Social phobia and computer literacy skills of library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study examined social phobia and computer literacy skills of library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Correlational research design was adopted to execute the study. A total of 437 students who are 300 and 400 Level undergraduates that responded to questionnaire in two universities in Rivers State in the 2021/2022 academic session were used in the study. Questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data from the respondents. The data obtained were analyzed with Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation and simple regression. Findings revealed a positive relationship between social phobia and computer literacy skills; that social phobia significantly predicts computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State. The study recommends that strategies should be adopted by the management of these universities to reduce social phobia among LIS undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria among others.

Keywords: Social phobia, computer literacy, computer skills, ICT skills, library and information science, undergraduates

Introduction
In the 21st Century, the role of computer knowledge in the life of every student cannot be underestimated. Knowledge, skills, and confidence in the use of computers and related technologies are now an asset for entering the competitive employment market (Oladunjoye & Benwari, 2014). Everyone requires computer knowledge and skills to survive in the current technology-dependent era (Adomi & Anie, 2006) as inadequate or absence of skills can hamper the adoption and use of technologies (Adomi, 2011). In fact, every aspect of life from education, leisure, and work environment to social interactions is being influenced by computer technology. In Nigeria today, computers have become so important that students who do not have access to them are likely to get further behind their peers who did have such access (Oladunjoye & Benwari, 2014). Many examinations e.g., Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), Nigerian Bar Association NBA, etc. in the Nigerian educational system are conducted using computer technology which is popularly referred to as computer based test (CBT).

Computer-based test is now being used for the conduct of Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), post-UTME by many tertiary institutions and professional examinations such as teachers professional examinations, coSmputer professional examinations, among others, to give credibility to the examination processes (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019). Some Nigerian universities have adopted computer based test (CBT) for their courses/examinations to test students’ performance (Oyetola et al., 2022). Examples of such universities are Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), University of Lagos (UNILAG), and University of Ibadan (UI) among others (Oyetola et al., 2022). Delta State University Abraka is also among the universities in Nigeria that are already conducting examinations for students using the computer system. So, it becomes imperative that students should be equipped with computer literacy competencies
to be able to function effectively in the university. According to The New York Times Company (2006), in most places of business, a computer is a standard tool. In the education sector classroom interaction as well as automated library environment, the computer remains a standard tool that can be used and it is in the best interest of students to have a sound knowledge of computer technology. Institutions of higher learning in Nigeria, especially universities, have made frantic efforts to enforce computer literacy skills acquisition among students by introducing computer studies as a General Studies course which is a basic requirement for graduation (Oladunjoye & Benwari, 2014). In most primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, especially privately owned schools, the computer remains an object for advertisement not minding if they are functional or not (Oladunjoye & Benwari, 2014). In order to ensure full implementation of the National Policy on Computer Education in Nigeria, the state governments also introduced computer education and literacy into the secondary school curriculum in 1997 (Adomi & Kpangban, 2010).

Computer education is of paramount importance to national development and it is on this premise that the Federal government of Nigeria sought to introduce computer studies in the education system from primary through to secondary schools (Oladimeji et. al., 2018). Ogugua (2020) asserted that this led to the setting up of a pilot training scheme for computer education and some federal government colleges and colleges of education across the country. One would anticipate that Nigerian undergraduates would experience the effects of computer literacy given the efforts made by the Nigerian government to guarantee that students acquire the necessary skills. However, a greater percentage of Nigerian undergraduate students seem not to have the required computer skills. They often seem to apply a theoretical approach to the learning of computer studies and appear not to possess any practical skills in computer operations (Ukachi, 2013). The poor computer appreciation and literacy skills among undergraduates in Nigerian universities may be connected to social phobia.

Social phobia - sometimes known as a social anxiety disorder - is a type of anxiety disorder that causes a person to be anxious or fearful in social situations. The feeling can cause those suffering from social phobia not to socialize and avoid places where they are likely to interact and mingle with people (Higuera, 2022). Social phobia is a dangerous and incapacitating mental health condition that has a chronic history and is linked to a considerable decline in social and occupational functioning as well as a decreased quality of life (Mäki, 2015). Students who struggle with social phobia frequently try to come across as self-sufficient. Public speaking is typically difficult for them (Ahmad, Bayan, Faque & Seidi, 2017). Social phobia differs between individuals, so it makes sense that the relationship between technology and social phobia is murky and often varies from case to case. For some sufferers, technology can increase social interaction. According to Ossola (2021), persons with poor self-esteem who would be hesitant to discuss themselves with a friend face-to-face are more at ease sharing private information online. Hence, social phobia may have effects on students’ computer literacy skills among LIS undergraduates.

