation.

Given the importance of these psychosocial factors, it becomes necessary to examine how they relate to students' learning behaviours. Understanding these relationships can provide valuable insights into the underlying causes of poor academic engagement among undergraduates and inform the development of effective interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes. By identifying the key psychosocial determinants of learning behaviour, educators, counsellors, and policymakers can design strategies that promote positive academic behaviours, enhance students' well-being, and ultimately improve academic performance.

Building on the foregoing, it is important to recognize that the university environment represents a critical stage in the developmental life of young adults, where individuals are expected to assume greater responsibility for their learning and personal growth. At this level, students are no longer passively dependent on structured guidance as in secondary education; rather, they are required to demonstrate autonomy, initiative, and self-regulation in managing their academic activities. This transition, however, is often challenging, as many undergraduates struggle to adapt to the demands of independent learning. Consequently, their ability to develop and sustain effective learning behaviours becomes largely dependent on the psychosocial conditions surrounding them.

Learning behaviours such as attention and concentration are particularly vulnerable to psychosocial influences. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancement and increased digital engagement, students are frequently exposed to distractions that compete for their attention. Social media, online entertainment, and peer interactions can significantly reduce students' ability to focus during lectures or personal study time. In such

situations, motivation and self-discipline become essential in helping students maintain concentration and remain committed to their academic goals. Without adequate motivational drive and emotional regulation, students may find it difficult to sustain the level of attention required for meaningful learning.

Participation in academic activities is another important dimension of learning behaviour that is closely tied to psychosocial factors. Active participation requires not only cognitive engagement but also a certain level of confidence and social comfort. Students with high self-esteem are more likely to contribute to discussions, ask questions, and interact freely with lecturers and peers. In contrast, those with low self-esteem may experience anxiety or fear of embarrassment, leading to passive behaviour in the classroom. Additionally, the nature of peer relationships can either facilitate or hinder participation. Supportive peers can encourage involvement and collaboration, while negative or overly competitive peer environments may discourage students from expressing themselves.

Furthermore, study habits and self-discipline are critical for academic success, yet they are heavily influenced by both psychological and social factors. Effective study habits require planning, organization, and consistency, all of which are linked to a student's level of motivation and self-control. Students who lack self-discipline may struggle with procrastination, poor time management, and inconsistent study routines. At the same time, peer influence can shape study behaviours either positively, through group study and shared academic goals, or negatively, through distractions and unproductive activities. The interaction between these factors highlights the complex nature of learning behaviours and the need to consider multiple influences simultaneously.

Curiosity and collaboration, as dimensions of learning behaviour, also depend significantly on the psychosocial environment. Curiosity drives students to explore knowledge beyond the minimum academic requirements, fostering deeper understanding and critical thinking. However, this intrinsic desire to learn can be either nurtured or suppressed depending on the learning environment. Lecturers who encourage inquiry, provide constructive feedback, and create an open atmosphere for discussion are more likely to stimulate students' curiosity. Similarly, collaboration thrives in environments where students feel socially connected and supported. Positive peer linkage enhances teamwork, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving, all of which contribute to improved learning outcomes.

It is also important to consider the broader socio-cultural context within which undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria operate. Cultural expectations, societal norms, and family pressures can significantly influence students' psychological states and social interactions. For instance, expectations of academic success from parents and guardians may serve as a source of motivation for some students, while for others, it may create stress and anxiety that negatively affect their learning behaviours. Economic challenges, which are prevalent in many parts of Nigeria, can further complicate students' academic experiences by affecting their access to learning resources and their overall well-being.

Moreover, institutional factors within universities in Southwest Nigeria, such as large class sizes, limited lecturer-student interaction, and inadequate academic support services, can interact with psychosocial variables to influence learning behaviours. In many cases, students may feel disconnected from their lecturers, which reduces opportunities for mentorship and academic guidance. This can weaken the teacher-student relationship and limit its positive impact on students' motivation and engagement. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of how psychosocial factors operate within specific educational contexts.

