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## **Peer Relations As Predictors of Emotional Promiscuity Among Undergraduate Students**

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**Chikwendu, Chimezie Emmanuel;**

Affiliated Institution: Enugu State University of Science and Technology

Corresponding Author: [douglasufuoma@gmail.com](mailto:douglasufuoma@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated peer relations as predictors of emotional promiscuity among undergraduate students. Ninety-five (95) undergraduate students comprising 59 females and 36 males with a mean age of 20.96 and SD of 2.15 were selected using multi-stage (cluster, simple random: by balloting and purposive) sampling techniques as participants from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Jones (2011) Emotional Promiscuity Scale (EPS) and Aydoğdu (2022) Peer Relationship Scale were used for data collections, correlational design was adopted, while Hierarchical Multiple Regression statistics with the aid of SPSS version (27) to manage the data. Findings shows that peer relation (popularity  $St\beta = .201$ ,  $t = 1.214$ , trust  $St\beta = -.137$ ,  $t = -.671$ , insightfulness  $St\beta = .148$ ,  $t = .790$  at  $p < .05$ ) did not predict emotional promiscuity. Hence, future researchers should investigate other variables that can cause or bring about significant prediction of emotional promiscuity.

### **Keywords:**

*Peer Relations, Emotional Promiscuity, Undergraduate Students*

### **Introduction**

The adolescence period signifies dynamic transitions in terms of emotions, physiologies, behaviours and interests along with several challenges (Hurlock, 1982; Faiza, 2022) and young people continuously change their personalities (Cherry, 2017). The adolescent stage encourages romantic relationships and demands certain skills to sustain interactions in healthy manners (Noar, Carlyle, & Cole, 2006; Widman, Choukas-Bradley, Helms, Golin, & Prinstein, 2014). In today's world, promiscuity is rampant (Brand, Markey, Mills, & Hodges 2007; Jones & Paulhus 2012; Faiza, 2022). Promiscuity refers to the readiness to be involved in romantic activities with several partners and includes two domains: sexual and emotional (Jones & Paulhus 2012; Faiza, 2022). Sexual promiscuity refers to engagement in physical acts with several partners (Garcia et al. 2010; Faiza, 2022) whereas the latter refers to an inclination to readily fall in love, flirt, date and emotional vulnerabilities with individuals other than one's partner (Jones & Paulhus 2012; Faiza, 2022). Sexual and emotional promiscuity leads to sexual as well as emotionally unfaithful acts (Pinto & Arantes, 2016). People with higher levels of emotional promiscuity (EP) possess greater sensitivity to easily develop feelings of love and love at first encounters (Sprecher & Metts, 1989; Faiza, 2022). However, affective connections can grow with or without sexual relationships (Diamond, 2002; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987; Faiza, 2022). Individuals with higher levels of EP tend to be emotionally unfaithful to present partners, unreliable, and lack desirability as prospect mate; which leads to unprotected sex and greater chances for sexually transmitted disorders (Lalduhawmi., 2019; Jones & Paulhus, 2012). Students tend to engage in romantic relationships due to several factors such as personality, libido and lowered emotional intelligence. Lack of skills to control emotions leads to sexuality and promiscuity (Edobor & Ebiye, 2017). Promiscuity has several adverse effects on lifestyle (Okafor & Duru, 2010; Faiza, 2022), such as indulgence in relationships at young ages, opt bad partners for themselves, inflicting harmful acts towards their current partners, unwanted pregnancies, economic, and psychological, and biological drawbacks (Jones, 2011; Faiza, 2022). It is a major issue for the individual as well as society and warrants attention. However, relatively under-investigated topic (Jones &

Paulhus, 2012; Faiza, 2022). Different factors can contribute to emotional promiscuity; this study tend to investigate peer relations as predictors of emotional promiscuity among undergraduate students.

For decades, peer relationships have been considered by scholars to be one of the most important social relationships for adolescents. Peer relationship is a kind of interpersonal relationship developed by individuals of similar age or psychological development levels in the process of communication and cooperation. It is regarded as an important indicator to effectively measure the ability of adolescents to adapt to the social environment and cope with difficulties (Rubin et al., 2013). As non-kinship relationships, the development of adolescent peer relationships is affected by many different factors in family, school, and society (Ladd et al., 2008; Zhu et al., 2022). Adolescents who are unable to effectively establish positive peer relationships may experience a decrease in their ability to accurately assess the value of relationships (Rosenbach & Renneberg, 2014; Long et al., 2021), and even show withdrawal and avoidance of future interpersonal communication and social activities (Molden et al., 2009; Haddow et al., 2021). Having good peer relationships plays an important role for individuals in adolescence. On the one hand, it can help adolescents develop positive interpersonal relationships and adapt to complex social situations, which directly impacts adolescents' self-identity; on the other hand, it can be a valuable source of emotional support for adolescents (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Ecological systems theory suggests that everyone lives in a specific environment. Family and peer relationships are the most important microsystems for adolescents (King et al., 2016; McMahan et al., 2020). It has been found that family intimacy affects adolescent peer relationships (Zemp et al., 2018; Noonan and Pilkington, 2020). The influential mechanism of the complex relationship between family background and peer relationships needs further investigation. Therefore, it is meaningful to study the influence mechanism of family intimacy on peer relationships, which can improve the level of positive peer interaction among adolescents.