**Statement of the problem**

Though computer study has been introduced in secondary schools several years ago, the researcher's personal observation has revealed that most university undergraduates, LIS undergraduates especially in Rivers State Universities still find it difficult to perform basic computer operations. The level of
computer literacy skills that undergraduates especially, demonstrates when using a mobile phone to access the Internet is higher than what is usually demonstrated while using a computer system as many of them prefer to employ the service of a computer operator when they have an urgent need to make use of a computer system for academic purposes. This attitude by undergraduates towards the use of computers can only be blamed on low-level computer literacy skills. This however has raised a major concern in the mind of the researcher. Could it be that these inadequate computer literacy skills among undergraduates are caused by social phobia? It is on the basis of this question that this study seeks to examine social phobia and computer literacy skills of library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Research question**
The following question is answered in the study:
What is the relationship between social phobia and computer literacy skills among the undergraduates?

**Hypothesis**
The following hypothesis is tested at 0.05 level of significance in the study:
Ho: Social phobia will not significantly predict computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

**Literature review**
Social phobia is one of the most prevalent anxiety disorders among adolescents and youths. It can hinder the individual’s performance if left untreated (Abdallah et. al., 2016; & Mustafa, et al., 2014). It is the third most common mental disorder following depression and alcohol use disorder (de Menezes, et al., 2011). Epidemiological studies report that the lifetime prevalence of social phobia ranges from 3 to 13 percent (Sadock, et al., 2015). Reta et. al., (2020) asserted that in United Kingdom (UK), a cross-sectional study revealed a 10% prevalence of social phobia in higher education students (n=1007) and closer to this finding a study from India using Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) conducted by Preeti (2019), reported 12.6% prevalence of social phobia among undergraduate medical students. A study conducted by Wilson (2005) with large sample size (n=4368) in Australia, reported that 30% of first-year university students suffer from Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). Also, in a study conducted by Desalegn et. al. (2019), a higher prevalence (44%) of SAD was observed in Egyptian undergraduate students (n=2919) while 20 and 31.2% of health science students are reported to have SAD in the University of Gondar.

Hajure and Abu (2020) reported that a cross-sectional study conducted in Swedish, Jordan University showed that about 9–16.1% of participants were positive for social phobia. According to a comparison study conducted in three Arab nations, social anxiety among high school students varied from 7.8% in the United Arab Emirates to 13% in Egypt (AlHinai et al., 2006). While 21% of university students in adjacent nations reported having social anxiety, it has a detrimental influence on how people build their identities and their quality of life (Van Ameringen et. al., 2003). Additionally, meta-analysis studies revealed that social phobia sufferers have a poor quality of life and poor psychosocial functioning (Olatunji et. al., 2007). Among school-aged teenagers, social phobia is more common in certain nations than in others. For instance, the magnitude varies from 3.5% to 21% in high-income countries (Schneier & Goldmark, 2003).

Students from Jordan University, Saudi Arabia, and the University of Parakuo participated in a cross-sectional study that used the Liebowtize Social Phobia Intensity
Evaluation Scale and a self-report questionnaire. The results revealed that between 9.6% and 11.6% of individuals had social phobia (Hakami, Mahfouz & Adawi, 2017). According to a study done in Nigeria by Buckner and Turner, (2009), “there was a substantial difference in the phobic health of teenagers in the selected private and public institutions, with 9.4% of students having social phobia”. According to a study done by Mekuria et. al. (2017), among high school students in Woldia, Ethiopia, “27.5% of teenagers suffer from social phobia disorder”. Social phobia was significantly influenced by factors such as gender, youth, religion, marital status, psychiatric disease, and a favorable family history of mental illness (Monteiro & Balogun, 2014). Hajure, et al. (2020) claim that social phobia is quite common among college students and that as a result, more students are dropping out of school and there are long waiting lists at the counseling center. Considering that the majority of college students are in the age range when social phobia is more likely to develop and that they are also dealing with basic concerns with identity and self-management, the population of college students may be more susceptible to social phobia experiences (Hakami, et al., 2017). Therefore, the pressures of the university system may have a significant impact on their social phobia.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) literacy abilities are important instruments for global self-actualization (Olatoye, 2019). Technology advancements, in the opinion of Ogwu and Ogwu (2015), may boost economic prospects, improve service delivery, and enhance governance, ultimately resulting in the socio-economic growth of the community. Makori and Mauti (2016) noted that

