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ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES AND BIBLIOPHOBIA; THE MODERATING ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Universities across Nigeria equipped the libraries with recent and relevant learning materials to improve students' learning ability. These efforts of equipping the libraries failed to achieve its aim as many textbooks and other learning material remain unused since they arrived. Understanding the effect bibliophobia is important for treatment-plan in order to improve students' reading and learning ability. This study investigates adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia; the moderating role of self-efficacy among undergraduates in north central, Nigeria

The study involved 426 (236(55.4%) male participants and 190 (44.6%) females participants. Age range is 18-70 years with a mean age of 2.1321 and standard deviation of 2.381, who were selected through multi-stage sampling technique. Student reading anxiety, adverse childhood experiences and self-efficacy scale were used for data collection. The study employed the cross-sectional survey design, and three hypotheses were tested using Hayes PROCESS macro. The result revealed a positive relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia, and self-efficacy significantly moderated the relationship adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia. Based on the findings, adverse childhood experience is a predictor of bibliophobia, and the self-efficacy can also reduce the effect of adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia.

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences Self-efficacy, Bibliophobia and Hayes Process Macro.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria educational standard continues to decline despite the effort from the schools' management and government trying to improve the system. Universities across Nigeria equipped the libraries with recent and relevant learning materials to improve students' learning ability. These efforts of equipping the libraries failed to achieve its aim as many textbooks and other learning material remain unused since they arrived. Librarians sometimes could not even explain the phenomenon surrounding the students' inability to make use of the library learning materials. Students' inability to read or fear of reading is one of the psychological disorders called bibliophobia. Bibliophobia is a perversely fear of academic issues that significantly hindered performance (Oreagba & Lasisi, 2024).

A person with bibliophobia might fear all books or only a specific kind, such as textbooks or children's books (Cummings, 2022). Someone with bibliophobia might be afraid of books themselves, the stories they contain or the act of reading a book. It is hard knowing exactly how many people have a specific phobia, like bibliophobia (fear of books). Many people may keep this fear to themselves or may not recognize they have it. Globally, 1 in 10 adults and 1 in 5 teenagers will deal with a specific phobia disorder at some point in their lives (Shippey 2001). Bibliophobia is characterized by the tendency of anxiety or panic in the person who is just having the thought of reading books. The condition can be accompanied by shaking, sweating or crying or other abnormal activities of the person when he/she is asked to read out loudly publicly in a classroom. Mythophobia, or the fear of legends, can be considered a subtype of bibliophobia if the fear is of those legends that are written down. Metrophobia, or fear of poetry,

is another subtype of bibliophobia (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Like other specific phobia, a bibliophobia diagnosis requires that the fear of books be unreasonable, persistent, and out of proportion to the actual danger. The fear turns into anxiety as a result of lack or loss of control over the books or other reading materials which develops a hatred or feeling of isolation from them (Downes, 2019). In other words, this abnormality cannot be considered as irrational as many phobias are. There are some other symptoms that are related to the conditions like bibliophobia and those symptoms include confusion, sweating, shaking, increase in heart rate, high rate of breathing, and inability to think normally. The causes of bibliophobia may be related to any congenital abnormalities or it may have developed since the start of childhood. The reasons for the development in early childhood may be different in different cases depending upon the environment in which the upbringing of the individual is done or the behavioural status of the individual itself (Breinholst, Esbjorn, Reinholst-Dunne, & Stallard, 2024). Bibliophobia may be as a result of an individual's negative experiences in the past which have affected his/her mind adversely and repeatedly.

Adverse childhood experiences are childhood disorder characterized with emotional, physical, or sexual abuse and household dysfunction during childhood. The categories are verbal abuse, physical abuse, and contact sexual abuse, a battered mother/father, household substance abuse, household mental illness, incarcerated household members, and parental separation or divorce (National Institute for Health, 2022). Research indicates that childhood exposure to one or more ACEs can have long lasting, negative effects on an individual's health, wellbeing, and opportunity. ACEs may impact a person's physical health associated with diabetes, cancer, a compromised immune system and chronic health problems later in life. Childhood adversity also affects mental health, leading to depression, substance abuse. Additionally, adverse childhood experiences lead to social/behavioural issues, including poor social development, unhealthy coping behaviours, and engagement in risky behaviours or violence.

