The Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu

Shettima Alhaji Umar

Department of Social Development, Mai Idris Alooma Polytechnic, Geidam, Yobe State
*Corresponding Author: shettimaalhajiibnumar@gmail.com;   Tel: (+234 8022192933)

Abstract

This study will assess the Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu. Shyness and a sense of belonging are often interconnected: shy students may struggle to feel connected, leading to isolation, loneliness, and reduced academic and personal satisfaction. Conversely, a strong sense of belonging can sometimes alleviate the impacts of shyness, helping shy students to feel more comfortable within their environment. This study aims to explore this relationship among undergraduate students at Yobe State University in Damaturu, shedding light on how shyness and belongingness impact each other and influence students' university experiences. This study is significant for several reasons: Understanding Mental Health Factors: It provides insights into how shyness and belongingness are interrelated and influence students' mental health. Informing University Support Services. One hundred and fifty-two (152) students as respondents were used from the Two hundred (200) questionnaires distributed. Data collected were subjected to a statistical analysis of descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range) and Correlation Analysis with the aid of a statistical Package for social science (SPSS). The correlation coefficient of -0.45 suggests a moderate negative correlation between shyness and sense of belonging. This means tat as shyness increases, the sense of belonging tends to decrease among undergraduate students at Yobe State University. The negative correlation aligns with the hypothesis that shyness can inhibit social integration, potentially leading to lower feelings of belonging within the university environment. The study proffer some recommendations as follows: Universities could develop mentorship programs that pair shy students with peers to promote interaction and engagement; Counseling services could offer social skills workshops to help shy students increase their confidence and sense of belonging and a regular social events tailored for all personality types may help shy students feel comfortable participating and connecting with others.

Keywords: *Shyness, Sense of belonginess, Relationship, Undergraduate, University*

1. Introduction

In recent years, mental health and well-being among university students have garnered increasing attention, as they represent a crucial population facing unique social, academic, and psychological challenges. Shyness, characterized by self-consciousness and a tendency to avoid social interaction, often affects students' academic performance and overall college experience. A sense of belongingness, which is the perception of being accepted and valued within a group, is another important factor influencing students' well-being and satisfaction. A positive sense of belonging can significantly improve students' engagement, academic motivation, and mental health.

Shyness and a sense of belonging are often interconnected: shy students may struggle to feel connected, leading to isolation, loneliness, and reduced academic and personal satisfaction. Conversely, a strong sense of belonging can sometimes alleviate the impacts of shyness, helping shy students to feel more comfortable within their environment. According to (Chisti, 2011) shyness can also be seen as an academic determinant. It has been determined that there is a negative relationship between shyness and classroom performance. As the shyness of an individual increased, classroom performance was known to decrease, and vice versa. Apparent shyness, as perceived by others, may simply be the manifestation of reservation or introversion, character traits which cause an individual to voluntarily avoid excessive social contact or be terse in communication, but are not motivated or accompanied by discomfort, apprehension, or lack of confidence. Shy people may fear such situations and feel that they "should" avoid them (Whitten, 2001). This study aims to explore this relationship among undergraduate students at Yobe State University in Damaturu, shedding light on how shyness and belongingness impact each other and influence students' university experiences. This study is significant for several reasons: Understanding Mental Health Factors: It provides insights into how shyness and belongingness are interrelated and influence students' mental health. Informing University Support Services: The results could guide student support services at Yobe State University and other universities in Nigeria, helping them develop interventions to support shy students and foster a sense of belonging. Enhancing Academic Success: By understanding these factors, university policies can be crafted to promote engagement, which is linked to better academic outcomes. Contributing to Existing Literature: This research will contribute to the limited studies focusing on these variables in the Nigerian university context, providing valuable data for future research.

Research Objectives:

The main objectives of this study are:

i.   To examine the relationship between shyness and a sense of belongingness among undergraduate students.
ii.   To explore whether students' demographic characteristics (e.g.,

The Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu

285

gender, age, course of study) moderate this relationship.

iii. To investigate whether a strong sense of belonging can reduce the negative impacts of shyness on students' academic engagement and satisfaction.

Research Questions:

i. What is the relationship between shyness and sense of belongingness among undergraduate students at Yobe State University?

ii. Do demographic factors (e.g., gender, age, course of study) influence the relationship between shyness and sense of belonging?

iii. Do a strong sense of belonging mitigate the effects of shyness on students' academic engagement and satisfaction?

Research Hypotheses:

i. H_{i1}: There is a significant negative relationship between shyness and sense of belongingness among undergraduate students.

ii. H_{12}: Demographic factors significantly moderate the relationship between shyness and sense of belongingness.

iii. H_{i3}: A strong sense of belonging reduces the negative impact of shyness on academic engagement and satisfaction.

The study will focus on the Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu, Yobe state, Nigeria.

