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Website: <https://jppssuniuyo.com/jpci> Email: [jppssuniuyo@gmail.com](mailto:jppssuniuyo@gmail.com)

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### Article

### Open Access

#### **SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT STRATEGIES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT IN ETCHE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE**

**Hanson Manuabuchi Ukaegbu** <sup>1</sup>

**Gertrude Ezinne Nnaji** <sup>2</sup>

Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Uyo, Nigeria <sup>1 & 2</sup>

**Corresponding Email:** [ukaegbuhanson@uniuyo.edu.ng](mailto:ukaegbuhanson@uniuyo.edu.ng) <sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The study investigated the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 5,076 students offering Government as a subject in 25 public senior secondary schools in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample of 346 Senior Secondary Two Students offering Government was selected for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure. Two researcher-made instruments, entitled "Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire" (SASQ) and "Government Achievement Test" (GAT) were used for data collection. Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire was face validated while Government Achievement Test was content validated. The internal consistency reliability of the instruments were established which yielded reliability coefficients of .73 and .75 for SASQ and GAT respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses. Analysis of data revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour, emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Based on the findings, conclusions were drawn and three recommendations made among which is that secondary schools in Etche Local government Area should promote collaborative learning activities such as group discussions, debates, and peer tutoring to enhance peer interaction among students.

**Keywords:** Social, Adjustment, Strategies, Academic, Achievement, Students.

## **Introduction**

Academic achievement, particularly in subjects like Government that require active engagement with civic ideas, analytical thinking, and social relevance, may be significantly shaped by how well students are socially adjusted to their learning environment. Social adjustment encompasses a student's ability to interact appropriately with peers, teachers, school structures, and expectations. When students develop effective social adjustment strategies, they are more likely to experience emotional stability, constructive relationships, and a conducive learning atmosphere that supports academic success. Undoubtedly, some secondary schools represent a microcosm of the larger society, with students coming from diverse socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. These differences may impact how students relate socially within the school system and the strategies they adopt to adjust. Given the emphasis on performance in core social science subjects like Government especially in external examinations, there is growing interest among educators, parents, and policymakers in identifying non-academic factors that may support or hinder students' performance. While many previous studies may have focused on teaching methods, learning environments, and motivation, none has addressed how social adjustment strategies relate to students' achievement in Government, specifically in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

As highlighted by Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017), social adjustment strategies refer to the behavioural and emotional techniques students adopt to fit into the social structure of the school. These include conflict resolution, peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour, cooperation, emotional self-regulation, and adaptability. These skills are crucial to fostering healthy interpersonal relationships, managing stress, and maintaining a positive school climate conducive to academic engagement. But for the purpose of this study, only three social adjustment strategies namely peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour and emotional self-regulation were studied. Peer interaction refers to the quality of social engagement and communication among students (Rubin, Bukowski, & Laursen, 2016). Positive peer interactions enhance a sense of belonging and academic cooperation, while negative peer relationships may lead to social exclusion or classroom disruption. As noted by Rubin *et al.* (2016), peer interaction is essential for the development of social competence and school engagement. When students collaborate respectfully with peers, they can share academic resources, engage in group discussions, and stimulate collective learning skills that are especially vital in understanding civic issues and governance topics.

Help-seeking behaviour is the willingness of students to approach others, such as peers or teachers, for academic or emotional assistance (Karabenick & Newman, 2019). This strategy is particularly beneficial to students who may struggle with subject content or experience social anxiety. Thus, help-seeking is a proactive and self-regulatory behaviour that supports learning by enabling students to access necessary guidance (Ukaegbu & Ekpenyong, 2025). In the context of Government studies, students who seek help are more likely to clarify difficult concepts, improve class participation, and perform better academically. Emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage one's emotional responses in a way that facilitates positive social and academic functioning (Gross, 2015). It enables students to cope with stress, disappointment, and peer pressure without acting out or withdrawing. Emotional regulation involves strategies such as reappraisal and impulse control that help individuals adapt to changing social environment. A student who regulates emotions effectively is less likely to engage in classroom conflict, more likely to remain focused, and better positioned to handle the academic demands of subjects like Government. Based on the foregoing therefore, it became necessary to investigate the connection between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement in Government among secondary school students in Etche Local