Nigeria's backward socioeconomic situation and stagnant economic growth have made it one of the world's poverty hubs (Isangha et al., 2023). Issues like socioeconomic and family limitations in Nigeria pose significant risks to the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences. Nigeria lacks an adequate child protection framework, contributing to children's exposure to adversity and necessitating urgent policy intervention (Isangha et al., 2023). Recent reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest socioeconomic conditions catalyze ACE adverse childhood experiences exposures (CDC, 2019, 2023). Socioeconomic disadvantages have been linked to both dysfunctional behaviour within families as well as violent behavior caused by frustrations (Wight et al., 2008). The socioeconomic constraints within Nigerian families may further expose girl-children to adverse childhood experiences capable of disrupting their later life experiences (Bhatti, 2011; Pereira et al., 2015). The process of trusting oneself ability is a powerful tool that can moderate problem of fear of book or reading even in the face of adverse past experience. A person adverse past experiences and fear of books, could be determine by self believe and ability.

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals (American Psychological Association, 2021). Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavour. The beliefs a person holds regarding their power to affect situations; self-efficacy strongly influences both the power a person actually has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. These effects are particularly apparent, and compelling, with regard to investment behaviours such as in education (Krishnan, Pramila; Krutikova & Sofya, 2013). A strong sense of self-efficacy promotes human accomplishment and personal educational success. A person with high self-efficacy views challenges as things that are supposed to be mastered rather than threats to avoid. These people are able to recover from failure faster and are more likely to attribute failure to a lack of effort. They approach threatening situations with the belief that they can control them. These

things have been linked to lower levels of stress and a lower vulnerability to depression (Bandura, Albert, 2010). On the other hand, people with a low sense of self-efficacy view difficult tasks as personal threats and are more likely to avoid these tasks as these individuals lack the confidence in their own skills and abilities (Bandura, Albert, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Bibliophobia can be extremely life-limiting, causing problems at work and school as well as in personal life. This disorder leads to a shattering of the wish to read or interact with books or going out in places such as libraries and museums where reading takes place. Bibliophobia is a problem that has affected development in North Central Zone. Due to fear of reading and books, it has resulted in low development as a result of little discoveries. This disorder has resulted in issues like suicide and other psychological disorders as a result of family pressure and expectation. The inability of such students to read resulted in going into the examination room with materials. Bibliophobia has also resulted in multiple poverty and low esteem in people in the North central zone. Most of the modern ways of manufacturing are in books and fear of reading made it impossible for the people in this zone to miss the opportunities. Bibliophobia is a type of specific anxiety disorders that researchers are yet to investigate in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. This made the researchers to investigate cause and possible factors to reduce the disorder in order to improve students' use of library in the region and across the globe.

Aim and Objective(s) of the study

The main aim of the study is to investigate adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia; the moderating role of self-efficacy among undergraduates in north central, Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Explore the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among undergraduates in north central, Nigeria,
- ii. Examine the influence of self-efficacy on bibliophobia among undergraduates in north central, Nigeria,
- iii. To investigate the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among undergraduates in north central, Nigeria,

Significance of the Study

In order to encourage reading habit among the undergraduates of higher institutions in Nigeria, it is important to investigate the disorder associated with students' reading behaviour in order to improve learning ability in the nation for the purpose of development. The study will unveil people living with fear of books or reading which will help government and university authorities on the necessary steps to take in order to improve reading habit in the University for Academic Success. The study will also help some of the victims of the disorder find some possible solutions that will improve their wellbeing. This study will also add to existing literature on the disorder.