In view of these considerations, examining psychosocial factors as correlates of learning behaviours among undergraduates is essential for developing effective educational interventions. Such an investigation will not only identify the key factors influencing students' academic engagement but also provide a basis for designing counselling programmes, institutional policies, and teaching strategies that support positive learning behaviours. By focusing on both the psychological and social dimensions of learning, this study aims to contribute to a more holistic understanding of student development in higher education.

## Psychosocial Factors of Undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria

Psychosocial factors refer to the combined influence of psychological processes and social conditions on an individual's behaviour, emotions, attitudes, and overall functioning. Among undergraduates, these factors are particularly important because they shape how students adapt to university life, manage academic demands, and interact within their social and educational environments. In Southwest Nigeria, psychosocial factors are especially significant due to the region's unique socio-cultural background, economic realities, and the structure of its higher education system. These factors do not operate in isolation; rather, they interact in complex ways to influence students' academic engagement, well-being, and overall development.

Southwest Nigeria, which includes Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti States, is widely regarded as a major educational hub in the country. The region hosts numerous higher institutions that attract students from diverse cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. While this diversity provides opportunities for exposure and growth, it also presents challenges as students must navigate differences in values, expectations, and lifestyles. The transition into university life itself is a critical developmental stage that requires students to adjust to independence, make personal decisions, and take responsibility for their academic progress. This adjustment process is often influenced by various psychosocial factors that either support or hinder students' ability to cope effectively.

One of the most influential psychosocial factors among undergraduates is motivation. Motivation determines the extent to which students are willing to initiate and sustain academic efforts. It is shaped by both internal drives, such as personal ambition and interest in a chosen field, and external influences, such as parental expectations, societal pressure, and the desire for future career success. In Southwest Nigeria, economic challenges such as the high cost of education and living expenses can affect students' motivation. Some students may be forced to engage in part-time work or entrepreneurial activities to support themselves, which can divide their attention and reduce their academic focus. Conversely, strong aspirations and support systems can enhance motivation and encourage persistence in academic tasks.

Self-esteem is another important psychosocial factor that significantly influences students' academic and social behaviour. It refers to how individuals perceive their own worth and abilities. Students with high self-esteem tend to exhibit confidence in their academic capabilities, participate actively in classroom activities, and cope better with academic challenges. On the other hand, students with low self-esteem may experience feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, and anxiety, which can lead to withdrawal from academic and social interactions. In a competitive academic environment such as that found in many universities in Southwest Nigeria, constant comparison with peers and pressure to perform well can either strengthen or weaken students' self-esteem.

Peer linkage, also play a central role in shaping the psychosocial experiences of undergraduates. University life provides a platform for students to form friendships and social networks that can influence their attitudes and behaviours. Positive peer relationships can foster academic collaboration, provide emotional support, and encourage responsible behaviour. For example, students who belong to serious study groups are more likely to develop effective study habits and remain academically focused. However, peer influence can also be negative, particularly when students associate with individuals who prioritize social activities over academics or engage in risky behaviours. The need for acceptance and belonging may lead some students to adopt behaviours that negatively affect their academic performance.

The teacher-student relationship is another crucial psychosocial factor that impacts students' academic experiences. This relationship involves the level of communication, support, and mutual respect between lecturers and students. A positive teacher-student relationship creates a conducive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions, expressing their ideas, and seeking academic assistance. Such relationships enhance students' confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning. However, in many universities in Southwest Nigeria, factors such as large class sizes and limited contact hours reduce opportunities for meaningful interaction between lecturers and students. This can create a sense of detachment and limit the potential benefits of this relationship.

Emotional well-being is equally significant in understanding the psychosocial conditions of undergraduates. Many students experience various forms of stress related to academic workload, financial difficulties, social relationships, and future career uncertainties. The pressure to succeed, combined with personal and environmental challenges, can lead to anxiety, depression, and emotional instability. These emotional challenges can negatively affect students' concentration, motivation, and ability to perform academically. The availability of support systems such as counselling services, peer support groups, and mentoring programmes is therefore essential in helping students manage stress and maintain emotional balance.

