



# Psychological Wellbeing in Student Populations in South-West Nigeria: Implications for Family Support Relationship and Religious Orientation

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## Abstract

This study examined the influence of family relationship and religious orientation on psychological wellbeing among undergraduate in Adekunle Ajasin University. Using accidental sampling technique, three hundred and four students were selected for this study. In order to determine the extent and direction of associations among the study variables, multiple regression analysis was then used to test hypothesis 1, 2, and 3. A cross-sectional design as adopted in his study. The variables of this study were not actively manipulated. The dependent variable is psychological wellbeing. The predictor variables are family relationship and religious orientation. Religious Orientation Scale (ROS); Scale of Psychological Wellbeing (SPWB) and Family Relation Scale (IFR) were used to measure study variables. The result of the multiple regression, showed that family support relationship was significant predictor of psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State South-West, Nigeria [ $\beta = .41^{**}$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. Hence, hypothesis 1 was accepted. Also, the results of the regression analysis showed that religious orientation directly predicted psychological wellbeing [ $\beta = .61^{**}$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. It was recommended that government organizations, non-governmental organization, religious organization and communities should all take part in giving the undergraduates the whole support and encouragement needed pending the time they spend in academic activities until they begin full adult functional life.

**Keywords:** Psychological Wellbeing; Family Support Relationship; Religious Orientation; Undergraduates; Nigeria

**Abbreviations:** SPWB: Scale of Psychological Wellbeing; IFR: Index of Family Relation Scale; ROS: Religious Orientation Scale; PPMC: Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

## Introduction

In the last decade there have been concerted efforts to empirically investigate psychological wellbeing in diverse

populations [1-4]. Throughout human history, normative understandings of psychological well-being have defined particular human characteristics and qualities as desirable and worthy of pursuit or emulation [5-7]. Ryff CD [8] referred to psychological well-being as a dynamic concept that includes subjective social, and psychological dimensions as well as health related behaviors [2,8]. People are said to be in a state of stable psychological well-being when there are

no mental or emotional disturbances in their lives [2,8] such normative understandings are characterized by traditional philosophies and religions that often stress the cultivation of certain virtues [9,10]. Psychological well-being is an internal focused method of attaching value to the quality of life and effective experience generally accepted as a scientific construct with long-term propensity or disposition and short term mood components similar in design to the trait state distinction in anxiety [8,11,12]. Balogan SK [13] defined psychological well-being is the overall satisfaction and happiness or the subjective report of one's mental state of being healthy, satisfied or prosperous and broadly to reflect quality of life and mood states.

Deci EL, et al. [14] defined psychological well-being as living life in a full and deeply satisfying manner. This conceptualization maintains that well-being is not so much an outcome or end state as a process, and is concerned with living well or actualizing one's human potentials [13]. Psychological well-being is usually conceptualized as some combination of positive affective states such as happiness (hedonic) and functioning with optimal effectiveness in individual and social life (eudaimonic) [12,14-18]. Despite the superfluity of studies based on psychological wellbeing, it has received relatively little empirical attention [15]. In this study, the question is being asked "what constitutes positive psychological functioning and what roles does the family and religion play? Some studies [15,16,19,20] have identified core dimensions of the model of psychological well-being such as self-acceptance, positive relationship with others, autonomous functioning, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth in all facet of live including family relations and religious orientation have been identified as significant to psychological wellness [20-22]. This present study therefore intends to extend knowledge by investigating the influence of the family relation and religious orientation on psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in Nigeria. Several research studies extend the critique of happiness, arguing that it is not to be attained if made an end in it [11,23-32]. Family relationship and support are critical in the physical, emotional, spiritual, and social development of students [33]. The structure and quality of relationships between family members are fundamental elements of family functioning and a major influence on the well-being of undergraduates [34]. The current structural form of the family is best viewed in the light of its trajectory through time. Research using longitudinal data has identified stability over time as a crucial aspect of family wellbeing [35,36]. Previous research studies have shown that when certain steps in family formation are taken it is strongly connected to the path of family development which subsequently transcends into a happier academic life those in involved [37].

