



# Improving Psychological Adjustment of the Sexually Abused In-school Adolescents in Nigeria: The Roles of Emotional Stability, Social Anxiety, and Self-Esteem

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## ABSTRACT

The researchers considered examining the psychological adjustment process of sexually abused adolescents rather than dwelling on the causes. This study, therefore, examined emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem as correlates of psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents. The survey research design was employed. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this investigation. The two Local Government Areas in Osogbo were purposively selected. The researchers considered this because of the sexual abuse cases reported in the area over time. For the study, a random sample of 362 students across 20 secondary schools, including eight private and 12 public secondary schools was used. The data for this study was gathered using reliable and standardized instruments: The Sexual Assault questionnaire ( $\alpha = .80$ ), psychological adjustment scale ( $\alpha = .81$ ), Self-Esteem Inventory ( $\alpha = .71$ ), emotional stability scale ( $\alpha = .78$ ) and Social Anxiety Scale ( $\alpha = .90$ ). The results demonstrated that 41.16% of the respondents were below 12 years, 47.51% were between 13–15 years and 11.33% were above 15 years old; 31.22% of the respondents were from nuclear families, 66.57% were from extended families and 2.21% were undecided. Also, the result showed a strong correlation between sexually abused adolescents' psychological adjustment and emotional stability ( $r = .594$ ;  $p < .05$ ), social anxiety ( $r = .605$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and self-esteem ( $r = .521$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The strongest predictor of psychological adjustment was social anxiety ( $\beta = .365$ ;  $t = 7.804$ ;  $p < .05$ ) followed by emotional stability ( $\beta = .340$ ;  $t = 7.260$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and self-esteem ( $\beta = .305$ ;  $t = 8.194$ ;  $p < .05$ ). It was recommended that changing the trajectories of the sexually abused requires a lot of psychological re-orientation, especially considering interventions that employ the independent variables in this study (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem). This study adds to the current knowledge about the psychological adjustment of sexually abused teenagers as a difficulty that requires proper attention.

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## INTRODUCTION

The battle on sexual issues is being fought at many different and multi-dimensional levels all across the world to protect future generations of children from the negative repercussions. All of these attempts seem so far-fetched. The rise in the rate of sexual abuse among teenagers is concerning. Relevant stakeholders do not appear to be worried by this. This has increased teenage pregnancies, school dropouts, more indiscriminate sexual activity,

rebellious behavior, and social malaise.<sup>1</sup> The rate of indiscriminate sexual abuse among adolescents is increasing daily and unless immediate action is taken to stem the flood, it may fester to the point of becoming unmanageable. Unwanted pregnancy, one of the consequences of sexual abuse, would eventually reverse the upward trajectory of the majority of these children. Many adolescent girls who become pregnant may face discrimination and abandonment from persons who have previously cared for them because they are viewed as irresponsible. Most adolescent boys and girls are too emotionally, financially, spiritually, and psychologically immature to deal with the consequences of sexual assault.<sup>2</sup> Sexual abuse has a harmful impact not only on the individuals who are abused but on their families, relatives, and friends on the one hand, and numerous institutions, government resources, and society on the other. Despite global coordinated actions and education about this issue, it has been on the rise over the previous 15 years.<sup>3</sup> The rate of increase in cases of molestation and rape, which distort, ruin, and destroy the victims' lives, is particularly concerning. The most troubling aspect is that the trend shows no signs of abating. Sexually transmitted illnesses and infections, inadequate education, limited purchasing power, stigma, isolation, despair, dejection, low self-esteem, unstable emotions, and many other things are some of the repercussions of sexual abuse on teenagers.<sup>4</sup> Prior research has mostly concentrated on the causes, prevention, and treatment; however, recent surveys suggest that they have produced little to no results. These earlier inquiries into sexual assault seem to have produced more questions than they have solutions. They emphasized the physical side while ignoring the psychological impact of sexual abuse on the victims. To live a well-adjusted life, the psychological healing of those who have experienced sexual assault is crucial.

Psychological adjustment refers to a sense of compromise with oneself and individual authority over one's environment. According to Herrera-López et al., psychological adjustment is a process that helps a person recognize and predict the conduct of others, manage their behavior, and plan out their social interactions in an adjusted manner.<sup>5</sup> Adjustment, as defined by Vaillio et al., is a person's predisposition to alter their behaviors to conform to their surroundings, which is, in fact, a response to environmental changes.<sup>6</sup> The social ability that gives an individual their terms and connections for interactions with others and the value elements in the society where they live is this interaction and adjustment characteristic with others and their value structures. Chauhan views psychological adjustment as a response to expectations and pressures placed on the individual.<sup>7</sup> The demand, which requires a response from the person, could come from within or without. Furthermore, the psychological adjustment of the victims of sexual assault has come at a high health cost. According to the United Nations Children's Fund, the leading global cause of death for girls between the ages of 15 and 19 is sexual abuse.<sup>8</sup>

According to Action Health Incorporated, there is an increasing need for human capital investments in adolescents and youths in developing countries; components include improving the physical, sexual, and psychological health of these individuals at a price that would prevent more than 12 million teen deaths and more than 30 million unintended births, resulting in a tenfold increase in economic gain.<sup>9</sup> This has necessitated that the government unavoidably increases its spending specifically concerning health policies for adolescents and youths.<sup>10</sup> To assess how to enhance sexual health and psychological adjustment, particularly in teenagers, it is crucial to have information on sexual abuse.<sup>11</sup> Importantly, empirical proof is required to dispel misconceptions and presumptions

<sup>1</sup> Karol Lewczuk et al., "Treatment Seeking for Problematic Pornography Use among Women," *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* 6, no. 4 (October 16, 2017): 445–56, <https://doi.org/10.1556/2006.6.2017.063>.

<sup>2</sup> Adewuyi Habeeb Omonle and Yusuf Adam Oyetunji, "Social Factors as Predictors of Pornographic Viewing among In-School Adolescents in Edo State, Nigeria," *Al-Hikmah Journal of Education* 6, no. 1 (2019): 89–95.

<sup>3</sup> P. C. Manyike et al., "Child Sexual Abuse among Adolescents in Southeast Nigeria: A Concealed Public Health Behavioral Issue," *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences* 31, no. 4 (2015): 827; G R Burstein, "The Epidemiology of Adolescent Health Problems," *Nelson Textbook of Paediatrics [Electronic Copy]. 20th Edition. Philadelphia. Elsevier*, 2016.

<sup>4</sup> K Kanmodi et al., "Determinants of Sexual Practices among Secondary School Students in Nigeria: Focusing on Socio-Cultural and School-Related Factors," *Rwanda Medical Journal* 77, no. 4 (2020): 32–37.

<sup>5</sup> Mauricio Herrera López et al., "Influence of Social Motivation, Self-Perception of Social Efficacy and Normative Adjustment in the Peer Setting," *Psicothema* 28, no. 1 (2016): 32–39.

<sup>6</sup> Yolanda Andreu Vaillio et al., "Mini-Mental Adjustment to Cancer Scale: Construct Validation in Spanish Breast Cancer Patients," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 114 (November 2018): 38–44, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2018.09.004>.