Family background and socio-economic status also contribute significantly to students' psychosocial experiences. Students from stable and supportive family environments often benefit from emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and guidance, which can positively influence their academic engagement. In contrast, those from less privileged backgrounds may face financial hardship, family responsibilities, and limited access to educational resources. These challenges can create stress and reduce their ability to focus on their studies. Additionally, family expectations can either motivate students to strive for success or place undue pressure on them, affecting their psychological well-being.

Cultural and societal influences in Southwest Nigeria further shape students' psychosocial experiences. Nigerian society places a high value on academic achievement and professional success, which often translates into high expectations for students. While these expectations can serve as a source of motivation, they can also lead to stress and fear of failure. Cultural values related to respect, discipline, and social status may also influence how students interact with lecturers and peers, as well as how they approach their studies.

Institutional factors within universities also interact with psychosocial variables to influence students' behaviour. Challenges such as overcrowded lecture halls, inadequate facilities, irregular academic calendars, and limited access to learning resources can create a stressful learning environment. In addition, the increasing use of digital technology and social media presents both opportunities and challenges. While technology enhances access to information and learning materials, it also introduces distractions that can negatively affect students' attention and study habits.

In conclusion, psychosocial factors play a central role in shaping the experiences and behaviours of undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. These factors, including motivation, self-esteem, peer relationships, teacher-student interaction, emotional well-being, family background, and socio-economic conditions, interact in complex ways to influence students' academic engagement and overall development. Understanding these factors is essential for addressing the challenges faced by undergraduates and for developing effective strategies to enhance their academic performance and well-being. A holistic approach involving educational institutions, lecturers, parents, and policymakers is necessary to create supportive environments that promote positive psychosocial development and academic success among students.

## **Motivation**

Motivation is a central psychological construct that explains why students initiate, sustain, and direct their learning behaviours toward achieving academic goals. It refers to the inner drive or external influence that stimulates a student's willingness to engage in learning activities. In the context of undergraduate education, motivation determines not only whether a student studies, but also how much effort they invest, how long they persist in the face of difficulties, and how committed they are to achieving academic success.

Motivation can broadly be understood from two major dimensions: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual and is driven by personal interest, curiosity, or the inherent satisfaction derived from learning. A student who is intrinsically motivated studies because they genuinely enjoy acquiring knowledge or mastering a subject. This type of motivation is often associated with deeper learning, critical thinking, and long-term retention of knowledge. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors such as grades, rewards, recognition, parental expectations, or fear of failure. While extrinsic motivation can effectively prompt students to engage in academic tasks, it may not always lead to sustained interest or deep understanding if the external incentives are removed.

In addition to these types, motivation involves several important components that shape learning behaviour. One of these is goal orientation, which refers to the reasons or purposes students have for engaging in learning. Students with strong academic goals are more likely to be focused and committed to their studies. Another component is effort, which reflects the amount of energy a student is willing to invest in academic work. Closely related to effort is persistence, which is the ability to continue working despite challenges, setbacks, or academic difficulties. Students who are highly motivated tend to demonstrate high levels of persistence, often overcoming obstacles that might discourage less motivated individuals.

Motivation significantly influences various aspects of learning behaviour. A motivated undergraduate is more likely to attend lectures regularly, participate actively in classroom discussions, complete assignments on time, and adopt effective study strategies. Such students often display a proactive approach to learning, seeking clarification when necessary and making use of available academic resources. In contrast, students with low motivation may exhibit poor attendance, lack of concentration, procrastination, and minimal engagement in academic activities. This can ultimately lead to poor academic performance and reduced educational attainment.