Theoretical Review

Classical Conditioning Model

The classical conditioning model was propounded by Pavlov (1904) under learning theory. Pavlov's experiments led to the development of the concept of classical conditioning. Pavlov (1904) proposed that through repeated pairings of a neutral stimulus with a biologically significant stimulus (such as food), the neutral stimulus acquires the ability to elicit a response similar to the one elicited by the biologically significant stimulus (Pavlov, 1904). The discovery that phobias can be considered a conditioned response is attributed to Watson (1920). By

pairing a neutral stimulus (a white rat) with a loud, sudden noise, Watson and his collaborator Rayner successfully elicited a fear response in Little Albert whenever he encountered the rat alone. This now-controversial experiment provided empirical evidence for the role of classical conditioning in the development of phobias. It contributed to understanding the relationship between learned associations and fear responses (Watson & Rayner, 1920)

The process of classical conditioning can explain how people acquire bibliophobia. For example, people learn to associate something they do not fear, such as a book (neutral stimulus), with something that triggers a fear response, such as failure (unconditioned stimulus). After an association has formed, the book (now a conditioned stimulus) causes a response of fear (conditioned response) and consequently, they develop a phobia. Watson (1920) work is significant to this study because it highlighted the role of learning in shaping behaviour. Watson (1920) demonstrated that organisms could learn to associate stimuli in their environment and that these associations could lead to predictable behavioural responses such as negative experience in past and fear of book (Rachman, 2009). Conditioning can provide insights into how anxiety develops and is maintained. Anxiety can be understood as a conditioned response to certain stimuli or situations. Through classical conditioning, individuals may associate neutral or initially nonthreatening stimuli with fear or negative experiences

This theory is also important to this study because it emphasis on the causes and treatment of the disorder. Wolpe (1961), a psychiatrist, developed systematic desensitization as a therapeutic technique for treating anxiety disorders. Systematic desensitization involves creating a hierarchy of feared stimuli and gradually exposing individuals to these stimuli while they engage in relaxation techniques. By repeatedly pairing relaxation with the feared stimuli, the conditioned fear response is weakened and replaced with relaxation. This implies that fear of book and reading can as well be treated using systematic desensitization through relaxation method which permeate facilitation of information for better learning experience.

Empirical Review

Adverse Childhood Experiences and Bibliophobia

Kargiotidis and Manolitsis (2024) examined whether literacy difficulties in both grades 2 and 3 are associated with social and generalized anxiety within the school environment in grade 5 and if children with different literacy difficulties differ in anxiety levels compared to typically developing children in grade 5 after controlling for inattention. Sixty-nine Greek children with literacy difficulties and fifty-two children with typical literacy development were assessed at the beginning of grade 2 and at the end of grade 3 on standardized literacy measures (reading accuracy, text-reading fluency, reading comprehension, and spelling). In grade 5, teachers were asked to rate their children's social and generalized anxiety levels and inattentive behavior in the school context. Results of one-way ANCOVAs showed that children with literacy difficulties were experiencing more social anxiety than typically developing children. Furthermore, children with both reading and spelling difficulties, but not those with single reading or spelling difficulties, had more social anxiety. These findings suggest that there is a close connection between early literacy difficulties and social anxiety in upper elementary grades and particularly among children with both reading and spelling difficulties. Implications for both teachers and other professionals who support children's socioemotional development will be discussed.

Stewart-Tufescus, Strck, Taillieu, Salmon, Fortier, Brownwell, Chartier, Yakubovich and Afifi, (2022) examine the associations between adverse childhood experiences and adolescents' self-reported education outcomes and provincial education assessments among adolescents in Manitoba, Canada. Data were gathered from 1002 adolescents who participated in the Well-

Being and Experiences (WE) Study. A subsample of the adolescents (84%) consented to having their WE survey data linked to administrative education databases. Binary and multinomial logistic regression models were computed to examine associations between ACE history and self-reported education outcomes and provincial education assessments, adjusting for sociodemographic variables. Adolescents with an adverse childhood experiences history had significantly increased likelihood of having ever been suspended from school (adjusted odds ratio (aOR) = 3.33, 95% CI 1.60–6.92), of lower grades (adjusted relative risk ratio (aRRR) = 3.21, 95% CI 1.42–7.29), and of chronic school absenteeism (aRRR = 2.45, 95% CI 1.28–4.68) compared with adolescents without an adverse childhood experiences history after adjusting for sociodemographic variables. Findings from the study illuminate the important relationship between childhood adversity and poor education outcomes assessed directly by adolescents.