despite technological advancements such as the use of classroom computers, instructional software to teach academic curricula, and the availability of library and academic materials to undergraduates online, some undergraduate students in universities still require assistance using computers, even to the point where they need it to send an email.

Alemu (2015) opined that “ICT literacy skills have become increasingly significant in the achievement of a degree-based education”. Furthermore, they will influence students’ manipulation of digital resources and the way they are utilized for learning purposes. ICT literacy skills of users relate to the users’ capability of utilizing their ICT knowledge to discover, advance, and represent information whether as text, number or image, or an integration of these. It is suggested that in a bid to effectively utilize the developments in the ICT industry, it is germane for students to ensure the acquisition, through training in the required competencies.

ICTs have greatly developed and widened the influence and skillfulness of their users in ways of seeking electronic information (Davies, 2011). It is on this premise that Emwanta (2013) recommended the acquisition of the optimal skills required for the maximization of ICT potential. These skills include competence in computer procedures. Alemu (2015) disclosed that ICT skills comprise capacities such as evaluating, recognizing, and efficiently utilizing given information. Hence, one should also acquire ICT literacy skills. Commenting on the level of computer literacy skills among undergraduates, Ogwu and Ogwu (2015) considered the proficiency level of ICT use amongst final-year teacher trainee students at the University of Botswana and revealed that their computer proficiency was grossly inadequate.

Similarly, Omona et. al. (2015) assessed the ICT competence of a representative sample of fourth-year students in a Tanzanian medical school. The study established that an estimate of about 50% of the students did not have the necessary skills to enable them to use ICT.
facilities effectively to access and disseminate health information for their day-to-day study, research, and learning. Dery et. al. (2016) conducted a study on knowledge and use of information and communication technology by health sciences students of the University of Ghana and reported that computer knowledge was high among health science students in the University of Ghana at almost 99%. About 83% of the health science students owned computers (p < 0.001) and their self-rated computer knowledge was also 87 % (p <0.001). The usage of computers among health sciences students at the University of Ghana was mostly for studying at 93% (p< 0.001). Jaiswal et. al. (2020) conducted a study on burden of internet addiction, social anxiety and social phobia among university students in India and found that the prevalence of SAD was estimated to be 15.3%. Furthermore, the study found that Internet addiction was positively correlated with social anxiety score (Pearson correlation = 0.994, P < 0.001) and that more than 90% of participants had internet addiction, the majority had mild-moderate internet addiction. The study concluded that SAD was found to be associated with internet addiction.

Social phobia is characterized by a strong fear of humiliation and embarrassment during exposure to unfamiliar people or possible scrutiny by others. Since they are worried about failing socially evaluative tasks, socially anxious people frequently avoid both formal and informal encounters (Bonetti, Campbell & Gilmore, 2010). These teenagers must also learn how to meet their growing interpersonal needs for approval, control, belonging, and affection through interactions and communication. One important aspect that influences online engagement is social anxiety (Hutchins et al., 2021). Additionally, social anxiety may hinder students' performance in online learning environments (Ajmal & Ahmad, 2019). The phrase "fear of seeming awkward and foolish or embarrassed" is used to describe social phobia condition (Morrison, 2016). Due to a dread of other people's judgment and excessive avoidance of social settings, social phobia may develop (Persons & Tompkins, 2011). The literature emphasizes different variables related to social phobia in online environments. Studies show that previous e-learning experiences reduce anxiety and students have a more comfortable learning experience (Sharifrazi, 2012). Students’ technology use skills and digital self-efficacy appear to be significant in reducing anxiety (Hill et al., 2009; Saadé & Kira, 2009; Yang et al., 2010). Another finding that may be related to social phobia in online learning environments is that digital skills reduce autonomy anxiety in online environments. (Korucu & Gürkez, 2019).