Furthermore, motivation is not static; it can be influenced by several environmental and personal factors. For instance, supportive teaching methods, positive feedback from lecturers, and a conducive learning environment can enhance students' motivation. Similarly, factors such as self-esteem, peer influence, and family background also play a role in shaping motivational levels. In the context of Southwest Nigeria, issues such as economic challenges, academic pressure, and societal expectations may either strengthen or weaken students' motivation depending on how they are managed.

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is a vital psychosocial factor that influences how undergraduates perceive themselves and their academic abilities. It refers to an individual's overall sense of self-worth, value, and confidence in their capacity to succeed. Within the academic environment, self-esteem shapes how students approach learning tasks, interact with others, and respond to success or failure. Students with high self-esteem tend to believe in their intellectual competence and are more willing to participate in class discussions, express their opinions, and take on challenging academic tasks. They are also more resilient when faced with setbacks, viewing failure as an opportunity to improve rather than as a reflection of inadequacy. In contrast, students with low self-esteem often struggle with self-doubt, fear of negative evaluation, and anxiety. Such students may avoid participation, hesitate to ask questions, and withdraw from academic activities due to a lack of confidence. This can negatively affect their learning behaviours, as they may be less engaged, less persistent, and more prone to academic difficulties. Therefore, self-esteem plays a crucial role in determining students' level of involvement, confidence, and overall academic adjustment.

### **Peer linkage**

Peer linkage, on the other hand, refers to the social connections and relationships that exist among students within the university setting. It encompasses the ways in which students interact with, influence, and support one another academically and socially. In the undergraduate environment, peers often serve as an important source of companionship, validation, and shared experiences. Through peer interactions, students exchange ideas, form study groups, collaborate on assignments, and provide emotional encouragement. Positive peer linkage can significantly enhance learning behaviours by fostering a supportive academic atmosphere where students motivate one another to succeed. It can promote effective study habits, increase engagement in academic activities, and encourage discipline. However, peer influence can also be negative, particularly when students associate with peers who prioritize non-academic activities or engage in behaviours that distract from learning. In such cases, peer pressure may lead to poor study habits, absenteeism, and reduced academic focus. Thus, the nature and quality of peer relationships play a decisive role in shaping students' attitudes toward learning and their overall academic behaviour.

## **Teacher-Student Relationship**

The teacher-student relationship is another critical psychosocial factor that affects students' learning experiences and behaviours. This relationship involves the level of interaction, communication, mutual respect, and emotional connection between lecturers and students. A positive teacher-student relationship is characterized by approachability, support, fairness, and effective communication. When students perceive their lecturers as supportive and understanding, they are more likely to feel comfortable participating in class, asking questions, and seeking clarification when needed. This sense of psychological safety enhances their confidence and motivation, leading to more active engagement in learning. Additionally, lecturers who provide constructive feedback and show genuine interest in students' progress can inspire greater academic commitment and effort. Conversely, a negative teacher-student relationship, marked by poor communication, perceived bias, or intimidation, can hinder students' willingness to engage in academic activities. Students may become withdrawn, lose interest in the subject, or develop negative attitudes toward learning. In many university contexts, especially where class sizes are large, limited interaction between lecturers and students can weaken this relationship and reduce its positive impact on learning behaviours.

## **Attention and Concentration**

Attention and Concentration are critical components of learning behaviour that determine how effectively students engage with academic tasks.

Attention refers to the ability to selectively focus on specific stimuli or tasks while ignoring distractions. It is the initial step in the learning process, as students must first direct their mental focus to absorb information, whether during lectures, reading assignments, or practical activities. Without attention, even the most motivated or capable student may fail to comprehend or retain information effectively.

Concentration, on the other hand, is the ability to sustain that focus over a period of time. It involves maintaining mental effort and resisting distractions to process information thoroughly and complete learning tasks. Concentration allows students to engage deeply with material, solve complex problems, and perform academic tasks efficiently.