Ginsburg, Pella, Devito and Chan (2021) investigated child avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations in the classroom and teacher accommodation. Children with anxiety disorders frequently engage in avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations within the classroom, such as speaking in front of peers, participating in group activities, or completing evaluative tasks. Empirical findings suggest that higher levels of adult accommodation are associated with greater anxiety severity, functional impairment, and reduced opportunities for skill mastery in anxious children. The work emphasizes the critical role of teachers in either perpetuating or interrupting the anxiety-avoidance cycle and underscores the importance of school-based interventions that promote gradual exposure, coping skills, and consistent behavioral expectations. Training teachers to recognize anxiety-driven avoidance and to reduce maladaptive accommodation is identified as a key component in improving academic, social, and emotional outcomes for anxious students.

Self-Efficacy and Bibliophobia

Trisnayanti. et al. (2020) in a quantitative study of 90 participants measuring reading anxiety, reading self-efficacy and reading competency. Pairwise correlations and multiple regression were used. Result indicated that reading anxiety and reading self-efficacy were **strongly negatively correlated** ($r \approx -0.77$); reading self-efficacy positively predicted reading competency while anxiety predicted lower competency. This supports that higher self-efficacy = lower reading anxiety (less bibliophobic response).

Ghonsooly, (2010) investigated self-efficacy and bibliophobia (reading anxiety). cross-sectional study using an author-designed reading self-efficacy scale and the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS). The result showed that participants with **higher reading self-efficacy reported significantly lower reading anxiety**, suggesting that boosting self-efficacy mitigates reading-related fear and avoidance. This is directly relevant to bibliophobia in language learning contexts.

Martinez, (2019) examined *the relationship among pupils' reading self-efficacy, reading anxiety, and reading comprehension performance*. dissertation (quantitative) testing social cognitive theory model was used to see whether reading self-efficacy mediates the effect of reading anxiety on comprehension. The result showed that a relationship exists among **reading self-efficacy, reading anxiety, and comprehension performance**; self-efficacy partially (not fully) mediates anxiety's effect, indicating self-efficacy is an important buffer but not the only factor. Implication: improving self-efficacy can reduce /bibliophobic responses and improve outcomes.

Jiao, Onwuegbuzie and Daly, (1996/1997) investigated *reducing library anxiety in first-year students: impact of instruction*. The result showed that, targeted instruction/orientation reduced library anxiety and improved students' confidence when using library resources; showing that

increasing domain-specific self-efficacy (how confident students feel about using books/libraries) reduces avoidance/anxiety associated with books and libraries.

The Moderating Role of Self-efficacy in the Relationship Between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Bibliophobia

Schiele et al., (2016) and Cohrdes et al., (2020) the studies demonstrate that self-efficacy moderates the relationship between childhood adversity and anxiety outcomes, such that individuals with higher self-efficacy exhibit reduced anxiety despite high levels of early-life stress. Körner et al., (2019).) also investigated the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia. Their finding indicated a concurrent increase in self-efficacy and reductions in anxiety symptoms, further supporting a causal buffering role. The study supports a moderated pathway in which adverse childhood experiences increase the risk of bibliophobia through anxiety and avoidance mechanisms, while self-efficacy attenuates this risk by promoting coping, confidence, and engagement with reading tasks.

Hypotheses

The following result will be expected at the end of the research

- i. There will be a significant relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among undergraduates of Universities in North Central Nigeria.
- ii. There will be a significant relationship between self-efficacy and bibliophobia among undergraduates of Universities in North Central Nigeria.
- iii. Self-efficacy will significantly moderate the relationship between adverse childhood experience and bibliophobia among undergraduates' of Universities in North Central Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study will employed correlational design. This design was used because variables were not manipulated but instead questionnaires were used to collect data on adverse childhood experience, bibliophobia and self-efficacy. This design was used because the researchers will find the association between the independent variable (adverse childhood experience) and the dependent variable (bibliophobia). The researchers used the method because none of the variables was manipulated.

This research will be in three phases, namely the conceptual, narrative, and empirical research phases. At the conceptual stage, the research question was primarily about the participants' experiences, and for which, hypotheses was formulated. The predictions evolve because of the involvement of the researchers in the phenomenon under scrutiny. An appraisal of the scholarly literature was done to broaden knowledge of the content and concepts. It was critical to undertake bracketing to eliminate any preconceived ideas concerning the matter under investigation. The narrative phase entailed planning and organising the research design. The empirical research phase covers data collection, analysis and ultimately interpretation. The

gathering of data will include quantitative information, which will be collected during the administration of the questionnaires.