Social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) is adopted as theoretical framework because it views interactions between individuals as an exchange of goods and services that is carried out in pursuit of individual goals. The terms of the exchange reflect the relative power of each partner. The partner who is least dependent on the relationship for valued benefits has greater bargaining power to improve on the exchange. Dependency and bargaining power are operationalized as partners' relative resources, and greater access to support outside the relationship is theorized to decrease dependency and increase an individual's power to shape outcomes within the relationship. The amount of give and take will determine how a family structure will look like, this situation will build up the decision-making of the students. Hence, this hypothesis

### **Hypotheses**

This hypothesis was tested  
Peer relation will significantly predict emotional promiscuity.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Ninety-five (95) undergraduate students comprising 59 females and 36 males with a mean age of 20.96 and SD of 2.15 were selected using multi-stage (cluster, simple random: by balloting and purposive) sampling techniques as participants from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. The students were clustered according to their faculties, simple random: by balloting was used to pick the faculties, while purposive: a criterion selection-based sampling technique was used to select the participants from twenty-two (22) from pharmacy, twenty-eight (28) from Management sciences, twenty-four (24) from Environmental sciences and twenty-one (21) from Law.

### **Instrument**

Two sets of instruments were used for the study, namely

1. Jones (2011) Emotional Promiscuity Scale (EPS)
2. Aydođdu (2022) Peer Relationship Scale

### **Emotional Promiscuity Scale (EPS) (Jones, 2011)**

The Emotional Promiscuity Scale (EPS) was developed by Jones (2011) which contains 10 items designed in Likert-type format from 1 to 5 where 1 represented strongly disagree and 5 represented strongly agree. The scale measured the

tendency of emotional promiscuity in university students of both sexes. The internal consistency of the scale was 0.69 Cronbach Alpha for both sexes.

### **Aydoğdu (2022) Peer Relationship Scale**

Aydoğdu (2022) Peer Relationship Scale is a structure consisting of four sub-dimensions and 29 items. The sub-dimensions of the scale are named as intimacy, popularity, trust, and insightfulness, with a 5-point Likert type listed as strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and completely agree.. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, the model fit indices were found to have a good fit. Significant relationships were found with the Peer Support Scale and the Stirling Children's Well-being Scale during the analysis of the scale's criterion validity. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  internal consistency, split half reliability, and the test-retest method were used to assess the reliability of the scale. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  internal consistency coefficient for the total score was found to be .93, the split-half reliability was .85, and the test-retest reliability value was .82. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and split-half reliability analyses of the scale are. The internal consistency value for the overall scale is .93 and for the sub-dimensions this value is .94, .90, .87 and .84, respectively. The split-half reliability values are as follows: .85 for the total scale and .87, .82, .79 and .77 for the sub-dimensions, respectively. Given that scales with a reliability coefficient of .70 and above in the scale development and adaptation processes are considered reliable, it can be inferred that the internal consistency and semi-reliability coefficients of the Peer Relationship Scale for Children and Adolescents are sufficient (Landis & Koch, 1977; Robinson et al., 1991). The structure of the Peer Relationship Scale, which consists of 29 items and four sub-dimensions, has a good and sufficient level of adaptation. When the model fit indices of the scale are examined ( $\chi^2/df = 2.96$ , RMSEA = .068, RMR = .041, SRMR = .061, CFI = .97, NFI = .98, RFI = .97, GFI = .96), they are found to be above the recommended critical values (Schumacher & Lomax, 2004; Seçer, 2015).

### **Procedure**

Undergraduate students were selected as participants from four faculties in Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT) using multi-stage sampling (cluster, simple random: by balloting, and purposive) techniques for this study. The students were clustered according to their faculties, simple random: by balloting was used to pick the faculties while purposive sampling techniques were used to select students from the selected faculties. The researcher employed the research assistants who are faculty executives from the selected faculties to help distribute and retrieve the questionnaire. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were sent out, one hundred and fourteen were returned. Among the returning ones, ten bears multiple initials and the other nine were not properly responded to, which make the numbers properly responded to be ninety-five, which was used for data analysis.