Bahçekapılı (2021) examined the social phobia of university students in online live lessons in terms of their digital literacy levels, gender, previous distance education experiences, and the way they interact with the teacher in live lessons and found that the social phobia of students in synchronous learning environments had a negative relationship with their digital skills. The survey also revealed that female students had greater levels of social anxiety than male pupils. Also, students who did not actively participate in the course and engage in live chat with the instructor were less at ease. The social phobia was unaffected by prior distance education experience or classroom microphone use.

Methods

The correlational research design was adopted to execute this study. The population of the study comprised 649 students who were 300 and 400-level undergraduates of the two universities (Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt) that offer Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) in Rivers State in the 2021/2022 academic session. A total of 521 out of the entire population of
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649 was used as sample using the purposive/availability sampling technique. Questionnaire was the instrument used to elicit data from the respondents. A total of 521 questionnaires were administered and 437 were duly completed and found usable. Hence, there was 84% response rate. The data obtained were analyzed with Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation and simple regression. While Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation was used to answer the research question, simple regression was used to test the hypothesis.

**Results**

The results were presented according to the research question and hypothesis.

**Research question:** What is the relationship between social phobia and computer literacy skills among undergraduates?

The data in Table 1 are used to answer this question.

As shown in Table 1, Pearson’s correlation coefficient of determination was used to determine the nature of the relationship that exists between social phobia and computer literacy skills among undergraduates. The result revealed a positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.255; r^2 = 0.065; r^2\% = 6.50$). The result further showed that social media contributed 6.50% to the variability in computer literacy skills among undergraduates.

**Hypothesis:** Social phobia will not significantly predict computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The data in Table 2 are used to test this hypothesis.

As shown in Table 2, a linear regression statistic was used to determine the significant relationship between social phobia and computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result revealed a significant positive relationship between the two variables, $F (1, 436) = 21.357$ $p < 0.05$ level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, which means that social phobia can significantly predict computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Pearson’s correlation to determine the relationship between social phobia and computer literacy skills among LIS undergraduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>$N$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$R$</th>
<th>$r^2$</th>
<th>$r^2%$</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer literacy skills</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.255</td>
<td>0.065</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Regression statistics of prediction between social phobia and computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Square</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>9.725</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.725</td>
<td>21.357</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>140.250</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>149.975</td>
<td>436</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variables in Equation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.087</td>
<td>.153</td>
<td>20.238</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Phobia</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>4.621</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

α = 0.05, R = 0.255, R-Square = 0.065

a. Dependent Variable: Computer Literacy Skills
b. Predictors (Constant): Social Phobia

**Discussion**

The result revealed a positive relationship between social phobia and computer literacy skills of LIS undergraduates in Rivers State ($r = 0.255$; $r^2 = 0.065$; $r^2\% = 6.50$). The result showed that social phobia contributed 6.50% to the variability in computer literacy skills among LIS undergraduates in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding agrees with the one by Jaiswal et. al. (2020), that Internet addiction was positively correlated with the social anxiety score of university students in India. Jaiswal et. al. (2020) further concluded that SAD was found to be associated with internet addiction. The study revealed that social phobia can significantly predict computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding is consistent with Bonetti, et al. (2010) whose finding revealed that socially anxious individuals often withdraw from either informal or formal situations because they are afraid of failing in socially evaluative tasks. The finding also agrees with Ajmal and Ahmad (2019), who found that social phobia may also affect students’ success in online learning environments.

**Conclusion**

This study examined social phobia and computer literacy among undergraduate students of library and information science. The findings revealed a positive relationship between the two variables – social phobia and computer literacy skills as well as established that social phobia can significantly predict computer literacy skills among library and information science undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

In light of the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Strategies should be adopted by the management of these universities to reduce social phobia among LIS undergraduates in universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Programmes/workshop on computer literacy skills should be organized for the students from time to enable them to improve their computer literacy skills.

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