Setting

The North Central is the one of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria representing the majority of the country's Middle Belt. It comprises six states which include Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, and Plateau, as well as Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory. The North Central stretches across the whole width of the country, from the border with Cameroon to that with Benin. In terms of the environment, the zone is dominated by the Guinean forest–savanna mosaic, with the western portion falling into the West Sudanian savanna ecoregion Plateau State is also named for the Jos Plateau, which lies in the east-central portion of the zone. The region has a population of about 20 million people, around 11% of the total population of the country. The country's capital is Abuja, which is in the Federal Capital Territory, as well as Ilorin and Jos, are the most populous cities in the North Central, as well as the sixth, seventh, and eighth most populous cities in Nigeria. North central has seven federal universities.

Participants

The involved 426 participants selected for the study through stratified, purposive, simple and convenience sampling techniques. The demographic characteristics of the participants are: 236(55.4%) male participants and 190 (44.6%) females. The age of the participants from 18-29 are 316 (74.2%) and 30 above are 110 (25.8%). The participants were strictly drawn from six universities in North Central Nigeria.

Sampling

Simple random, stratify and convenience sampling and purposive methods were used for the study. Simple random sampling was used since some of the participants were randomly selected from all the faculties in the university. Stratify sampling was used by dividing the North Central geopolitical universities into strata since all the nine (9) institutions cannot be use in the research. Convenience sampling technique was used because it is only the participants that were available at the time of administration of the questionnaire that will be use. Purposive sampling techniques was also used to only target students the rarely used library and are within CGPA of 2.29 below.

Instruments

Three set of instruments will be used for the study; (1) Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire for Adults (2) Library anxiety scale for undergraduates (3) self-efficacy scales

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire 10-item version (ACE-10) is a self-report retrospective questionnaire consisting of 10 items. The questionnaire assessing exposure to 10 types of intrafamilial adverse childhood experiences belonging to two categories: five types of maltreatment (1. physical abuse, 2. emotional abuse, 3. sexual abuse, 4. physical and 5. emotional neglect), and five types of household dysfunction (6. parental separation/divorce, 7. household physical violence, 8. household substance abuse, 9. household mental illness or suicide attempt, 10. incarcerated household member). The questionnaire focused on 10 questions requiring a yes/no answer. The items are rated from five categories with 0; 1; 2; 3; 4 . The Cronbach's alpha reliability score of the ACE-10 was proved to be equal to 0.64,

Bostick's (1992) multi-dimensional Library Anxiety Scale has been used in numerous studies to study the library anxiety phenomenon among various categories of library users. In addition, this scale has also been employed as the leading instrument in all studies that have attempted to empirically identify the antecedents, correlates and

predictors of library anxiety as well as bibliophobia. The 49-item scale with five Likert scale has Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.71. It is scored on five Likert scale starting from strongly agreed to strongly disagreed.

Procedures

The researchers made use of trained research assistants that helped in administering the instruments to the participants across all the selected universities. The research will only make use of federal University and state Universitario in North Central region. The researchers and the research assistants visited the selected areas for the research in order to have physical contact with them. The researchers will undertake the research inform of population census. It was only students that score below CGPA of 2.39 that were targeted.

Method of Data Analysis

The statistical methods for this study were descriptive statistic, simple linear regressions and moderation analysis using PROCESS macro. These methods were adopted because it was quantitative study with the aim of making prediction or examine the strength and direction of the relationship and how self-efficacy will moderate the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia. These methods also controlled the entire extraneous variable that might have cause a change in the bibliophobia apart from the independent variables.

RESULTS

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses 1

Hypothesis one was tested using simple linear regression through Process macro and the result is tabulated and interpreted as shown below.