<sup>7</sup> Reema Chauhan, "Relationship between Academic Self-Esteem and Educational Achievement of Visually Impaired Suggestion for Inclusion," *India, New Delhi: Rajnagar II, Palam Colony*, 1990.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, *Neither Safe nor Sound: Unaccompanied Children on the Coastline of the English Channel and the North Sea* (UNICEF France, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Action Health Incorporated, "Foundation for a Healthy Adulthood: Lessons from School-Based Family Life and HIV Education Curriculum Implementation in Lagos State" (Action Health Incorporated and Lagos State Ministry of Education Lagos, 2010); Nigeria Family Planning Blueprint, "Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria (SCALE-UP PLAN)," 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Nigeria Family Planning Blueprint, "Federal Ministry of Health, Nigeria (SCALE-UP PLAN)," 2014

<sup>11</sup> Jesus De la Fuente et al., "The Role of Personal Self-Regulation and Regulatory Teaching to Predict Motivational-Affective Variables, Achievement, and Satisfaction: A Structural Model," *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (April 21, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00399>; Omonle and Oyetunji, "Social Factors as Predictors of Pornographic Viewing among In-School Adolescents in Edo State, Nigeria."

about these behaviors in the public eye.<sup>12</sup> Despite widespread awareness, scientific research on sexual abuse faces obstacles and solutions also face difficulties.<sup>13</sup> Though sexual activity is strongly regulated in every society, its modification to improve sexual health has proved difficult. The researchers affirm the fact that adolescents have a propensity for behaviors that are risky sexually; however, it is common knowledge that adolescents experience sexual abuse in different outrageous forms. Despite the attempts by various scholars to reduce the causes, challenges, and effects of sexual abuse among young people, the situation among adolescents does not seem encouraging; the researchers, therefore, see the need to examine the psychological adjustment process of the sexually abused rather than dwelling on the causes. This study, therefore, examines emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem as correlates of psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents in Osogbo. The findings are presented in subsequent sections.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Emotional Stability

Emotional stability is the management of feelings to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display. The sexually abused are emotional beings like every other human; they have feelings, and they experience, interpret, reflect on, express, and manage these feelings. Their ability to carry out these processes positively implies their level of emotional stability.<sup>14</sup> Emotions develop as a result of social interactions and are impacted by situational, interpersonal, cultural, and social factors.<sup>15</sup> Emotional stability is a factor that can be used to predict psychological adjustment among the sexually abused. Higher emotional intelligence is associated with improved health, fewer cases of depression, and the ability to form stronger relationships.<sup>16</sup> An aspect of social intelligence known as emotional stability allows people to regulate their feelings and emotions, recognize them, and use this knowledge to guide their actions and thinking. In other words, emotional stability is the essential component of social maturity that improves a person's capacity for psychological adjustment.<sup>17</sup> The four indications of emotional stability are emotionality, sociability, self-control, and well-being. These indicators have implications for key life domains like health, parenting, pro-social behavior, psychological adjustment, academic success in school, leadership and career decision-making, and self-management skills in early adolescence.<sup>18</sup>

According to research, understanding how teenagers' social and emotional development affects their psychological adjustment is an intricate assignment. Singh et.al. found that individuals who possess emotional stability are good at reading and managing their own emotions and are skilled at reading and managing the emotions of others and are more likely to succeed in all areas of life.<sup>19</sup> When compared to those who are unable to exert any control over their emotional lives and engage in internal conflicts that impair their capacity for concentration and

<sup>12</sup> Norval D Glenn, "The Recent Trend in Marital Success in the United States," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1991, 261–70; K. Bal and M.P Koss, "From Prevalence to Prevention: Closing the Gap between What We Know about Rape and What We Do," in *Sourcebook on Violence against Women* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2019), 117–42.

<sup>13</sup> Adewuyi Habeeb Omojonle, "Religiosity, Family Back Ground and Occupational Prestige as Predictors of Career Preference among Secondary School Adolescents in Osun State," *American Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2019): 8; Gloria Fraser et al., "Non-Suicidal Self-Injury, Sexuality Concerns, and Emotion Regulation among Sexually Diverse Adolescents: A Multiple Mediation Analysis," *Archives of Suicide Research* 22, no. 3 (2018): 432–52.

<sup>14</sup> Parsanjeet Kumar, "A Study of Emotional Stability and Socio-Economic-Status of Students Studying in Secondary Schools," *International Journal of Education and Information Studies* 3, no. 1 (2013): 7–11.

<sup>15</sup> Alexandra Martins, Nelson Ramalho, and Estelle Morin, "A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Health," *Personality and Individual Differences* 49, no. 6 (October 2010): 554–64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.05.029>.

<sup>16</sup> David Cantón-Cortés and José Cantón, "Coping with Child Sexual Abuse among College Students and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Role of Continuity of Abuse and Relationship with the Perpetrator," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 34, no. 7 (July 2010): 496–506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2009.11.004>; A Gugliandolo, "Many Tongues, One People: The Making Of Tharu Identity In Nepal" (Routledge, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Gurumayum Mukesh Sharma, "Personality And Emotional Intelligence Between Young Adults Belonging To Nuclear And Joint Families; A Comparative Study" (Manipur University , 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Gloria Da Costa, Gloudien M Spies, and Laetitia Coetzee, "Contributory Factors to Child on Child Sexual Abuse: Perceptions of Diverted Female Youth Sex Offenders," *Child Abuse Research in South Africa* 15, no. 2 (2014): 35–50; Federica Andrei and K.V. Petrides, "Trait Emotional Intelligence and Somatic Complaints with Reference to Positive and Negative Mood," *Psihologija* 46, no. 1 (2013): 5–15, <https://doi.org/10.2298/PSI1301005A>; N Sanchez-Ruiz, "Marital Adjustment and Personal Space Orientation," *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 130, no. 5 (2013): 633–39; Deborah Posel, "'Getting the Nation Talking about Sex': Reflections on the Discursive Constitution of Sexuality in South Africa since 1994," *Agenda* 18, no. 62 (2004): 53–63; María Teresa Frías, Audrey Brassard, and Phillip R. Shaver, "Childhood Sexual Abuse and Attachment Insecurities as Predictors of Women's Own and Perceived-Partner Extradynamic Involvement," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 38, no. 9 (September 2014): 1450–58, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.02.009>; Chanda Rawat and Ritu Singh, "Effect of Family Type on Emotional Maturity of Adolescents," *Journal of Human Ecology* 57, no. 1–2 (2017): 47–52; Richard W Robins et al., "Evaluating the Link between Self-Esteem and Temperament in Mexican Origin Early Adolescents," *Journal of Adolescence* 33, no. 3 (2010): 403–10.