Family relationship refers to relatedness or connection by

blood or marriage or adoption [36]. The size of the family, as measured by the number of children in the household, while family intactness and stability has been the subject of a flood of research on family well-being in recent decades, family size stands out as an almost-forgotten factor [38,39]. This lack of interest in family size may have been prompted by the assumption that families have now standardized around the one, two or three child family and that larger family sizes have more or less disappeared [33]. However, moderately large families are still common. In Africa and there is a small but nevertheless strong thread of international research which suggests that number of siblings is a substantial influence on child outcomes [40]. Effective families contribute to positive individual development, a quality workplace and workforce, caring communities, and a healthy nation [33,41]. Coping refers to expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict [33]. Family support and religious orientation has been linked with psychological wellbeing in some studies [33,38,42]. Religion is defined in terms of its functional nature as what a person does to answer the basic existential questions of life [43,44]. Tamminen K [45] suggested that religiousness involves conscious-dependency on a deity [46-48]. Thus, this study is to understand how social support could play its role in dealing with depression, anxiety, and stress is essential [49]. Also, religious orientation has also been recognized to have significant impact on the achievement of the students [49-63].

## Statement of Problem

The attempt to understand psychological wellbeing within student populations has generated several interests from diverse fields in research, social service, healthcare and law enforcement settings. This has led to governments in different countries to promulgate policies and research intervention to help understand the factors that promote psychological wellbeing. However, little effect has been observed and the problems associated with psychological wellbeing in student populations are on the increase [64]. This study attempts to provide predictive measures in understanding psychological wellbeing by examining how family support relationship and religious orientation. This provided a basis for understanding the possible precursors of psychological wellbeing, so as to identify and assuage the possible familial and religious orientation that may predispose students to have poor psychological wellbeing. Research studies involving psychological wellbeing within students' population in Nigerian literature is relatively scarce [2] and studies conducted within Ondo State on this subject is almost non-existent. Therefore, it becomes imperative for studies on psychological wellbeing to receive research attention, so as to provide scientific literature and proffer research proven explanations associated with psychological wellbeing.

Studies have suggested that psychological wellbeing is a function of several other social and psychological variables [2,16,20]. What is not clear from the literature is what role does family support relationship and religious orientation play in the understanding and management of psychological wellbeing among students in Nigeria.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to study the association between family relationships and the influence of religious orientation on Psychological wellbeing. However, the specific primary purpose of this study is to:

- Examine whether family support relationship would predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in the South-West Nigeria.
- Examine whether religious orientation would predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in the South-West Nigeria.
- Examine whether family relationship and religious orientation would jointly or independently predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in the South-West Nigeria.

### Research Hypotheses

- H<sup>1</sup>: Family support relationship will significant predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in the South-West Nigeria.
- H<sup>2</sup>: Religious orientation would predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in the South-West Nigeria.
- H<sup>3</sup>: Family relationship and religious orientation would jointly predict psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in the South-West Nigeria.

### Relevance of Study

The outcomes of this study would have some pragmatic relevance for academic institutions and universities as results of this study would help them know where to focus on and when to redesign their curriculum to encourage and promote the psychological wellbeing of undergraduates. The results of this study, will also inform school management about the need and requirements for undergraduates to successfully inculcate the needed psychological balance for optimal learning. The findings from this study will serve as a reference point and stimulate more research in this direction among educational psychology researchers and other researchers that are interested in similar studies. This study will be of huge benefit for educational purposes to broaden the knowledge of other researchers.

### Methods

#### Research Design

A cross-sectional design as adopted in his study. The variables of this study were not actively manipulated. The dependent variable is psychological wellbeing. The predictor variables are family relationship and religious orientation.

#### Research Setting

Undergraduates in the university in Ondo state, Nigeria constitute the population of this study. The pluralistic and viable nature of Ondo state informed the choice of institution. Undergraduates in this university compared to undergraduates in other part of the country may face diverse demands on their psychological wellbeing due to diverse collection of people and cultures.

#### Participants

A total of 304 undergraduates across departments in Adekunle Ajasin University were sampled using accidental sampling technic (ballot). The departments were selected using a simple sampling technic (ballot). The departments were drawn from faculties of Law, Art, Social & Management Science, Science, and Education in the university. The participants comprised of male 172 (56.6%) and female 132 (43.4 %).