### **Design/statistics**

The design for the study is correlational design. This is because the researcher investigated the relationship between the study variables without manipulating or controlling any of them. Therefore, the researcher adopted Hierarchical Multiple Regression statistics with the aid of SPSS version (27) to manage the data to test the formulated hypotheses and account for the contribution of each of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

### **Result**

**Table I: descriptive statistics**

S/N	Variables	M	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
1	Emotional promiscuity	25.5417	5.87805	1	.166	.039	.099	.055	-.192	-.193
2	popularity	14.5417	3.76410		1	.436	.173	-.019	.049	-.340
3	trust	26.3958	5.01801			1	.605	.022	-.048	-.129
4	insightfulness	19.0000	4.41949				1	-.101	-.058	.044
5	age	21.2917	1.99956					1	-.210	.342
6	gender	1.5625	.50133						1	-.036
7	Year of Study	2.3333	1.19098							1

At  $p < .05$

Table I above shows popularity  $r = .166$ , trust  $r = .039$  and insightfulness  $r = .099$  dimensions of peer relations did not relate with emotional promiscuity. Age  $r = .055$ , gender  $r = -.192$  and year of study  $r = -.193$  demographic variables did not related to emotional promiscuity.

**Table II: regression statistics**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	St $\beta$	t	Sig.
1	.206	.043			.586
Popularity			.201	1.214	.231
Trust			-.137	-.671	.506
Insightfulness			.148	.790	.434
2	.365	.133			.377
Age			.114	.690	.494
Gender			-.176	-1.160	.253
Year of study			-.202	-1.164	.251

**Dependent variable= emotional promiscuity, at  $p < .05$ .  $r$ = relationship,  $r^2$ =relation square, St $\beta$ = standardized beta**

Table II above shows that peer relation (popularity St $\beta = .201$ ,  $t = 1.214$ , trust St $\beta = -.137$ ,  $t = -.671$ , insightfulness St $\beta = .148$ ,  $t = .790$  at  $p < .05$ ) did not predict emotional promiscuity, hence the hypothesis tested which stated that per relation will independently and jointly predict emotional promiscuity is hereby rejected. Peer relation is not related to emotional promiscuity at  $r = .206$ , and it contributed 4.3% variation to emotional promiscuity, peer relation did not predict emotional promiscuity sig. = .586 at  $p < .05$ . Age St $\beta = .114$ ,  $t = .690$ , gender St $\beta = -.176$ ,  $t = -1.160$  and year of study St $\beta = -.202$ ,  $t = -1.164$  did predict emotional promiscuity at  $p < .05$

### Discussion

The hypothesis tested which stated that peer relation will significantly predict emotional promiscuity was not confirmed, hence the hypothesis was rejected. The result shows that student tend to make their own decision and chooses their sexual orientation without any external factors, and these internal factors were not considered in this study.

The findings from this study implies that student that are emotionally promiscuous is not as a result of peer relations rather, and that peer relations does not contribute to either increase or the decrease of emotional promiscuity.

### Implication of the Findings

The findings were incongruity with social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) which was adopted as a theoretical framework because it views interactions between individuals as an exchange of goods and services that is carried out in pursuit of individual goals. The terms of the exchange reflect the relative power of each partner. The partner who is least dependent on the relationship for valued benefits has greater bargaining power to improve the exchange. Dependency and bargaining power are operationalized as partners' relative resources, and greater access to support outside the relationship is theorized to decrease dependency and increase an individual's power to shape outcomes within the relationship.

The finding indicated that either peer relations wasn't factors that can help to determine emotional promiscuity, hence future researchers should consider other factors such like self-esteem, marital satisfaction and others if they can.

### Limitation of the study

Some factors militated against this study, one of such is the sampled population. Sampling only one institution during exam reduces the numbers of participants, more students would have participated assuming more than one university was sampled.

The sampling techniques also affected the numbers of participants; the more students would have been sampled assuming a suitable sampling technique was adopted.

Some demographic variables were left on answered by the participants which lead to the researcher not including the outcome in the study, demographic such as religious affiliation, parental working status et al. These control variables would have help to give this study direction.

### **Suggestion for further study**

Future researcher should consider sampling population from different institution and also to consider carrying this study outside examination period, this will give student opportunity to participate in the research.

A suitable sampling technique should be considered by future researcher, because this will give room for the selection of larger population.

The future researcher should consider to arrange the demographic variables in such a way that the participants will not leave them unattended to.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The study investigated peer relations and family structure as predictors of emotional promiscuity among undergraduate student, findings revealed that none of the independent variables predicted emotional promiscuity. Hence future researcher should explore or factors that can contribute or necessitate emotional promiscuity.

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