<sup>19</sup> Ritu Singh, Kusha Pant, and Laitonjam Valentina, "Impact Analysis: Family Structure on Social and Emotional Maturity of Adolescents," *The Anthropologist* 17, no. 2 (March 18, 2014): 359–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2014.11891445>.

clarity of mind, such people find fulfillment in themselves. Results have further revealed that respondents who showed high emotional stability were more personally, interpersonally, and socially adequate and thus, psychologically adjusted than those with low stability. Similarly, they scored much higher than individuals with low stability on the emotional development, social adjustment, personality integration, and independence components of emotional maturity. Not only is emotional stability an important factor in determining psychological patterns, but it also plays a role in regulating the expansion of adolescent development. According to Glüer and Lohaus, stable emotional behavior is defined as behavior that reflects the outcomes of appropriate emotional growth at every level.<sup>20</sup> A person may still be mentally adjusted if they can maintain emotional stability and control during stressful circumstances, such as sexual abuse.<sup>21</sup>

### Social Anxiety

Social anxiety is a common mental health issue that can range from mild distress to severe disability. In its mildest form, it can take the shape of momentary social anxiety that arises in reaction to typical social-evaluative events while its more severe form is characterized by crippling, continuous fear and avoidance.<sup>22</sup> When someone tries to project a positive public image but has worries about their capacity to do so, social anxiety develops. Low self-esteem and internalized guilt may contribute to such doubt.<sup>23</sup> Together, these factors have the potential to negatively affect social anxiety, personal identity, interpersonal relationships, mental health, and academic success. More specifically, social skill deficiencies, concentration issues, and psychological adjustment problems in school settings were all associated with severe social anxiety. People commonly experience upset, unease, and tension when they get apprehensive. The loss of a career, a failed relationship, sexual abuse, a significant disease, a serious accident, or the passing of a loved one can all cause anxiety feelings.<sup>24</sup> In these circumstances, feeling apprehensive is natural, but it often lasts for a brief period. Given that experiencing anxiety is so frequent, it is critical to distinguish between normal anxiety and the signs of an anxiety disorder.<sup>25</sup>

Ameringen observed that 21% of 17-year-old Swedish school students reported reduced functioning as a result of social anxiety.<sup>26</sup> Richard on the other hand, discovered that a sizable fraction of individuals with social anxiety reported quitting school early due to nervousness.<sup>27</sup> Additional research has revealed significant consequences of social anxiety in dropping out of school, an increased likelihood of failing an exam, and graduation failure. According to Upreti, social anxiety affects 7–13% of adults and children throughout their lifetimes.<sup>28</sup> Fergusson et al., go on to add that socially anxious people worry about what they think other people think of them, which can cause OCD, dread, shyness, and social withdrawal. As a result, when confronted with a feared social circumstance, the socially anxious person gets unduly worried about looking foolish and worries that other people will view them as weak or apprehensive. People with social anxiety often avoid the feared social encounters due to the intense sensations of shame and worry. The individual has severe distress and psychological maladjustment as a result of the avoidance's significant interference with or impairment of daily living. Studies with adolescents who have experienced sexual abuse and adults who have experienced sexual abuse as children have revealed that avoidant coping, in which a person avoids or refuses to address the issue, is ineffective at preventing the symptoms of sexual abuse but instead causes psychological issues.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Michael Glüer and Arnold Lohaus, "Frequency of Victimization Experiences and Well-Being among Online, Offline, and Combined Victims on Social Online Network Sites of German Children and Adolescents," *Frontiers in Public Health* 3 (2015): 166369.

<sup>21</sup> Gyanesh Kumar Tiwari et al., "The Life Outcomes of Children during COVID-19: Exploring the Protective Roles of the Joint and Nuclear Families in India," *Authorea Preprints*, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Olga Gómez-Ortiz et al., "Analysis of Emotion Regulation in Spanish Adolescents: Validation of the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire," *Frontiers in Psychology* 6 (2016): 172329; Julia Friederike Sowislo and Ulrich Orth, "Does Low Self-Esteem Predict Depression and Anxiety? A Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Studies.," *Psychological Bulletin* 139, no. 1 (January 2013): 213–40, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028931>.

<sup>23</sup> Sowislo and Orth, "Does Low Self-Esteem Predict Depression and Anxiety? A Meta-Analysis of Longitudinal Studies."

<sup>24</sup> B. Arora and J. Kaur, "Emotional Stability Among Adolescents about the Parent-Child Relationship," *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies* 2, no. 5 (2014): 305–8.

<sup>25</sup> Juan Jesús Sola-Carmona et al., "Anxiety, Psychological Well-Being and Self-Esteem in Spanish Families with Blind Children. A Change in Psychological Adjustment?," *Research in Developmental Disabilities* 34, no. 6 (June 2013): 1886–90, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2013.03.002>.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Van Ameringen and Beth Patterson, "Refractory Social Anxiety Disorder," *Journal of Psychiatry & Neuroscience* 42, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): E1–2, <https://doi.org/10.1503/jpn.160016>.

<sup>27</sup> Erin M. Richard, "Developing Employee Resilience: The Role of Leader-Facilitated Emotion Management," *Advances in Developing Human Resources* 22, no. 4 (November 5, 2020): 387–403, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422320949143>.

<sup>28</sup> Rashmi Upreti, "Identity Construction: An Important Issue among Adolescents," *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 22, no. 6 (2017): 54–57.

<sup>29</sup> T. E. Furmark, *Himalayan Households: Tamang Demography and Domestic Processes* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 2012).

## Self-Esteem and Psychological Adjustment

According to Costa-Requena et al., high levels of self-esteem are essential for managing psychological equilibrium, peer pressure, familial difficulties, and choices that have an impact on a student's health and development into adulthood.<sup>30</sup> High levels of self-esteem are also associated with greater mental health in adolescents and young adults. A precise operational definition of self-esteem is frequently absent from studies that examine the relationship between young people's sexual health behaviors and self-esteem. Most studies on self-esteem and teenage behavior conducted so far have employed a global measure of self-esteem. A person's knowledge and attitude about themselves make up their self-esteem. The impression that a person has of themselves as well as the traits and qualities that they use to characterize themselves. Self-esteem is significant because it makes a significant contribution to personality development. It is hypothesized that higher levels of self-esteem will work as a protective factor, reducing the drive for psychological maladjustment and boosting resistance to it. Self-esteem and psychological health are closely related, including depression, social anxiety, loneliness, and alienation; self-efficacy, ego strength, hardiness, optimism, and maladjustment are closely related.<sup>31</sup>

Also, understanding adolescents' psychology and sexual behavior has benefited from area-specific self-esteem research that has explored self-esteem in particular contexts like peers, school, and home.<sup>32</sup> The relationship between neuroticism and self-esteem has consistently been found to be significantly negative among the big five personality dimensions, while the relationship between extraversion and self-esteem has consistently been found to be significantly positive. Civitci identified the main sources of problems affecting the capacity of adolescents to heal from sexual assault psychologically.<sup>33</sup> One is claimed to be tied to academic achievement and expectations and the other is said to be related to social variables like building and sustaining interpersonal ties with people in their environment. The self-esteem and academic success of those who have experienced sexual assault and emotions of loneliness have a shaky link, according to Burzik's research.<sup>34</sup> People's psychological functioning is impacted by stress in a way that seems to be moderated by their sense of self-worth. Since they are less likely to have their sense of self threatened and are more resilient, people with high self-esteem appear to be shielded from experiencing distress from bad experiences. Having a high sense of self also seems to lead to more active and efficient stress management and higher levels of motivation.<sup>35</sup>

The following research questions guided the study.