#### Instrument

Relevant data were gathered through the use of validated questionnaires which comprises of four sections (section A-D). Socio-demographic information: These include age, gender, marital status and family type. Scale of psychological wellbeing (SPWB). The dimensions of psychological wellbeing were measured using scale of psychological wellbeing developed by Ryff C, et al. [65]. SPWB was rated on 6-point scale but separate scale (1= strongly agree, 2= moderate disagree, 3= slightly disagree, 4= slightly agree, 5= moderately agree, 6= strongly agree. Sample items included: "I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions" (subjective psychological wellbeing), "I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life" (happiness). Ryff CD, et al. [22] reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.79, 0.85 and 0.86. Religious Orientation Scale (ROS). Extrinsic intrinsic sub scale 20-item scale and the questions were scrambled. The question style adopted was a Yes and No forced choice format was used. The religious orientation scale developed by Alportt GW, et al. [66]. Internal consistencies reported for the ROS intrinsic range from adequate to excellent, with Cronbach Alpha's mostly typically in the mid 0.80's. Internal consistencies reported for the ROS extrinsic scale are invariably lower with Cronbach

alpha's mostly typically in the low [23].

Using Nigerian sample, Anyanwu J [67] obtained 0.70 and 0.76 Cronbach alphas respectively for the overall scale. In the present study, a Cronbach alpha of 0.83 was obtained for the overall scale. Score above below the mean reflect high psychological wellbeing indicate low psychological wellbeing. Index of Family Relation Scale (IFR) by Hudson WW, et al. [68] is a 25-item scales used to measure the extent, severity or magnitude of problems that family members have in their relationships with one another. There are two cutting scores for the IFR. The first is a score of 30 ( $\pm 5$ ); scores below this level indicate absence of a clinically significant problem, while scores above this level indicate the potential presence of a clinically significant problem. The second cutting score is 70. Scores above this level nearly always indicate that clients are experiencing severe stress with the possibility that some type of violence might be present or used in dealing with problems. The IFR is scored by reverse-scoring of items [1,5,15-17,19,21,29,40,63,66,67]. The next step is summing the scores, subtracting the number of completed items, multiplying this figure by 10, and dividing by the number of items completed times [38]. This will produce a range from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicated greater magnitude or severity of problems.

### Sampling and Procedure

Using accidental sampling technique, the researcher administered three hundred and fifteen questionnaires to students who consented in such a way that averages of 16 copies of questionnaire were administered per department. The reason for using accidental sampling technique and not randomization was because most banks undergraduates are always busy and the academic situations in the universities

### Results

Predictors	B	T	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Df	F
Independent Variable(s)			0.7	0.1	1,304	56.78**
Family Support Relationship	0.41**	0.7				
Religious Orientation	0.32**	0.6				
Dependent Variable						
Psychological Wellbeing						

**Table 1:** Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Prediction of Family Support Relationship and Religious Orientation on Psychological Wellbeing. (\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ ).

The result of the multiple regression, showed that family support relationship was significant predictor of psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University, Ondo State South-West, Nigeria [ $\beta = .41^{**}$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. Hence, hypothesis 1 was accepted. Also, the results

due to academic undertakings and lectures did not allow for other sampling techniques. So the only means to get sustainable participants is by using this non-probabilistic method. Although, three hundred and fifteen (315) copies of questionnaire were administered but only three hundred and four copies (304) were found usable for the analysis. This yielded a response rate of 96.11%. In order to get the undergraduates that participated, all the faculties in the university were listed and even numbers was assigned to various departments within the faculty. The choice of even numbers was arrived at via the ballot technique. That is, odd and even were wrapped differently and put together in a box. An individual was then asked to pick a wrapped paper upon which even numbers was written. The faculties used for the study are; Arts, Education, Sciences, Law, Social and Management. The purpose of the study was explained to the participating undergraduates as they were also given assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of their identities and responses. In addition, the respondents were told that there was no right or wrong answers, as such they such be as honest as possible in their responses.