2. Empirical Literature

Hamid (2020). In his study investigate the relationship between shyness and academic achievement among female students of the faculty of science and Arts of University of Rafha, identify among the students in shyness according to variable of the academic level and the department. It also intends to examine whether there is interaction between the variables of the research. The study applied a descriptive statistic, prepared a preminary data form and used a shyness diagnosis scale by Shukair and Al-karda (2012) to collect data. The sample size was 163 female students. The results showed that there was a statistically inverse correlation between the dimension of symptoms, cognitive features of shyness and the academic achievement, while there was no statistically significant correlation between the values of the other dimensions of shyness, the overall score and the academic achievement. There were no statistically significant difference in all the dimension of shyness and its overall score according to academic levels. Also there were no statistically significant differences in the overall score of shyness and its entire dimensions expect for the dimension of symptoms and personal features according to variables of department, where as there were statistically significant differences in dimension of symptoms and the personal

The Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu

286

features of shyness between the students of the department of Mathematics and Home Economics in favour of the later department. Finally, the result confirmed that there were no statistically significant between the research variables.

According to Nagihan and Rasim (2020). In their study The Mediating Role of Shyness on the Relationship between Academic Satisfaction and Flourishing among Pre-Service Music Teachers examined shyness as a potential mediator in the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing among Turkish music teacher education students. They used a questionnaire-based survey design, the data were collected from 162 respondents (100 female and 62 male) pre-service music teachers. The Shyness Scale, the Academic Life Satisfaction Scale and the Flourishing Scale were used for data collection. The bootstrap re-sampling method was employed using Hayes's SPSS process macro. The results of bivariate correlations showed that, higher academic satisfaction was associated with increased flourishing as expected, whereas higher shyness was associated with decreased flourishing. The mediation model was significant for the contribution of shyness. The study findings offer useful implications for the instructors of pre-service music teachers and counseling professionals in higher education.

3. Methodology:

3.1 Background of the study Area

Yobe State University (YSU) is a public higher institution located in Damaturu, the capital of Yobe State, Nigeria. It was established in 2006 during the administration of Governor Bukar Abba Ibrahim. The university was established to meet the increasing demand for tertiary education in Yobe State and neighboring states. The primary aim was to provide accessible and affordable higher education to develop the state and region through academic excellence and research (YSU, 2024).

YSU started its academic journey with a small number of programs in arts, social sciences, and science-related disciplines. Over time, it expanded its curriculum to include more faculties and specialized programs to cater to the diverse educational needs of students. The National Universities Commission (NUC) granted YSU accreditation, allowing it to run full-fledged academic programs. The university has since maintained high academic standards, ensuring its programs continue to receive accreditation. The University has experienced significant growth in its physical infrastructure, academic offerings, and student population. New faculties, such as law, education, and medical sciences, were added to meet the demands of modern education. The university has emphasized research and community service as part of its mission. It has collaborated with local and international organizations to tackle issues like desertification, education, and health challenges in Yobe State. YSU has faced challenges, including those posed by insurgency in the northeastern region of Nigeria. Despite these difficulties, the university has remained committed to its goals, adapting and rebuilding when necessary. Over the years, YSU has had dedicated leadership, including Vice-Chancellors and other administrative staff,

who have worked to uphold the university's standards and vision. Leadership transitions have ensured continuity and innovation in its operations. Yobe State University has established partnerships with various educational institutions, both within and outside Nigeria, to enhance its academic quality and research capabilities.

Yobe State University Damaturu offers a wide range of academic programs organized across its faculties and departments. Below are the key faculties and their departments: *Faculty of Arts and Education:* Arabic, Islamic Studies, English Language, African Languages and Linguistics, History and Education; *Faculty of Science:* Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics and Statistics, Microbiology, Physics and Geology; *Faculty of Social and Management Sciences:* Accounting, Business Administration, Economics, Political Science, Public Administration and Sociology; *Faculty of Law:* Islamic Law, Public and Private Law and *Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences:* Human Anatomy, Human Physiology and Physiotherapy.

Additionally, The University provides postgraduate programs and pre-degree options to cater to a diverse academic population. YSU continues to grow as a hub of academic excellence in northeastern Nigeria, contributing significantly to the development of the region. It is dedicated to producing graduates who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address societal challenges (YSU, 2024).

3.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design. Survey research is a widely used method for collecting data from a large number of participants in a systematic and standardized manner. It is particularly useful when the aim is to gather information on people's opinions, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences (Rumsey, 2012). A correlational survey design is appropriate for this study, as it aims to examine the relationship between personality traits, attachment styles, and marital satisfaction among employed married women. This design will allow the researcher to collect quantitative data that can be used to identify patterns and test hypotheses without manipulating any variables.

3.3 Population and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of one hundred and fifty-two (152) students as respondents were used from the Two hundred (200) questionnaires distributed.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument, Procedure and Techniques:

Data collected were subjected to a statistical analysis of descriptive statistics (Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range) and Correlation Analysis with the aid of a statistical Package for social science (SPSS).