- i. What is the pattern of relationship between the independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) and psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents?
- ii. What is the combined effect of independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents?
- iii. What is the relative effect of independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents?

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey research design as its methodology. It is a form of research study in which a group of people, things, or objects are investigated by gathering and evaluating data from just a number of those things, people, or objects that are thought to be precise examples of the full group. All adolescent students in Osogbo, Osun State's capital, make up the study's population. The population consists of secondary school adolescents from both public and private colleges. The multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this investigation. The two

<sup>30</sup> Gema Costa-Requena, Rafael Ballester Arnal, and Francisco Gil, "The Influence of Coping Response and Health-Related Quality of Life on Perceived Social Support during Cancer Treatment," *Palliative and Supportive Care* 13, no. 3 (June 28, 2015): 683–89, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478951514000418>.

<sup>31</sup> Teresa Ngozi Onyemah and Adewuyi Habeeb Omojonle, "Child Abuse and Family Background as Predictors of Poor Academic Performance among Adolescents in Special Schools of Ibadan-Nigeria," *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology (Online ISSN 2664-0899. Print ISSN 2517-9306)*, 6, no. 1 (2022): 106–19.

<sup>32</sup> Hayoung Ko, Jaehyun Shin, and Lee D. Cooper, "Brief Adjustment Scale–6 for Measurement-Based Care: Psychometric Properties, Measurement Invariance, and Clinical Utility," *Assessment* 30, no. 5 (July 3, 2023): 1623–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10731911221115144>; Adrienne L. Romer, Ahmad R. Hariri, and Timothy J. Strauman, "Regulatory Focus and the p Factor: Evidence for Self-Regulatory Dysfunction as a Transdiagnostic Feature of General Psychopathology," *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 137 (May 2021): 178–85, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2021.02.051>.

<sup>33</sup> Asim Civitci, "Moderator Role of Self-Esteem on the Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Depression in Early Adolescents," *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties* 15, no. 2 (2010): 141–52.

<sup>34</sup> K Burzik, "Self-Esteem and Social Support and Their Relationship to Emotional Stability in School-Aged Adolescents," *Journal of Studies of the University of Ammar Thaleeji Laghouat - Algeria* 56 (2017): 110–20; Orit Lahav, Alan Apter, and Navah Z Ratzon, "Psychological Adjustment and Levels of Self Esteem in Children with Visual-Motor Integration Difficulties Influences the Results of a Randomized Intervention Trial," *Research in Developmental Disabilities* 34, no. 1 (2013): 56–64.

<sup>35</sup> Lahav, Apter, and Ratzon, "Psychological Adjustment and Levels of Self Esteem in Children with Visual-Motor Integration Difficulties Influences the Results of a Randomized Intervention Trial."

Local Government Areas in Osogbo were purposively selected. The researchers considered this because of the sexual abuse cases reported in the area over time. For the study, a random sample of 362 students across 20 secondary schools, including eight private and 12 public secondary schools was used.

Data gathering involved the use of a structured questionnaire. There were two sections to the questionnaire (A and B). The respondents' demographic data was collected in Section A, including age and parental background which were some of these demographic traits. The other standardized tests that were employed in the study were included in Section B and are explained below.

### ***Sexual Assault Questionnaire***

The Sexual Assault Questionnaire developed by Carver was adapted and used as the screening instrument.<sup>36</sup> This scale consists of ten (10) items and the responses are anchored based on the two (2) point Likert which is 1= YES and 2= NO. Examples of the items in the scale include, "Has someone kissed or sexually touched you without your active, ongoing voluntary agreement?", "Has someone used physical force or threats of physical force to do the following with you like sexual penetration" and "Has someone had contact with you involving kissing or another sexual touching by threatening serious non-physical harm or promising rewards such that you felt you must comply?" The obtainable point on the scale ranges from 10–20; a score above 15 indicates sexual assault experience. It has a reliability coefficient of 0.80.

### ***The Brief Adjustment Scale-6 (BASE-6)***

The Brief Adjustment Scale-6 (BASE-6) was developed by Ko et al. It originally measured healthy adjustment to life. It was adapted as a measure of psychological adjustment for the sexually abused. It is a 15-item scale with responses anchored based on four point types: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). This measure has demonstrated high internal consistency reliability ranging from  $\alpha = .81$  to  $.88$  across numerous studies.

### ***Self-Esteem Scale***

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was adopted.<sup>37</sup> It looks at the social, academic, family, and self-esteem of children and adolescents. This scale has 58 total items: four core subscales and a lie detector subscale. Examples of items on the scale are: "At times I think I am of no good at all," "I take a positive view of myself," and other such statements. However, before the instrument was used, the instrument's reliability was determined through pilot research and the scale's internal consistency resulted in  $= .71$ , demonstrating that the scale is dependable for use. In addition, the strong construct validity of the instrument is shown by the Cronbach alpha.

### ***Emotional Stability Scale (ESS)***

The Emotional Stability Scale (ESS), developed by Chaturvedi and Chander, measures emotional stability in adolescents based on self-reported responses to questions addressing the evaluation and expression of emotions in themselves and others, regulation of emotions in themselves and others, and the use of emotions to solve problems.<sup>38</sup> The instrument has been carefully created in a way that taps into all areas of emotional intelligence, enabling people to take ownership of their emotions and happiness. There are 33 items on the test, each with a score from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA) on a five-point scale. On a five-point scale, participants respond by expressing how much they agree. The ESS has shown strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values varying from 0.87 to 0.89.<sup>39</sup>

### ***Social Anxiety Scale***

The amount of social anxiety in adolescents was assessed using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale, which was published by Fresco et.al. This test evaluates the impact social anxiety has on a person's life in a range of contexts.<sup>40</sup> How worried or afraid they feel in the situation is the first question. The second query inquires how frequently they avoid the circumstance. When they encounter a setting they are not accustomed to, we ask them to consider "What if they were faced with that situation," and then rate how much they would fear it and how often they would try to

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<sup>36</sup> Charles S. Carver, "You Want to Measure Coping but Your Protocol' Too Long: Consider the Brief Cope," *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 4, no. 1 (March 1997): 92–100, [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327558ijbm0401\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327558ijbm0401_6).

<sup>37</sup> Coopersmith S., *The Antecedents of Self-Esteem* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1967).

<sup>38</sup> M Chaturvedi and R Chander, "Development of Emotional Stability Scale," *Industrial Psychiatry Journal* 19, no. 1 (2010): 37–40.

<sup>39</sup> D. M. FRESCO et al., "The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale: A Comparison of the Psychometric Properties of Self-Report and Clinician-Administered Formats," *Psychological Medicine* 31, no. 6 (August 31, 2001): 1025–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291701004056>.