In the context of undergraduate learning, attention and concentration are crucial because students face numerous potential distractions, including social media, peer interactions, and environmental noise. High levels of attention and concentration enable students to follow lectures, understand complex concepts, complete assignments accurately, and prepare effectively for exams. Conversely, poor attention and concentration can lead to fragmented learning, mistakes, procrastination, and overall poor academic performance.

Ultimately, attention and concentration form the foundation of effective learning. They are interconnected: attention allows students to focus initially, while concentration ensures that focus is sustained long enough to achieve meaningful understanding and academic success.

## **Participation**

Participation is a key aspect of learning behaviour that reflects the extent to which students actively engage in academic activities within and beyond the classroom. It goes beyond mere presence in lectures; it involves meaningful involvement in discussions, group activities, question-and-answer sessions, and other forms of interactive learning. Participation allows students to apply their knowledge, clarify doubts, and reinforce understanding through interaction with lecturers and peers.

Active participation is essential for effective learning because it encourages students to think critically, express their ideas, and engage in reflective thinking. For example, when students contribute to class discussions, they are not only sharing what they know but also testing their understanding, receiving immediate feedback, and considering alternative viewpoints. This process deepens comprehension and promotes long-term retention of knowledge.

Participation also fosters academic confidence and motivation. Students who engage regularly are likely to develop a sense of ownership over their learning, feel more competent, and experience increased self-esteem. It can also strengthen peer relationships, as collaborative participation in group discussions or projects encourages teamwork, idea sharing, and mutual support.

However, lack of participation can negatively affect learning. Students who remain passive may miss opportunities to clarify misunderstandings, fail to develop critical thinking skills, and struggle with active engagement in collaborative tasks. Factors such as low self-esteem, fear of criticism, large class sizes, or poor teacher-student interaction can contribute to limited participation.

### **Study habits**

Study Habits refer to the consistent and organized patterns of behaviour that students adopt to acquire, process, and retain knowledge effectively. They encompass the methods, routines, and strategies that undergraduates use to approach their academic work, including how they manage time, organize materials, review content, and prepare for assessments. Good study habits are critical because they help students maximize learning, improve retention, and perform better academically, while poor study habits often lead to inefficiency, stress, and subpar academic outcomes.

Effective study habits include time management, which involves planning study schedules, allocating sufficient time for each subject, and avoiding procrastination. Students who manage their time well can balance academic tasks with extracurricular activities and personal responsibilities, reducing stress and ensuring consistent progress. Another important aspect is active engagement with learning materials, such as taking notes during lectures, summarizing key points, highlighting important information, and using memory aids like diagrams or flashcards. These techniques promote understanding and make revision more effective.

Regular revision and practice are also central to good study habits. Revisiting course content periodically helps reinforce knowledge, identify gaps in understanding, and prepare students for examinations. Additionally, developing a suitable study environment free from distractions - such as social media, noise, or interruptions - enhances focus and concentration, which in turn improves learning outcomes.

Study habits also involve adopting strategic learning methods that suit individual preferences and cognitive styles. For instance, some students benefit from visual aids, others from auditory materials, and some from kinaesthetic approaches like hands-on practice. Recognizing these personal learning preferences allows students to optimize their study sessions and retain information more effectively.

Conversely, poor study habits, such as cramming at the last minute, multitasking during study sessions, or relying solely on passive reading, can negatively impact academic performance. Such habits often lead to shallow understanding, higher stress levels, and inability to retain knowledge for long-term application.

### **Self-Discipline**

Self-Discipline is a fundamental psychosocial factor that significantly influences the learning behaviours of undergraduates. It refers to the ability of students to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and actions in order to achieve long-term academic goals, even in the face of distractions, temptations, or challenges. Self-discipline enables students to remain focused on their studies, adhere to schedules, resist procrastination, and persist through difficult or tedious tasks, thereby enhancing overall academic performance.

