

Influence of Peer Approval Seeking, Socio-Economic Status and Locus of Control on Academic Self-Handicapping Behaviour of Undergraduates in Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT : *The study investigated the influence of peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study and five universities were selected based on distribution of universities' ownership. Three faculties were purposively selected with a study population of 3,415. Random sampling procedure was employed using a sampling percentage of 10% to give a sample size of 341. Questionnaire was the instrument used in the collection of data and data were analysed using simple percentage, correlation, independent sample t test and regression. Results revealed that the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates was moderate ($\bar{x} = 2.27$). There was significant positive relationship between peer approval seeking and academic self-handicapping behaviour ($r = 0.314, p < .05$), socio-economic status ($r = 0.379, p < .05$), and locus of control ($r = 0.343, p < .05$). There was no significant difference in the academic self-handicapping behaviour of male and female undergraduates [$t(339) = -2.03, p > .05$]. There was a significant joint contribution of peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates, ($F_{(3, 337)} = 23.282, p < 0.05$). There was significant relative contribution of socio-economic status (Beta = .226, $t = 3.347, p < 0.05$), peer approval seeking (Beta = .126, $t = 2.081, p < 0.05$) and locus of control (Beta = .135, $t = 2.032, p < 0.05$) on academic self-handicapping behaviour. It was recommended that every counselling and career unit of each university should implement an intervention package for students in order to reduce self-handicapping behaviour that may impinge on the academic success of the students.*

KEYWORDS: Peer approval seeking, Socio-economic status, Locus of control, Academic self-handicapping behaviour, Undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Some undergraduates perform poorly in school simply because they are self-handicapped and this has actually deteriorated the standard of education in Nigeria. Academic self-handicapping behaviour is a detrimental habit students engage in to justify their underperformance on various academic tasks. Academic self-handicapping refers to behaviours or strategies that students use to create obstacles or excuses for themselves in order to protect their self-esteem and reduce the impact of failure on their academic performance. These behaviours could include procrastination, blaming others or external factors for poor performance, and engaging in activities that detract from academic success, such as partying or substance abuse (Melhem, 2022). It is affirmed that undergraduates who resort to academic self-handicapping behaviour are those who care more about the type of performance they exhibit in different academic settings but who erect obstacles to their performance when they have doubts about their chances of success, especially in novel academic settings (Melhem, 2022). Yıldırım and Demir (2020) surmised that academic self-handicapping behaviour causes students to create a number of hurdles in an effort to safeguard their self-efficacy, which ultimately results in their inability to complete assignments successfully. Extant literature have revealed that peer approval seeking, socio-economic status, locus of control among others are some of the factors that could influence academic self-handicapping behaviour of students.

Peer approval seeking is a drive to associate with a particular culture, habit or norm which is in vogue in a particular society and most often, there is a pressure on children, adolescents and young adults to impersonate what is in vogue. The influence of peer approval seeking on students' academic self-handicapping is generally associated with negative connotations rather than being used as the vehicle for problem-solving development. Socio-economic status measures undergraduates' access to family resources (financial capital, social capital, cultural capital and human capital) and the social position of the student's family/household. Undergraduates from low socio-economic status background may be more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviours. This could be due to lack of access to resources such as academic support, tutoring or technology which may be more difficult for these students to perform well.

Locus of control is defined as an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of the various events that take place in their lives whether internal or external. It is revealed that undergraduates with an external locus of control are more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than those with an internal locus of control. This is because individuals with an external locus of control tend to attribute their successes and failures to external factors such as luck or the difficulty of the task, rather than their own abilities. As a result, they may be

more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviour as a way to protect their self-esteem. Also, undergraduates with an external locus of control may be more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviour when they perceive the task as important or when they feel anxious about the task. In contrast, individuals with an internal locus of control may be more motivated to perform well on the task, even in the face of anxiety or other obstacles (Stewart & Walker, 2014).