<sup>40</sup> FRESCO et al., "The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale: A Comparison of the Psychometric Properties of Self-Report and Clinician-Administered Formats."

avoid it. The instrument’s total reliability estimate came out to be 0.90. This demonstrated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

**PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

Simple percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression statistical methods were used to examine the study’s data at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Demographic data**

Table 1: Respondents distribution based on age range

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 12 Years	149	41.16
13–15 Years	172	47.51
Above 15 Years	41	11.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 indicates that 41.16% of the respondents were below 12 years, 47.51% were between 13–15 years and 11.33% were above 15 years old.

Table 2: Family structure distribution among respondents

Family structure	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear	113	31.22
Extended	241	66.57
Others	8	2.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>362</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In Table 2, 31.22% of the respondents were from nuclear families, 66.57% were from extended families, and 2.21% were undecided.

**Research Question One**

What is the pattern of relationship between the independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) and psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents?

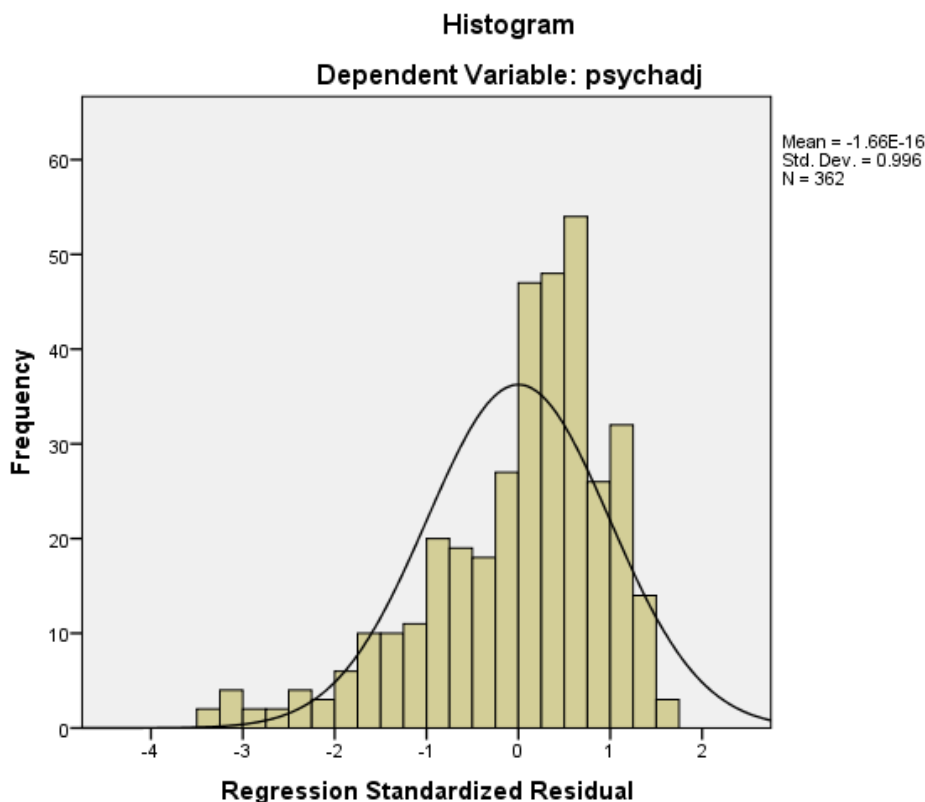


Figure 1: showing the frequency distribution of the Dependent Variable

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the variables**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Psychological adjustment	362	72.60	40.54	1.00			
Emotional stability	362	92.55	29.27	.565**	1.00		
Social anxiety	362	27.87	9.229	.588**	.608**	1.00	
Self-esteem	362	67.90	38.41	.328**	.011	.052	1.00

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 lists the study variables’ descriptive statistics and cross-correlations. According to Table 3, there is a strong relationship between sexually abused adolescents’ psychological adjustment and emotional stability ( $r = .594$ ;  $p < .05$ ), social anxiety ( $r = .605$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and self-esteem ( $r = .521$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Significant correlations between the independent variables also exist.

**Research Question Two**

What is the joint effect of the independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents?

**Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual**

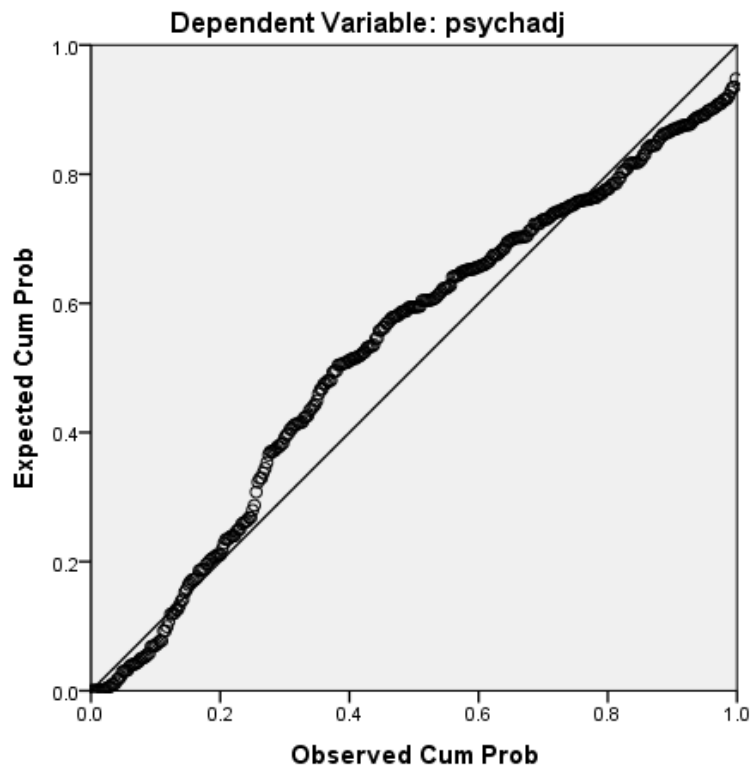


Figure 2: Showing the P-plot of the variables.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis demonstrating the combined effects of the independent variables on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents.

**Analysis of variance**

	Sum of Square (SS)	DF	Mean Square	F
Regression	300450.525	3	100150.175	122.431
Residual	292848.194	358	818.012	
Total	593298.718	361		

a)  $R = .712$

b)  $R^2 = .506$

c) Adjusted  $R^2 = .502$

d) Standard error of estimate = 28.6009

Table 4 demonstrates that the independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) have a significant impact on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents when combined. The  $R^2$  value was .712 while  $R^2$  adjusted value was .506. With 50.6% of the independent factors accounting for the adolescents' psychological adjustment, the analysis of variance conducted on the multiple regressions produced an F-ratio value of 122.431, which was significant at the 0.05 level.

**Research Question Three**

What is the relative effect of each of the independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents?