In the context of higher education, self-discipline manifests in several ways. One key aspect is time management, where disciplined students plan and allocate their time effectively to balance lectures, assignments, study sessions, and personal activities. This ensures that deadlines are met, study routines are maintained, and academic responsibilities are prioritized over distractions such as social media, peer gatherings, or leisure activities. Another aspect is consistency in effort, which involves maintaining regular study patterns and engaging with learning materials systematically, rather than relying on last-minute cramming. Consistent effort strengthens knowledge retention and helps students master complex concepts gradually.

Self-discipline also involves impulse control and delayed gratification. Students with high self-discipline are able to postpone immediate pleasures, such as entertainment or social activities, in favour of completing academic tasks that yield long-term benefits. They are less likely to engage in behaviours that negatively impact learning, such as skipping lectures, neglecting assignments, or engaging in academic dishonesty.

Moreover, self-discipline is closely linked to academic persistence and resilience. Disciplined students are more likely to overcome challenges, cope with academic pressure, and continue working toward their goals even when faced with difficulties or failures. This trait fosters a proactive approach to learning, encouraging students to seek help when necessary, revise content regularly, and maintain motivation over time.

A lack of self-discipline, conversely, can result in poor learning behaviours. Students may procrastinate, struggle with time management, become easily distracted, or give up when tasks become challenging. This can negatively affect attendance, participation, study habits, and ultimately academic achievement.

### **Curiosity**

Curiosity is a central psychological factor that drives learning behaviour among undergraduates. It refers to a student's intrinsic desire to acquire knowledge, explore new ideas, and understand concepts beyond surface-level information. Curiosity motivates learners to ask questions, seek explanations, and engage deeply with academic content, making it a critical determinant of meaningful and effective learning.

In higher education, curiosity manifests as an active interest in discovering and understanding the subject matter. Students who are curious do not passively accept information; instead, they investigate, analyse, and critically evaluate ideas. This trait encourages them to read widely, participate in discussions, and seek additional resources or research materials to expand their understanding. Curiosity is often linked to creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, as students are more likely to explore alternative approaches, challenge assumptions, and make connections between different concepts.

Curiosity also enhances intrinsic motivation, as students driven by genuine interest are more likely to persist in learning tasks despite challenges or difficulty. For instance, a curious student may spend extra time conducting experiments, solving complex problems, or researching additional references because of an inherent desire to learn, not merely for grades or external rewards. This leads to deeper comprehension, better retention of information, and a more meaningful learning experience.

Furthermore, curiosity encourages engagement in collaborative learning. Students with high curiosity are often more willing to share ideas, ask probing questions, and contribute to group discussions, thereby enriching both their own understanding and that of their peers. It also promotes lifelong learning, as curious individuals continue to seek knowledge beyond formal education, developing habits of independent inquiry and self-directed learning.

Conversely, a lack of curiosity can result in passive learning behaviour. Students may rely solely on what is presented in lectures, avoid questioning, and show minimal interest in exploring beyond the syllabus. This can limit critical thinking, reduce engagement, and ultimately hinder academic success.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration is a vital learning behaviour that refers to the ability of students to work effectively with others to achieve shared academic goals. It involves joint efforts, mutual support, and cooperative engagement in tasks such as group discussions, projects, assignments, and problem-solving activities. Collaboration is not merely about working together physically but emphasizes communication, coordination, and the exchange of ideas, which are essential for deep learning and skill development among undergraduates.

In a university context, collaboration allows students to combine their individual strengths, knowledge, and perspectives to accomplish tasks more effectively than working alone. For example, in group assignments, students share responsibilities, divide tasks according to skills, and support each other in understanding difficult concepts. This process encourages active participation, enhances critical thinking, and fosters problem-solving skills, as students challenge each other's ideas, ask questions, and engage in constructive debates.

Collaboration also promotes social and emotional learning, as students develop interpersonal skills such as communication, empathy, leadership, and conflict resolution. Working in diverse teams exposes students to different viewpoints and cultural experiences, broadening their understanding and encouraging adaptability. Moreover, collaboration strengthens peer support networks, which can motivate students to remain committed to their academic goals and provide emotional and academic encouragement during challenges.