Several studies have been conducted on academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates. Melhem (2022) examined the predictors of academic self-handicapping behaviour of university students in Jordan using the survey design and the sample comprised 130 students. Result showed that the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of the students was moderate. It was reported that loads of academic works and engagement in other social activities including sports are what the students attribute their low performance to, by using academic self-handicapping behaviour as a protective factor. A study by Onyeizugbe and Ogbuju (2018) examined the relationship between peer approval seeking and academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 350 participants and found that peer approval seeking was positively related to academic self-handicapping behaviour. The study also found that students who engaged in peer approval seeking were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviours such as procrastination, reducing effort, and avoiding challenging tasks. Another similar study by Oyewole and Oyewumi (2019) examined the influence of peer approval seeking on academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 200 participants and found that peer approval seeking was a significant predictor of academic self-handicapping behaviour. The study also found that the fear of failure mediated the relationship between peer approval seeking and academic self-handicapping behaviour.

Similarly, a study by Adebowale, Oni and Adepoju (2020) investigated the influence of peer approval seeking on academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 300 participants and found that peer approval seeking was positively related to academic self-handicapping behaviour. The study also found that academic self-handicapping behaviour was a significant predictor of academic performance, indicating that students who engaged in academic self-handicapping behaviours had poorer academic performance. A study conducted by Akomolafe, Olosunde, and Akomolafe (2019) investigated the influence of locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The study found that students with an external locus of control were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than those with an internal locus of control. Another study by Aremu (2016) also examined the relationship between locus of control and academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study found that students with an external locus of control were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour

than those with an internal locus of control. The study also found that students who engaged in academic self-handicapping behaviour had lower academic achievement than those who did not engage in such behaviour. Similarly, a study by Oyewumi and Akinboye (2015) investigated the relationship between locus of control and academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The study found that students with an external locus of control were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than those with an internal locus of control. The study also found that academic self-handicapping behaviour was negatively correlated with academic achievement.

A study by Olaoye and Akinboye (2014) investigated the relationship between SES and academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 400 undergraduates from four universities in Nigeria. The results showed that SES was a significant predictor of academic self-handicapping, with students from low SES backgrounds more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviours than those from high SES backgrounds. Similarly, a study by Ajayi and Olatoye (2015) examined the relationship between SES and academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 200 undergraduates from a university in Nigeria. The results showed that students from low SES backgrounds were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviours than those from high SES backgrounds. In a study by Olowu and Adelabu (2015), the relationship between SES, academic self-handicapping, and academic achievement was investigated among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 310 undergraduates from a university in Nigeria. The results showed that SES was a significant predictor of academic self-handicapping, with students from low SES backgrounds more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviours. In another study, Aderinto and Olateju (2019) investigated the influence of SES on academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved 450 undergraduates from three universities in Nigeria. The results showed that SES was a significant predictor of academic self-handicapping, with students from low SES backgrounds more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviours.

However, one study conducted by Adewale and Akinade (2019) examined the influence of gender on academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria. The study involved a total of 300 undergraduate students (150 males and 150 females) from four universities in Nigeria. The results of the study indicated that male undergraduates were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than their female counterparts. Specifically, the study found that male students were more likely to procrastinate, engage in social loafing, and blame external factors for their poor academic performance. A study by Akanbi and Alao (2016) investigated the influence of gender and self-esteem on academic self-handicapping behaviours among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The study involved 250 undergraduate students (125 males and 125 females) from two universities in Nigeria. The results of the study showed that male students had higher levels of self-esteem than female students. Additionally, the study

found that male students were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviours than female students.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria is a significant issue that has attracted the attention of researchers, educators, and policymakers. Studies have shown that academic self-handicapping behaviour is prevalent among Nigerian undergraduates, and it negatively impacts their academic success. One of the key issues is that academic self-handicapping can lead to a decrease in motivation and effort among students. When students feel that they have already created obstacles to their success, they may be less motivated to put in the effort required to perform well academically. As a result, their academic performance may suffer. Academic self-handicapping can be detrimental to the overall quality of education in Nigeria. When a significant number of students engage in this behaviour, it can lead to lower academic standards, reduced learning outcomes, and a less competitive workforce. Attributing failure to external factors such as peers and low socio-economic status of parents could be detrimental to the academic success of undergraduates. It is important to identify the underlying causes of this behaviour and develop strategies to address it, including counseling, mentoring, and educational interventions. Studies have examined academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates; however, no study has combined peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State, as this is the gap the study has filled.

Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State. The specific objectives are to;

- i. find out the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State;
- ii. examine the mean difference in the academic handicapping behaviour of male and female undergraduates in Oyo State;
- iii. examine the pattern of relationship between the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State;
- iv. examine the joint contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State; and
- v. examine the relative contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State

Research question

1. What is the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State?

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant relationship between the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the academic handicapping behaviour of male and female undergraduates in Oyo State

H₀3: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State

H₀4: There is no relative contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and five universities were selected based on distribution of ownership of university in Oyo State: one federal, two states and two privately owned. The selected universities were: University of Ibadan, Ibadan (UI); while the state universities were Ladoke Akintola University (LAU) and First Technical University (FTU). The two private universities were Lead City University (LCU) and Ajayi Crowther University (ACU). Within these universities, three faculties were purposively selected on the basis of being available in all the selected universities in Oyo State. The faculties were Engineering, Science and Social Sciences. Different departments were randomly selected within each of the selected faculties to provide a broad spectrum of courses for the study. The population of the study was 3,415 as at 2023. Random sampling procedure was employed to choose undergraduates from all the levels in the selected departments using a sampling percentage of 10% to give a sample size of 341. Questionnaire was used in the collection of data and these are: academic self-handicapping behaviour scale which was adapted from Ghanim (2017) to examine the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates which comprised 12 items, with a four-point Likert format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale was revalidated and it has a reliability coefficient of 0.81.

The second scale was peer approval seeking which was adapted from Funder & Ozer (1993) and it comprised 10 items with a four-point Likert format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale was revalidated and it has a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Socio-economic

scale was adopted from Salami (2000) to measure the socio-economic level of undergraduates. The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.79. The locus of control scale was developed by Rotter (1996) and it consisted of 15 items. The scale was revalidated and it has a reliability coefficient of 0.83. The copies of the questionnaire were administered on the undergraduates in their various institutions with the help of two trained research assistants. It took three weeks for the data collection. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research question was analysed using frequency counts and simple percentage of mean and standard deviation. Hypothesis 1 was analysed using independent sample T test, hypothesis 2 was analysed using Pearson product moment correlation and hypotheses 3 & 4 were analysed using Multiple regression statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic information of Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	129	37.8
	Female	212	62.2
Age	16-20 years	148	43.4
	21-25 years	139	40.8
	26-30 years	42	12.3
	30 years and above	12	3.5

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

Table 1 showed that 37.8% of the undergraduates were male while 62.2% were female. This means that females participated more in the study than the males. It was also revealed that 43.4% were between 16-20 years, 40.8% were between 21-25 years while 12.3% were between 26-30 years and the rest 3.5% were 30 years and above. This means that respondents whose age fell between 16-20 years were more represented in the study

Research question 1: What is the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State?

Table 2: Level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates

s/n	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1.	I usually find myself easily distractible when I am trying to work	-	3 (0.9%)	55 (16.1%)	283 (83.0%)	2.19	0.454
2.	I find myself unable to retrieve information when taking the test	-	260 (76.2%)	78 (22.9%)	3 (0.9%)	2.25	0.451
3	I can concentrate on the subject I study	23 (7.3%)	136 (43.3 %)	82 (26.1%)	73 (23.2%)	1.21	0.487
4	Problems that I can't control appear when I want to study	-	284 (83.3%)	54 (15.8%)	3 (0.9%)	2.18	0.403
5	I show interest towards any subject I study	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	96 (28.2%)	241 (70.7%)	1.31	0.511
6	Academic overload stresses me so I find it difficult to accomplish something	-	251 (73.6%)	84 (24.6%)	6 (1.8%)	3.28	0.488
7	I do not enjoy my weekend due to study	2 (0.6%)	18 (5.3%)	107 (31.4%)	214 (62.8%)	2.44	0.622
8	I lack adequate commitment to dedicate myself to study	-	184 (54.0%)	96 (28.2%)	61 (17.9%)	2.10	0.671
9	My emotions prevent me from completing my achievements	13 (3.8%)	181 (53.1%)	127 (37.2%)	20 (5.9%)	3.78	0.774
10	I face problems in understanding some subjects	2 (0.6%)	22 (6.5%)	136 (39.9%)	181 (53.1%)	1.55	0.643
11	I hope that others don't have high expectation about me	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	137 (40.2%)	200 (58.7%)	2.43	0.541
12	I feel I waste time studying the wrong subjects	-	2 (0.6%)	150 (44.0%)	189 (55.4%)	2.46	0.533

Weighted mean: 2.27

Key: SA=Strongly agree, A=Agree, D= Disagree, SD=Strongly disagree

Decision Rule: *High* =4.00-3.00, *Moderate* =2.99-2.00, *Low* =1.99-1.0.