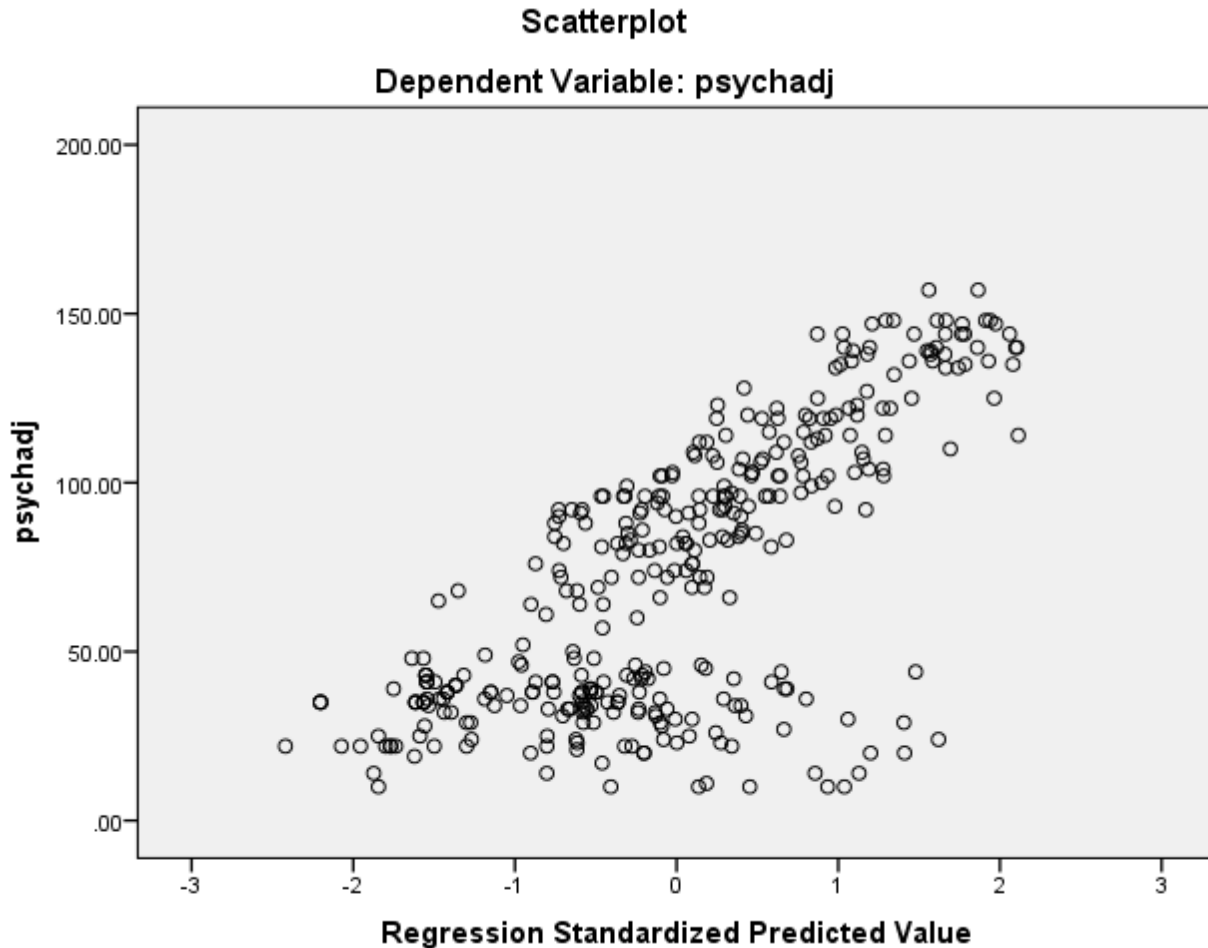


Figure 3: Showing the scattered plot of adjustment as the dependent variables

**Table 5: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to the Prediction**

Model	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients		t	p
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	-37.584	5.959		-6.307	.000
Emotional stability	.470	.065	.340	7.260	.000
Social anxiety	1.608	.206	.365	7.804	.000
Self-esteem	.322	.039	.305	8.194	.000

Table 5 demonstrates that in Osogbo, Osun State, the independent factors had a substantial impact on the prediction of adolescents' psychological adjustment. The largest contribution to the prediction in terms of magnitude was made by social anxiety ( $\beta = .365$ ;  $t = 7.804$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Emotional stability ( $\beta = .340$ ;  $t = 7.260$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and self-esteem ( $\beta = .305$ ;  $t = 8.194$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) were the other significant variables, in that order.

## DISCUSSION

From the results, the demographic analysis indicated that 41.16% of the respondents were below 12 years, 47.51% were between 13–15 years and 11.33% were above 15 years old. This means that adolescents between the age bracket of 13–15 years old are the most abused; this may be because these adolescents are more susceptible and more vulnerable at this stage as they are not mature enough to make decisions. Also, 66.57% of the adolescents were from extended families, which implies that most abused adolescents come from an extended family background. The possible reason for this is that this kind of family often does not pay enough attention to the children, and they often are left to fend for themselves making them easily accessible to sexual abusers. This complies with the findings of Vannucci et al. who found that 278 of 405 victims of sexual abuse were adolescents in their research.<sup>41</sup> They discovered that raising children with both parents in the same household is the greatest way to raise them to be responsible adults. Children who are not properly parented are denied the opportunity to acquire appropriate social behavior. Several studies have warned the public about the harmful effects of the rising rate of sexual abuse of children in society; the most significant of these is the absence of parental supervision. Lack of control makes children more likely to commit many criminal deeds, join dangerous groups, and exhibit antisocial behavior. Teenagers aged 13 to 19 are reported to be sexual assault or rape victims more than twice as frequently as any other age group in the USA, according to Feinstein et al.<sup>42</sup> Numerous research have found that children, and particularly adolescent females, are sexually attacked more frequently than adults.<sup>43</sup> The majority of sexual assault victims in their series (87.65%) were under the age of 18. According to Olanrewaju and Omojonle, the age distribution of the respondents who had experienced sexual abuse was as follows: early adolescence–0%, 0/33; mid-adolescence–72.7%, 24/33; and late adolescence–27.3%, 9/33.<sup>44</sup>

From the first research question, the result showed that there is a strong relationship between sexually abused adolescents' psychological adjustment and emotional stability, social anxiety and self-esteem. That is, emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem have a high probability of improving psychological adjustment among sexually abused adolescents. The higher the emotional stability and self-esteem, the less anxiety is shown by these sexually abused adolescents, and the more adjusted they become psychologically. This finding is in line with Hipson et al. and Opesemowo, et al., who found that shy children have difficulty regulating negative emotions, such as anger and disappointment, which contribute to problems interacting with others and psychological maladjustment.<sup>45</sup> In another study, Osa-Edoh and Iyamu posit that individuals with low emotional stability and self-esteem have fewer social skills and develop fewer friends because they tend to avoid asking and answering questions in social settings, participating in a debate that would put them in the limelight as well as just anything that socially engages them.<sup>46</sup> Hawker and Boulton, in a review of the behavior of genetic studies, analyzed self-esteem, shyness, emotional intelligence, and stability in adolescent sexual behavior and concluded that over 69% of the variance in adolescent sexuality is responsible for psychological adjustment.<sup>47</sup>

Further, the finding of the study corroborates the studies of Khazaie et al., who noted that adolescents with emotional instability are perceived as unfriendly and untalented and tend to feel lonely and have low self-esteem and a lower level of psychological adjustment. They also added that such individuals are less likely to demonstrate their knowledge and older people in the environment may develop poor perceptions of these adolescents. Flynn et al. in their study of gender, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence interventions on the adjustment of the sexually abused found that a statistical correlation between the measures is assumed to reflect self-esteem as a major factor

<sup>41</sup> Anna Vannucci et al., "Social Media Use and Risky Behaviors in Adolescents: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Adolescence* 79 (2020): 258–74.