The benefits of collaboration extend to academic performance. Students engaged in collaborative learning are more likely to retain knowledge, apply concepts practically, and develop higher-order thinking skills. Group interactions also encourage accountability, as each member is responsible for contributing meaningfully, which fosters discipline and consistency in learning behaviour.

However, ineffective collaboration can negatively impact learning. Poor communication, unequal participation, lack of coordination, or interpersonal conflicts can hinder the group's progress and reduce the benefits of cooperative learning. Therefore, successful collaboration requires structured guidance, mutual respect, and shared commitment among group members.

In summary, collaboration is a crucial dimension of learning behaviour among undergraduates. It enhances understanding, encourages active engagement, develops interpersonal and cognitive skills, and fosters a supportive learning environment. By promoting teamwork and shared responsibility, collaboration not only improves academic outcomes but also prepares students for professional and social interactions beyond the university setting.

## Summary

This study examined psychosocial factors as correlates of learning behaviours among undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. The research focused on key psychosocial variables such as motivation, self-esteem, peer linkage, and teacher-student relationship, and how these factors influence students' learning behaviours, including attention and concentration, participation, study habits, self-discipline, curiosity, and collaboration.

The study established that learning behaviours are not solely dependent on students' intellectual abilities but are significantly shaped by psychological and social influences within the academic environment. Motivation was identified as a driving force that determines students' level of effort, persistence, and engagement in academic activities. Self-esteem was found to influence students' confidence and willingness to participate in learning tasks. Peer linkage played a dual role, either promoting positive academic behaviours through collaboration and support or encouraging negative habits through peer pressure. Similarly, the teacher-student relationship was shown to be critical in fostering a supportive learning environment that enhances students' academic engagement.

Furthermore, the study highlighted that undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria face various psychosocial challenges, including economic pressures, social distractions, and limited interaction with lecturers, all of which can negatively affect their learning behaviours. The findings emphasized the need to consider both psychological and social dimensions when addressing issues related to students' academic performance.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that psychosocial factors play a significant role in shaping the learning behaviours of undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. Motivation, self-esteem, peer linkage, and teacher-student relationship were found to be strong determinants of how students engage in academic activities.

Students who exhibit high levels of motivation and self-esteem are more likely to demonstrate positive learning behaviours such as active participation, effective study habits, and sustained concentration. In contrast, students with low motivation and poor self-esteem tend to show negative learning behaviours, including lack of engagement and poor academic commitment. Additionally, peer influence and teacher-student interactions significantly impact students' attitudes toward learning, either positively or negatively.

The study therefore concludes that improving students' learning behaviours requires more than just academic interventions; it necessitates a comprehensive approach that addresses the psychosocial needs of students. Creating a supportive academic environment that fosters positive relationships, enhances motivation, and builds students' confidence is essential for improving academic outcomes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

### 1. Provision of Counselling Services:

Universities should strengthen guidance and counselling services to help students manage psychosocial challenges such as low self-esteem, lack of motivation, and peer pressure.

### 2. Enhancement of Teacher-Student Relationship:

Lecturers should adopt more interactive and student-centered teaching approaches that encourage communication, participation, and mentorship.

### 3. Promotion of Positive Peer Influence:

Institutions should encourage the formation of academic study groups and peer mentoring programmes to promote collaborative learning and reduce negative peer influence.

### 4. Motivational Strategies:

Universities and lecturers should implement strategies such as recognition of academic excellence, constructive feedback, and goal-setting activities to enhance students' motivation.

### 5. Workshops on Study Skills and Self-Discipline:

Regular seminars and workshops should be organized to train students on effective study habits, time management, and self-discipline.

### 6. Improvement of Learning Environment:

Institutions should provide conducive learning environments by reducing overcrowding, improving facilities, and minimizing distractions within academic spaces.

### 7. Parental and Societal Support:

Parents and guardians should provide emotional and financial support to students to reduce stress and enhance their academic focus.

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