Table 1: simple linear regression analysis showing the influence of adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central, Nigeria Universities

Variables	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Constant	.341	.116	18.608		4.3906	.000
				.341	3.392	.000

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Criterion variable: Bibliophobia

The results presented in Table 1 showed that there was a significant relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central Nigeria ($R = .341 = R^2 = .116$ ($F(1,426) = 18.608, t = 3.392, p < .01$). from the result 11.6% variation in bibliophobia among undergraduates is attributed to adverse childhood experiences. From the result, it shows that an increase in adverse childhood experiences lead to an increase in bibliophobia. This hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis two was tested using moderation analysis and the result is tabulated and interpreted as shown below

Table 2: simple linear regression analysis showing the influence of self-efficacy on bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central, Nigeria Universities

Variables	R	R ²	F	β	t	Sig
Constant	.057	.003	1.329		26.607	.000
				-.057	-1.180	.239

Self-efficacy

Criterion variable: Bibliophobia

The results presented in Table 2 showed that there was no significant relationship between self-efficacy and bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central Nigeria ($R = .057 = R^2 = .003$ ($F(1,426) = 1.329, t = -1.180, p > .239$). From the result a variation in bibliophobia among undergraduates is not attributed to self-efficacy. From the result, it shows that an increase in self-efficacy will lead to little decrease in bibliophobia. This hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis three was tested using moderation analysis and the result is tabulated and interpreted as shown below.

Table 3: Summary of PROCESS macro analysis showing the moderation role of self-efficacy in the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central Nigeria Universities

Dependent Variable	Predictors	Coeff	Se	T	p	95%CI	
						LLCI	ULCI
Bibliophobia	Constant	35.5202	8.0901	4.3906	.0000	19.6186	51.4219
	ACEs	1.0821	.3012	3.5923	.0000	.4900	1.6742
	Self-efficacy	.1873	.1295	1.4466	.1488	-.0672	.4417
	moderator	-.0079	.0050	-1.5980	.1106	-.0177	.0018
	R=	.3411					
	R ² =	.1163					
	ΔR ² =	.0053					
	F=	18.6077					
	ΔF=	2.5567					
	DF1=	.0000					
	DF2=	424					

Note: * = $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 2, the model was significant since adverse childhood experiences predicted bibliophobia ($R = .3411 = R^2 = .1163$ ($F(2,424) = 18.6077, p < .01$). Self-efficacy significantly moderated the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among the undergraduates in North Central Nigeria ($\Delta R^2 = .053, \Delta F(2, 424) = 2.5567, \text{Coeff} = -.0079, t = -1.5980, p > .005$). This means that Self-efficacy is likely to reduce the effect of adverse childhood experiences and thus reduces incidences of bibliophobia to 0.5% from 11.6%. Thus, the presence of Self-efficacy among undergraduates with bibliophobia in North Central Nigeria has reduced bibliophobia. This hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of the finding was done in line with the tested hypotheses. Hypothesis one was tested to find if the incidence of adverse childhood experiences will significantly predict

bibliophobia among the undergraduates in North Central Nigerian universities. The result showed that adverse childhood experiences significantly predicted bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central Nigerian universities. The result indicated that one's adverse childhood experiences is a great determinant of bibliophobia.

This study is in line with the work of Ginsburg, Pella, Devito and Chan (2021) that investigated child avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations in the classroom and teacher accommodation. Children with anxiety disorders frequently engage in avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations within the classroom, such as speaking in front of peers, participating in group activities, or completing evaluative tasks. Empirical findings suggest that higher levels of adult accommodation are associated with greater anxiety severity, functional impairment, and reduced opportunities for skill mastery in anxious children. The work emphasizes the critical role of teachers in either perpetuating or interrupting the anxiety-avoidance cycle and underscores the importance of school-based interventions that promote gradual exposure, coping skills, and consistent behavioral expectations. Training teachers to recognize anxiety-driven avoidance and to reduce maladaptive accommodation is identified as a key component in improving academic, social, and emotional outcomes for anxious students

The study is also in agreement with Stewart-Tufescus, Strck, Taillieu, Salmon, Fortier, Brownwell, Chartier, Yakubovich and Afifi, (2022) that examined the associations between adverse childhood experiences and adolescents' self-reported education outcomes and provincial education assessments among adolescents in Manitoba, Canada. The result showed that adolescents with an adverse childhood experiences history had significantly increased likelihood of having ever been suspended from school compared with adolescents without an adverse childhood experiences history after adjusting for sociodemographic variables.