<sup>42</sup> Brian A Feinstein et al., "Sexual Orientation Prototypicality and Well-Being among Heterosexual and Sexual Minority Adults," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 44 (2015): 1415–22.

<sup>43</sup> Megan Landry et al., "Social Media and Sexual Behavior among Adolescents: Is There a Link?," *JMIR Public Health and Surveillance* 3, no. 2 (2017): e7149; Ismail Yahaya et al., "A Comparative Study of the Socioeconomic Factors Associated with Childhood Sexual Abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Pan African Medical Journal* 11, no. 1 (2012).

<sup>44</sup> Muraina Kamilu Olanrewaju and Adewuyi Habeeb Omojonle, "Influence of Peer Pressure, Socio-Economic Status and Social Networking on Academic Performance of Students in Oyo State," *Africa Education Evaluation* 1, no. 1 (2017): 1–10.

<sup>45</sup> Will E. Hipson et al., "Maternal Agreeableness Moderates Associations Between Young Children's Emotion Dysregulation and Socioemotional Functioning at School," *The Journal of Genetic Psychology* 178, no. 2 (March 4, 2017): 102–7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2016.1269715>; Oluwaseyi Opesemowo et al., "Differential Bundle Functioning of National Examinations Council Mathematics Test Items: An Exploratory Structural Equation Modelling Approach," *Eğitimde ve Psikolojide Ölçme ve Değerlendirme Dergisi* 14, no. 1 (March 25, 2023): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.21031/epod.1142713>.

<sup>46</sup> G I Osa-Edoh and F I Iyamu, "Social Life Adjustment and Academic Achievement of Adolescents in Edo State: Implication for Counselling," *Ozean Journal of Applied Sciences* 5, no. 2 (2012): 159–67.

<sup>47</sup> David S J Hawker and Michael J Boulton, "Twenty Years' Research on Peer Victimization and Psychosocial Maladjustment: A Meta-Analytic Review of Cross-Sectional Studies," *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines* 41, no. 4 (2000): 441–55.

in the psychological adjustment of the sexually abused.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, adolescents with low esteem tend to engage in significantly less adjusted behavior than others because such children often care so much about what others think of them. They are more reticent than their peers in social circumstances and are slower to start conversations, take longer to break the silence, give shorter utterances and avoid elaborating.<sup>49</sup> They make less eye contact and touch their faces and bodies more frequently. They are preoccupied with the impression that what they say will create embarrassment, and they think that it is better to say nothing than to risk others' disapproval. This arises from the feeling of inadequacy. Furthermore, findings on low self-esteem also revealed that sexually abused adolescents take extra precautions by staying quiet to prevent embarrassment because they get shy and upset when they make mistakes.<sup>50</sup>

For the second research question, the findings indicated that the independent variables (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem) have a significant impact on the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents when combined. The multiple regressions' analysis of variance revealed that 50.6% of independent factors contributed to the adolescents' psychological adjustment. The findings support other findings, such as those by Morozova, et.al., which used data from more than 19,000 adolescents in four African countries (Ghana, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Malawi).<sup>51</sup> The study revealed that anxiety, emotional stability, individual resilience, and self-esteem appear to influence the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents, especially among females. The finding of the study also corroborates other similar studies, such as Sharma's that determined the relationship between gender, emotional stability, and family structure on the adjustment of the sexually abused and found that vulnerable adolescents are most likely to show irresponsible risky sexual behavior (psychological maladjustment). To determine the sort of relationship between sexually abused teenagers and their non-abusive classmates, Volkova, et al. examined emotional stability and self-concept.<sup>52</sup> Two hundred male and female teenagers, both from sexually abused and non-abusive backgrounds, made up the study sample. The findings indicated that there are statistically significant variations in the notion of emotional stability favoring the gender variable and that there is a positive association between the concept of emotional stability and the concept of self among sexually abused and unaffected teenagers.

Cheung, Cheung, and Hue discovered that lower levels of emotional instability are strongly correlated with low and depressing moods, which is a key structural component of depression.<sup>53</sup> The ability to manage one's psychopathological symptoms and psychological dysfunctions is better for emotionally secure people. People with high emotional stability can improve their undesirable traits and mood states. Interpersonal relationship issues, poor impulse control, stress, loneliness, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, aggressive behaviors, suicidal thoughts, and drug and alcohol use appear to be significantly linked with poor emotional stability, but positive subjective well-being, a high level of satisfaction, and increased happiness are thought to be caused by a high level of emotional stability.<sup>54</sup> Caprara et.al. sought to better understand how emotional stability, affective self-regulation efficacy beliefs, and psychological adjustment change from adolescence to young adulthood.<sup>55</sup> To examine the level and stability of emotional stability and self-efficacy in regulating negative emotions and expressing positive adjustment, a latent growth curve approach was used. One hundred and ninety-eight teenagers made up the study's sample; they ranged in age from 15 at the start to 21 at the conclusion. According to the findings, self-efficacy beliefs and initial levels of emotional stability are closely associated. According to the putout hypothesis, the rate of perceived self-efficacy in controlling negative emotions predicted the rate of emotional stability; however, the inverse relationship was not significant.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Patrick J. Flynn et al., "Tracking the Process of Resilience: How Emotional Stability and Experience Influence Exhaustion and Commitment Trajectories," *Group & Organization Management* 46, no. 4 (August 13, 2021): 692–736, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10596011211027676>.

<sup>49</sup> Shelley Hymel and Susan M. Swearer, "Four Decades of Research on School Bullying: An Introduction.," *American Psychologist* 70, no. 4 (May 2015): 293–99, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038928>.

<sup>50</sup> Junye Yu et al., "Factors Associated With Low Self-Esteem Among Patients With Hematologic Malignancies: A Cross-Sectional Study," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 12 (August 19, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.683894>.

<sup>51</sup> Lyudmila B Morozova et al., "The Problem of Socio-Psychological Adjustment of Personality in the Scientists' Studies.," *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education* 11, no. 11 (2016): 4706–15.

<sup>52</sup> E N Volkova et al., "Regarding Definition of the Notion of Positive Socialization of Youth," *Herald of Minin University* 2(2016):215–26.