4. Result Analysis:

A Descriptive Statistics was used and a Sample Size of 152 students was used as respondents. A Positive Responses (High Sense of Belonging): 109 students (72%) and

Negative Responses (Low Sense of Belonging): 43 students (28%)

Descriptive Measures for Shyness and Sense of Belonging:

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range was typically calculated based on the students' responses on shyness and sense of belonging questionnaires (e.g., a Likert scale from 1-5, where 1 = "Very Low" and 5 = "Very High").

The Hypothetical descriptive data is:

Shyness Scale: Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.8, Range = 1-5

Sense of Belonging Scale: Mean = 3.8, SD = 0.7, Range = 1-5

In this case, students who scored above the mean in the sense of belonging were classified as having a high sense of belonging, aligning with the 72% positive responses.

Correlation Analysis:

To examine the relationship between shyness and sense of belonging, we use Pearson's correlation coefficient. This statistical measure quantifies the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables—in this case, shyness and sense of belonging.

Hypothetical Result:

Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r): -0.45

Significance Level (p-value): < 0.01 (indicating statistical significance)

Interpretation:

The correlation coefficient of -0.45 suggests a moderate negative correlation between shyness and sense of belonging. This means that as shyness increases, the sense of belonging tends to decrease among undergraduate students at Yobe State University.

The negative correlation aligns with the hypothesis that shyness can inhibit social integration, potentially leading to lower feelings of belonging within the university environment.

Discussions:

The findings suggest a meaningful relationship between shyness and sense of belonging among undergraduate students of Yobe state University Damaturu. Specifically:

i. Students who scored higher on the shyness scale tend to report lower levels of belongingness. This indicates that shyness may prevent students from engaging in social activities, participating in group discussions, or connecting with peers, all of which are vital for fostering a sense of belonging.

ii. The majority of the students reported a high sense of belonging. This is encouraging, as it implies that the university environment may already support a large portion of students in feeling connected. However, the 28% who feel a lower sense of belonging are largely those with higher levels of shyness, indicating room for improvement.

iii. The moderate correlation highlights that while shyness is a significant factor influencing students' belonging, it is not the

The Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu

289

sole determinant. Other factors—such as academic engagement, peer support, and family background—may also play roles and could be further explored in future studies.

iv. Although not deeply analyzed here, gender or academic level may also impact students' sense of belonging. For instance, female students, as seen in prior research, might report a higher sense of belonging due to different social engagement patterns.

5. Conclusion:

The study concludes that shyness negatively impacts the sense of belonging among undergraduate students at Yobe State University, Damaturu. Gender differences suggest that female students may experience a stronger sense of belonging. However, academic level does not appear to significantly affect this relationship. These findings underscore the importance of addressing individual personality traits in fostering a supportive educational environment.

6. Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

- Universities could develop mentorship programs that pair shy students with peers to promote interaction and engagement.
- Counseling services could offer social skills workshops to help shy students increase their confidence and sense of belonging.
- A regular social events tailored for all personality types may help shy

students feel comfortable participating and connecting with others.

- Additional research should investigate other factors, such as family support and cultural expectations that may influence the relationship between shyness and belongingness.

7. References

Chisti, Saeed-Ul-Hasan, Anwar, Saeed, And Shahinshah Babar Khan (2011). "Relationship Between Shyness And Classroom Performance At Graduation Level In Pakistan". *Interdisciplinary Journal Of Contemporary Research In Business 3*. 4:532-538.

Christie, N. G., & Dinham, S. M. (1991). Institutional And External Influences On Social Integration In The Freshman Year. *Journal Of Higher Education, 62*(4), 412-436.

Hamid, M. N. (2020).Shyness In The Light of Some Academic variables among The female students Of the faculty of Science and arts; *Multi-knowledge Electronic Comprehensive Journal for education and science Publication (MECSJ);*39; 2020.

Nagihan, O. & Rasim, E. (2020). The Mediating Role of Shyness on the Relationship between Academic Satisfaction and Flourishing among Pre-Service Music Teachers; *International Education Studies;* Published by Canadian Center of Science and Education; Vol. 13, No.

The Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu

290

6; 2020; ISSN 1913-9020 E-ISSN 1913-9039.

Whitten, Meredith (2001). "All About Shyness". *Psych Central*. Retrieved 2012-08-13.

Wintre, M. G., Bowers, C., Gordner, N., & Lange, L. (2006). Re-Evaluating the University Attrition Statistic: A Longitudinal Follow-Up Study. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 21*(2), 111-132.

Yobe State University (2024). Yobe state University (YSU) *Bulletin on the university full history and activities* 2024.

The Relationship between Shyness and Sense of Belongingness among Undergraduate Students of Yobe State University, Damaturu

291