### Data Analysis

In order to determine the extent and direction of associations among the study variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was conducted. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was then used to test hypothesis 1, 2, and 3. Some of the socio-demographic variables were codified. For example, gender was coded male 0, female 1. Marital status was code single 0, married 1, widow 2, and divorce 3. Job position was coded junior 0, senior 1. All analysis was conducted using SPSS Wizard.

of the regression analysis showed that religious orientation directly predicted psychological wellbeing [ $\beta = .61^{**}$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. Hence, hypothesis 2 was accepted. This result implies that undergraduates who have high or increased perception of religious alignment are more likely to report increased levels

of psychological wellbeing in Adekunle Ajasin University, south-west Nigeria. In addition, the results of the regression analysis demonstrated that, on the contribution of all the independent variables (emotional empathy and religious orientation) signify that all the independent variables when pulled together yield a multiple R of Huppert FA [12] and R2 of Bech P [25] [ $F(3, 304) = 56.78^{**} p < 0.01$ ]. This is an indication that undergraduate's emotional empathy and religious orientation contributed 66% of the variance in psychological wellbeing. Meanwhile, other variables not considered in this study therefore accounts for 34%. Therefore, the hypothesis 3 was accepted.

## Discussion

This study examined the influence of family relation and religious orientation on psychological wellbeing among undergraduates in Ondo state. In hypothesis 1, the result showed an overall significant joint influence of family relation on psychological wellbeing. One plausible reason for this may be that the significance of family support can have far-reaching effects on the subjective perception of undergraduates, a feeling of that support system, interaction between family social support and psychological wellbeing as undergraduates who experience familial social support influence their state and their emotional needs which increases likelihood that they will report increased psychological wellbeing. The quality of family relationships, comprising social support and care, can influence psychological well-being through psycho-social means [69]. Familial social support may serve as a reservoir of managing the harmful impact of problems associated with psychological well-being [70], on the other hand, familial support may also enhance psychological well-being by increasing individual self-worth [71]. Students receiving support from their family members may feel a greater sense of positive self-image, and this improved self-worth can metamorphosis into increased optimism, positive affect, and improved psychological health [72]. In the second hypotheses, religious orientations significantly predicted psychological wellbeing. This outcome can be as a result of the fact that students who have increased levels of religious alignment would perceive increased levels of support from spiritual inclination who serves to promote hope, faith and courage. This view is supported by other researchers as religious learning can be mechanism to advance psychological wellbeing by developing standards and help students and individuals deal with demanding situations, suffering and problems in academic life, also, religious orientation enhances acceptance and an individual's ability to face stress and adversity competently [73]. In relation to the third hypothesis, both family support relationship and religious orientation should significant joint relationship and this plausible due to the psycho-social dimension of both constructs to increase psychological level in students.

## Conclusion

This study has established that family support relationship and religious orientation significantly predicted psychological well-being among undergraduates in South-west, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, level of psychological well-being was very low among the female partners of prisoners. This means that all these predictor variables could jointly interact to play important roles in contributing to psychological wellbeing in student populations. Hence, it is the position of this study that family support relationship and religious orientation are significant predictors of psychological well-being in student population.

## Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, it is recommended that;

- Government agencies can use the results of this study to develop and integrate policies that discourage and incorporate psychologically and socially responsible mechanism that directly engage the activities of students.
- Academic institutions and organizations such as, Ministry of Information and Culture, National Orientation Agency, Society for Family Health, Ministry of Women Affairs, Social and Welfare Board, and Faith based organizations should engage in programmes that have direct effect on parasocial tendencies within the various levels of tertiary education in other to foster studentship. This can be done through engaging student in psycho-educational programmes that advances spirit of tolerance, acceptability of one another and equally engage in programmes that involves individual religious belief system.

## Limitation of the Study and Direction for Future Research

Like other studies, this present study has some limitations as well. The limitations noted were: One, findings in this study should be generalized with caution due to the following reasons:

- Data might be open to response set because data were collected using self-report questionnaire,
- The study only made use of 304 participants which may not be enough for generalization.

This study only considered two variables and the influence of other variables such as, anxiety, emotional intelligence and academic status on psychological wellbeing of undergraduates should be considered in future research. Future researchers should also embark on comparative study as this will tell if the independent variables are truly responsible for the antecedent of psychological wellbeing among undergraduates' in other parts of Nigeria. The

interactive role of the dimensions of psychological wellbeing on should also be examined.

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