The study is also in agreement with Kargiotidis and Manolitsis (2024) that examined whether literacy difficulties in both grades 2 and 3 are associated with social and generalized anxiety within the school environment. Results of one-way ANCOVAs showed that children with literacy difficulties were experiencing more social anxiety than typically developing children. Furthermore, children with both reading and spelling difficulties, but not those with single reading or spelling difficulties, had more social anxiety. These findings suggest that there is a close connection between early literacy difficulties and social anxiety in upper elementary grades and particularly among children with both reading and spelling difficulties. Implications for both teachers and other professionals who support children's socioemotional development will be discussed.

The second hypothesis was tested to find if the incidence of self-efficacy will significantly predict bibliophobia among the undergraduates in North Central Nigerian universities. The result showed that self-efficacy could not significantly predicted bibliophobia among undergraduates in North Central Nigerian universities. The result indicated that self-efficacy has negative relationship with and contributed nothing to bibliophobia.

The study corresponded to Trisnayanti. et al. (2020) and the result indicated that reading anxiety and reading self-efficacy were **strongly negatively correlated** ($r \approx -0.77$); reading self-efficacy positively predicted reading competency while anxiety predicted lower competency. This supports that higher self-efficacy = lower reading anxiety (less bibliophobic response). Ghonsooly, (2010) investigated self-efficacy and bibliophobia (reading anxiety) result showed that participants with **higher reading self-efficacy reported significantly lower reading anxiety**, suggesting that boosting self-efficacy mitigates reading-related fear and avoidance.

The present study also in agreement with Martinez, (2019) that examined *the relationship among pupils' reading self-efficacy, reading anxiety, and reading comprehension performance*. The result showed that a relationship exists among **reading self-efficacy, reading anxiety, and comprehension performance**; self-efficacy partially (not fully) mediates anxiety's effect, indicating self-efficacy is an important buffer but not the only factor.

The third hypothesis was tested to see the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among the undergraduates in North Central Nigerian universities. The result indicated that self-efficacy actually moderated the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia among the undergraduates in North Central Nigerian universities.

The results are in line with Schiele et al., (2016) and Cohrdes et al., (2020) studies that demonstrated how self-efficacy moderated the relationship between childhood adversity and anxiety outcomes, such that individuals with higher self-efficacy exhibit reduced anxiety despite high levels of early-life stress. Result is in line with Körner et al., (2019) that investigated the moderating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia. Their finding indicated a concurrent increase in self-efficacy and reductions in anxiety symptoms, further supporting a causal buffering role. The study supports a moderated pathway in which adverse childhood experiences increase the risk of bibliophobia through anxiety and avoidance mechanisms, while self-efficacy attenuates this risk by promoting coping, confidence, and engagement with reading tasks.

Conclusion

- i. Adverse childhood experiences is a critical factor in determining how students can perform in their future carriers. By understanding the concept of adverse childhood experiences and its components, students can develop the resilience needed to navigate challenging situations effectively. By incorporating practical strategies, such as encouraging a growth mindset, developing problem-solving skills, and creating opportunities for challenge and growth, students with childhood experiences can build self-efficacy and resolve specific fear as a result of the experiences.
- ii. Self-efficacy contributed negatively to bibliophobia, therefore, building high self-efficacy can help treat bibliophobia.
- iii. Self-efficacy moderate the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and bibliophobia.

Recommendations

University management should foster strong, supportive relationships within the students and use of library by giving them orientation on the use of library and to encourage the how to help themselves to alleviate spirit of fear in order to increase their performance.

- i. Encouraging a positive and adaptive mindset by reframing challenges as opportunities for growth.
- ii. Teach students effective problem-solving skills, such as identifying problems, generating solutions, and evaluating outcomes
- iii. Universities' students with bibliophobia can improve their own self-efficacy by practicing self-awareness and by identifying their fear triggers, and stressors. They can develop self-regulation by learning effective ways to manage their fears. Enhance empathy by actively listening to others and putting themselves in others' shoes. Work on their

communication and conflict resolution skills, and seek out resources such as books, articles, or professional guidance to build on theirselfconfidence.

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