Result from Table 2 revealed the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Oyo State. The means scored ranged between (3.78-1.21), with item (6) which states that “Academic overload stresses me so I find it difficult to accomplish something” was ranked the highest with (\bar{x} =3.78), followed in succession by item (12) which states that “I feel I waste time studying the wrong subjects”, while item (3) which states that “I can concentrate on the subject I study” was ranked the lowest with (\bar{x} =1.21). With a weighted mean of 2.27, it could be inferred that the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State is moderate.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State

Table 3: Relationship between the peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates

Variables	Academic self-handicapping behaviour	Peer approval seeking	Socio-economic status	Locus of control	Mean	Std. dev
Academic self-handicapping behaviour	1.000	-	-	-	17.17	3.590
Peer approval seeking	.314**	1.000	-	-	16.87	5.714
Socio-economic status	.379**	.507**	1.000	-	15.48	4.673
Locus of control	.343**	.527**	.683**	1.000	22.42	6.266

*significant at 0.05

Table 3 revealed interrelationship among the independent variables: peer approval seeking, socio-economic status, locus of control and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates. There was significant positive relationship between peer approval seeking and academic self-handicapping behaviour ($r = 0.314$, $p < .05$), socio-economic status ($r = 0.379$, $p < .05$), and locus of control ($r = 0.343$, $p < .05$).

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the academic handicapping behaviour of male and female undergraduates in Oyo State

Table 4: Summary of t-test for independent samples showing the differences in academic self-handicapping behaviour of male and female undergraduates

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	T	Sig.	Remark
Male	129	16.67	3.26				
Female	212	17.47	3.75				
Academic self-handicapping behaviour				339	-2.03	>.063	Not sig.

*significant at 0.05

Table 4 showed that there is no significant difference in the academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates [$t(339) = -2.03, p > .05$]. This means that males and females in the study did not significantly differ in their academic self-handicapping behaviour. However, the result also shows that females had high academic self-handicapping behaviour (mean = 17.47) compared with their male counterparts (mean = 16.67). Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

H₀₃: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State

Table 5: Joint contribution of peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control and academic self-handicapping behaviour

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.414 ^a	0.172	0.164	3.28192			
ANOVA						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	752.318	3	250.773	23.282	.000 ^b	Sig.
Residual	3629.817	337	10.771			
Total	4382.135	340				

*significant at 0.05

Table 5 revealed the significant joint contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control) to the prediction of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates. It was tested using regression analysis. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions $R = 0.414$ and multiple R-square = 0.172. This suggests that the three factors combined accounted for 16.4% ($Adj.R^2 = .164$) variance in the prediction of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates. The other factors accounting for the remaining variance are beyond the scope of this study. The result from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant joint contribution of peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates, $F(3, 337) = 23.282, P < 0.05$. Therefore, H₀₃ is rejected.

H₀₄: There is no relative contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates in Oyo State.

Table 6: Relative contribution of the independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control) and academic self-handicapping behaviour

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.405	.723		15.768	.000
	Peer approval seeking	.079	.038	.126	2.081	.038
	Socio-economic status	.174	0.52	.226	3.347	.001
	Locus of control	.078	.038	.135	2.032	.043

a. Dependent Variable: Academic self- handicapping behaviour

Table 6 showed that the three independent variables (peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control) are potent predictors of academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates. It was analysed by using regression analysis. The most potent factor was socio-economic status (Beta = .226, t= 3.347, p<0.05) followed by peer approval seeking (Beta = .126, t= 2.081, p<0.05) and locus of control (Beta = .135, t= 2.032, p<0.05). This implies that, having high socio-economic status could reduce academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates by 22.6% while rejecting the negative influence of peers could reduce it by 12.6% and either external or internal locus of control could reduce academic self-handicapping behaviour by 13.8%. This means that there was significant relative influence of peer approval seeking, socio- economic status and locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour of undergraduates. Therefore, hypothesis H₀₄ is rejected.