<sup>53</sup> Chau-Kiu Cheung, Hoi Yan Cheung, and Ming-Tak Hue, "Emotional Intelligence as a Basis for Self-Esteem in Young Adults," *The Journal of Psychology* 149, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 63–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2013.838540>.

<sup>54</sup> Magdalena Gómez-Díaz, María Soledad Delgado-Gómez, and Rosario Gómez-Sánchez, "Education, Emotions and Health: Emotional Education in Nursing," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 237 (February 2017): 492–98, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.095>

<sup>55</sup> Gianvittorio Caprara et al., "Emotional Stability and Affective Self-Regulatory Efficacy Beliefs: Proofs of Integration between Trait Theory and Social Cognitive Theory," *European Journal of Personality* 27, no. 2 (2013): 145–54.

<sup>56</sup> Caprara et al., "Emotional Stability and Affective Self-Regulatory Efficacy Beliefs: Proofs of Integration between Trait Theory and Social Cognitive Theory."

The outcome indicated in the third research question that the independent variables significantly contributed to the prediction of the independent factors had a substantial impact on the prediction of adolescents' psychological adjustment. The largest contribution to the prediction in terms of magnitude was made by social anxiety followed by emotional stability and self-esteem. This result finds support in a study conducted by Shaikh, et.al. determined the degree of social anxiety, emotional stability, and their link to the level of social-psychological adjustment of students in public and private high schools.<sup>57</sup> 100 male and female students made up the study sample. The study's findings revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of social anxiety between students in public and private schools. However, there were differences in the general rate of social and adjustment levels of students that could be attributed to emotional stability, and the study sample's level of emotional stability was moderate.<sup>58</sup> In a similar vein, Guerra, et.al., investigated the link between university students' social adjustment and social functioning and various psychological, social, and physical elements, such as anxiety, depression, and social and physical health. According to the study's findings, emotional stability has a good correlation with social adjustment and social role among university students and a strong negative correlation with depression and anxiety. They discovered a high correlation between psychological adjustment and low levels of anxiety and depression. On the other side, they discovered that low levels of emotional stability are a reliable indicator of poor mental health, poor social functioning, and poor social adjustment.<sup>59</sup>

In addition, Sariçam, et.al., discovered a U-shaped relationship between self-esteem, emotional stability, and psychological adjustment in a study involving college students.<sup>60</sup> In this study, low self-esteem scores indicated a significant self-ideal discrepancy, which after a certain point became linked to high emotional instability and psychological maladjustment. According to other researchers, the relationship between low self-esteem and psychological maladjustment is not solely dependent on one's degree of self-esteem. While academic issues were predicted by the academic competence contingency, they discovered that poor self-esteem among college freshmen was a predictor of social issues. The findings of another study revealed that the personal-emotional adjustment for self-esteem, social anxiety, and self-esteem were both direct and significant predictors of all categories of college adjustment. While problem-solving coping was found to be unrelated to any sort of college adjustment, self-esteem was discovered to be regulated by social anxiety and avoidant coping.<sup>61</sup> Even though the multifaceted nature of self-esteem is well acknowledged, most of the research relied on it as a universal concept. Social interaction, good physical health, and optimistic psychological well-being are all significantly correlated with mood restoration and emotional clarity. High levels of emotional stability are a requirement for effective coping mechanisms with maladaptive behaviors.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve an improved psychological adjustment among adolescents (most especially the sexually abused), the following recommendations were highlighted:

- Adolescents should be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills useful to live a meaningful life. They should also strive to be socially acceptable and must be able to successfully enter into play with others, which may be the most "basic" part of developing social skills.
- The necessity for the availability of counseling services has been revealed in this study which calls for appropriate attention. The policymakers and the government at all levels should give counseling services a significant position in society and make jingles that will constantly educate the nation on the importance of counseling and the challenges of sexual abuse among adolescents.
- Orientation programs for adolescents in and out of school are recommended. Emotional stability, self-esteem, and social anxiety must form integral components of the orientation program which should be anchored by qualified counseling psychologists. This kind of training is very critical as it would equip the adolescents with the skills needed to cope in and outside the school environment, particularly when issues of sexual abuse arise.
- Adolescents can be helped to reduce social anxiety by incorporating groups or teamwork into teaching strategies.

<sup>57</sup> P. Shaikh, A. Shaikh, and A. Wahed, "A Study of Emotional Stability Among Children," *Scholars Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language* 3, no. 15 (2016).

<sup>58</sup> Shaikh P., Shaikh A., A Wahid, A. "A Study of Emotional Stability Among Children," *Scholars Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language*, vol. 3, no. 15, pp. 3623–3627, 2016

<sup>59</sup> Cristóbal Guerra et al., "Design Considerations for Group Interventions for Adolescent Victims of Interpersonal Violence in Chile," *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma* 31, no. 10 (2022): 1318–36.

<sup>60</sup> Hakan Sariçam et al., "The Investigation of Relation between Elementary School Second Grade Students' Self-Esteem, Different Skills and Assertiveness Levels İlköğretim II. Kademe Öğrencilerinde Benlik Saygısı, Farklı Yetenek ve Atılgnlık Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi," *Journal of Human Sciences* 10, no. 1 (2013): 525–40.

<sup>61</sup> Kehinde Kazeem Kanmodi et al., "Knowledge of Senior Secondary School Students in Nigeria about Head and Neck Cancer: Implications on Prevention Strategies," *Malawi Medical Journal* 34, no. 3 (2022): 162–69.

## CONCLUSION

This study has examined emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem as correlates of psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents in Oshogbo Nigeria. This study has shown that changing the trajectories of the sexually abused involves a significant amount of psychological re-orientation, especially when the interventions use the independent variables in this study (emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem). This research work has established that there is a positive joint correlation between these factors and the psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents. This study has further revealed that social anxiety was the most potent contributor to the prediction of psychological adjustment in sexually abused adolescents, followed by emotional stability and self-esteem. The study underscores the need for counseling programs for adolescents in all ramifications; this will help in the amelioration of psychological strain which could hamper adjustment for sexually abused adolescents. Various techniques should be developed to tackle the issue of sexual abuse in various areas; the emphasis should also be on the recognized ways or elements identified by the researchers that can affect the psychological adjustment of the victims of sexual abuse. This study contributes to knowledge on emotional stability, social anxiety, and self-esteem as predictors of psychological adjustment of sexually abused adolescents.

## Limitations of the Study

- During this work, the researchers found it difficult particularly at the initial stage to gain the attention of the school principals and heads.
- In addition, the students' attitudes toward supplying correct and adequate information concerning the items in the questionnaire were a factor in this research.

## Ethics Statement

All procedures carried out in this study with human participants followed the ethical standards of the National Research Committee and the Declaration of the Helsinki of 1964 and its subsequent amendments or comparable ethical standards. The participants gave their written informed consent to take part in this study.

## Acknowledgments

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## Availability of Data Statement

The article and supplementary materials contain the original contributions to the study; for further information, contact the corresponding author.

## Funding

The study was carried out without financial support.

## Competing Interests

The authors of the study declare that there were no business or financial connections that may be interpreted as having a potential conflict of interest.

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