Government Area. A deeper understanding of this relationship could guide teachers in identifying students at risk of social maladjustment, inform counselling interventions, and help create more inclusive and supportive school environment that enhance both social and academic outcomes.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite efforts to improve curriculum content and teaching methods, students' academic achievement in Government remains inconsistent, particularly in public secondary schools in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Poor achievement of students in Government, a subject that plays a vital role in civic education and national development, has serious implications for both the individual learner and the society at large. Government as a subject is designed to equip students with knowledge about the structure, functions, and operations of the state, as well as their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens. When students perform poorly in Government, it may hamper their understanding of democratic principles and weakens their capacity for informed political participation. This may even threaten the growth of a politically conscious and active citizenry, which is essential for the sustainability of democracy in Nigeria. More so, the immediate consequence of poor achievement in Government could be the limitation it places on students' future academic and career opportunities. Government is a foundational subject for disciplines such as political science, public administration, international relations, and law. Students who do not perform well in Government may be ineligible for admission into these programmes at tertiary level of education, thus narrowing their career prospects and hindering their aspirations for professions in the public and legal sectors. This academic limitation can lead to frustration and disinterest in education generally, especially among students who had hoped to pursue careers tied to civic and public service. Therefore, understanding the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students is crucial in shaping students' attitudes, behaviours, and overall engagement with learning. When students are well-adjusted socially, they are more likely to exhibit positive academic behaviours such as regular attendance, active classroom participation, and effective communication. These behaviours could directly contribute to improved academic outcomes particularly in subjects like Government that require critical thinking and collaborative discussion. Thus, this study sought to investigate the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government, with a particular focus on Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

- i. Relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.
- ii. Relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.
- iii. Relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study would be of significant value to students, teachers, school counsellors, and researchers. Students would benefit directly from the findings, as the study would help them become more aware of the importance of developing effective social skills such as peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour and emotional self-regulation. This awareness would enable students to reflect on their interactions within the school environment and adopt more positive behaviours that promote academic success and healthy peer relationships. Teachers would find the study useful in identifying the specific social difficulties that hinder students' achievement in Government. With this knowledge, teachers would be better equipped to create supportive classroom environments that encourage cooperation, respectful dialogue, and inclusive group work. Teachers would also be able to integrate social skills development into their teaching strategies to enhance students' academic engagement. More so, the study would provide school counsellors with empirical data to guide the design of targeted intervention programmes aimed at improving students' social adjustment. These programmes could include peer mentoring, conflict resolution training, and emotional management workshops tailored to the needs of students who are struggling socially and academically. Finally, researchers would benefit from the study as it contributes to the existing body of literature on academic achievement, particularly in the Nigerian environment. It would open avenues for further research on the intersection of social behaviour and academic achievement in specific school subjects such as Government and provide a framework for comparative studies across educational systems and states in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. What is the relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government?
- ii. What is the relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government?
- iii. What is the relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses guided the study:

- i. There is no significant relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.

### **Scope of the Study**

The study investigated the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students. Social adjustment strategies variables investigated as independent variables of the study were peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour and emotional self-regulation while academic achievement in Government served as the dependent variable. Only Senior Secondary Two Students offering Government in public secondary schools in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, 2024/2025 academic session participated in the study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

**Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977):** Social Learning Theory was developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. The theory posits that learning occurs within a social context through observation, imitation, and modeling. It stresses that individuals, particularly adolescents, learn behaviours, attitudes, and emotional responses by watching others, especially authority figures and peers. Reinforcement and perceived consequences of actions also play crucial roles in shaping behaviour. This theory is relevant to this present study in explaining how students acquire social adjustment strategies that impact academic achievement. In Etche Local Government Area, students learn from peer groups and teachers how to resolve conflicts, cooperate, and seek help when needed. When positive behaviours are modeled in the school environment such as active participation, respect, and discipline, students are more likely to emulate them, which may result in improved classroom behaviour and academic achievement in Government. On the other hand, exposure to maladaptive behaviours may lead to social and academic challenges. Bandura's theory supports the integration of structured social learning experiences to enhance both adjustment and academic success.

**Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979)**

Ecological Systems Theory was introduced by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979. The theory conceptualizes human development as influenced by multiple layers of environmental systems, including the microsystem (immediate relationships like family and school), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), exosystem (indirect environments), and macrosystem (cultural and societal norms). These systems interact over time (chronosystem) to shape behaviour and development. This theory is relevant to this study as it offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the interconnected factors affecting social adjustment and academic achievement. In the school context, the microsystem comprising teachers, peers, and family may play a central role in shaping students' social behaviours and attitudes toward learning. For instance, students from supportive schools with positive peer culture are more likely to develop adjustment strategies that enhance academic performance in subjects like Government. Moreover, broader community values and educational policies within the macrosystem can also affect students' motivation and behaviour. Bronfenbrenner's theory underscores the importance of nurturing environments at all levels to foster holistic students' development.