DISCUSSION

Result from research question one could be ascribed to the fact that undergraduates face a lot of pressure from their academic work which could range from extemporaneous test and engaging in other social activities. Undergraduates could attribute these obstacles to their low performance in their academic works. The finding corroborates that of Melhem (2022) who examined the predictors of academic self-handicapping behaviour of university students in Jordan using the survey design and the sample comprised 130 students and reported that the level of academic self-handicapping behaviour of the students was moderate. It was reported that loads of academic works and engagement in other social activities including sports are what the students attribute their low performance to, by using academic self-handicapping behaviour as a protective factor. The result on hypothesis one could be attributed to the fact that having a minimal peer interference, high socio-economic status and attributing less blame to external factors could reduce academic self-handicapping behaviour and could improve academic success. The finding

lends credence to that of Onyeizugbe and Ogbuju (2018) who examined the relationship between peer approval seeking and academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria and reported that students who engaged in peer approval seeking were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviours such as procrastination, reducing effort, and avoiding challenging tasks. The finding also supports that of Ajayi and Olatoye (2015) who examined the relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria and reported that students from low SES backgrounds were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviours than those from high SES backgrounds.

Findings in hypothesis two could be ascribed to the fact that some females tend to engage in some other activities than male which could make them to procrastinate some school works which invariable may inhibit their performance. The finding negates that of Adewale and Akinade (2019) who examined the influence of gender on academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria and reported that male undergraduates were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than their female counterparts. Specifically, the study found that male students were more likely to procrastinate, engage in social loafing, and blame external factors for their poor academic performance.

The result on hypothesis three could be attributed to the fact that having peers who devote more time to their academics and who barely ascribe their flaws to external factors tend to be more academically successful and shun any form of procrastination. The finding is in line with that of Oyewole and Oyewumi (2019) who investigated the influence of peer approval seeking on academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduates in Nigeria and found that peer approval seeking was a significant predictor of academic self-handicapping behaviour. It was also revealed that the fear of failure mediated the relationship between peer approval seeking and academic self-handicapping behaviour. The finding is in agreement with that of Aremu (2016) who examined the relationship between locus of control and academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria and reported that students with an external locus of control were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than those with an internal locus of control.

As for the result of the fourth hypothesis, it could be surmised that low socio-economic status, negative influence of peers and frequent attribution of failure to external environment tend to make undergraduates to be self-handicapped in their studies and could in turn lead to failure. The finding is in consonance with that of Akomolafe, Olosunde, and Akomolafe (2019) who investigated the influence of locus of control on academic self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduate students in Nigeria. The study found that students with an external locus of control were more likely to engage in academic self-handicapping behaviour than those with an

internal locus of control. The finding also validates that of Aderinto and Olateju (2019) who investigated the influence of SES on academic self-handicapping among undergraduates in Nigeria and reported that SES was a significant predictor of academic self-handicapping, with students from low SES backgrounds more likely to engage in self-handicapping behaviours.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has provided more details to the existing information on the academic self-handicapping behaviour as a factor that required immediate solution. It was revealed from the findings that peer approval seeking, socio-economic status and locus of control had significant relationship with academic self-handicapping behaviour. It was also found that each of the independent variable had positive relative contribution to the prediction of academic self-handicapping behaviour. Since self-handicapping behaviour thwarts achievement and leads to long-term withdrawal from academic achievement activities, it becomes crucial for educational stakeholders, lecturers and parents to discourage behaviours that promote self-handicapping and avoid behaviours that encourage it. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- ✓ Undergraduates should not attribute their academic failure to any external factor as they are the architect of what they become in life and they have what it takes to do away with those external factors that could self-handicapped them in attaining their educational goals.
- ✓ Undergraduates should choose peers that that would accept them the way they are and also associate with those that would help them to do away with those handicapping behaviours that are impinging on their academic pursuit.
- ✓ To reduce self-handicapping behaviour in undergraduates, lecturers could deemphasize social comparison and competition in classroom and focus on individual growth, improvement and comprehension of the academic matter.
- ✓ Parents should meet the financial needs of their children and wards by ensuring that all academic materials needed are provided and readily available for use as this could reduce some self-handicapping behaviours such as procrastination as a result of non-availability of academic materials needed.
- ✓ Every counselling and career unit of each university should implement an intervention package for undergraduates in order to reduce self-handicapping behaviour that may impinge on their academic success.

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