**Empirical Studies**

A study on peer interaction and academic performance among senior secondary school students in Enugu State was conducted by Ume and Okorie (2020). The population of the study comprised 1,210 SS 2 students in public secondary schools. A correlational design was adopted for the study. A sample of 300 students was selected for the study using stratified random sampling procedure based on school location and gender. Instruments used for data collection were the Peer Interaction Questionnaire (PIQ) and the Academic Performance Record Sheet (APRS). Pearson correlation and multiple regression were used for data analysis. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement, particularly in subjects requiring collaborative learning. The study recommended that schools adopt structured peer learning programs to enhance academic outcomes. An assessment of peer interaction and its effect on students' performance in Civic Education was conducted by Okonkwo and Eze (2019) in Abia State. The study covered 1,560 SS 3 students in 12 public secondary schools. A cross-sectional design was adopted for the study, and 320 students were selected through proportionate stratified sampling procedure. Instruments for data collection included the Peer Interaction and Support Inventory (PISI) and the Civic Education Performance Test (CEPT). Data were analyzed using t-test and regression statistics.

The findings indicated that students who reported high levels of positive peer interaction scored significantly higher in Civic Education. The study recommended that teachers should promote classroom activities that foster collaborative interaction.

An investigation into peer group influence and academic achievement among adolescents in Edo State was conducted by Aigbe and Omoregie (2019). The study targeted 1,870 students from public senior secondary schools in Benin City. A descriptive survey design was used, and 320 students were randomly selected for the study. Data were collected using the Peer Influence Behaviour Checklist (PIBC) and Academic Records Retrieval Sheet (ARRS). Statistical tools used for data analysis were descriptive statistics and regression analysis. Findings indicated a negative correlation between peer group association and academic performance. The researchers noted that students who spent extended periods with peers outside the classroom environment engaged more in non-academic activities such as social media use and truancy. The study concluded that peer influence, when not directed or moderated by academic goals, could hinder academic success. Recommendations included the introduction of peer regulation workshops and stronger home-school communication to monitor out-of-class interactions. A study on academic help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement among secondary school students in Kwara State was conducted by Yusuf and Ibrahim (2020). The population comprised 2,100 senior secondary students in Ilorin metropolis. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A sample of 420 students was selected for the study using stratified random sampling procedure based on school type and gender. The instruments used for data collection were the Help-Seeking Behaviour Questionnaire (HSBQ) and students' cumulative academic scores. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement. The study recommended that schools should encourage students to seek academic support through peer tutoring and teacher consultation.

Adebayo and Ogundipe (2019) explored the relationship between perceived classroom support, help-seeking behaviour, and academic achievement in Lagos State. The study involved 1,500 SS 3 students from urban secondary schools. A descriptive survey design was employed, and 300 students were selected via purposive sampling procedure. Instruments used for data collection were the Classroom Support Inventory (CSI), Help-Seeking Behaviour Scale (HSBS), and an Academic Achievement Checklist (AAC). Data were analyzed using multiple regression. Results revealed that perceived teacher support significantly influenced students' willingness to seek help, which in turn predicted higher academic achievement. The authors recommended teacher development programmes focused on creating supportive classroom climates. Nwankwo and Ibe (2018) conducted a study on students' help-seeking tendencies and academic success in Imo State. The population included 2,300 senior secondary school students across three educational zones. A descriptive design was employed, with a sample of 500 students selected using multistage sampling procedure. The instruments used for data collection were the Help-Seeking Inventory (HSI) and Student Academic Progress Record (SAPR). Pearson correlation analysis revealed that students with high help-seeking tendencies had significantly higher academic scores. The researchers recommended institutionalizing help-seeking as a skill through classroom guidance activities.

An investigation into the influence of help-seeking tendencies on academic achievement among students in Ekiti State was carried out by Aina and Ojebola (2020). The target population comprised 1,260 students from public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study, and 280 students were randomly selected for the study. Data collection instruments were the Help-Seeking Behaviour Inventory



(HSBI) and Academic Achievement Record Form (AARF). Analysis using regression techniques revealed a weak negative correlation between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement. The authors observed that students who frequently sought help tended to rely excessively on others for academic tasks, leading to reduced autonomy and lower performance. They recommended interventions that promote strategic help-seeking while encouraging student independence and critical thinking. A study on emotional intelligence and academic achievement among senior secondary students in Delta State was conducted by Efe and Odili (2022). The study targeted 2,200 students. The study adopted a correlational design, and 400 students were selected using stratified sampling procedure. The Emotional Self-Regulation Subscale of the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (ESREIQ) and the Academic Achievement Index (AAI) were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using linear regression. Analyses of data revealed that the emotional self-regulation dimension significantly influenced students' academic performance. The study recommended emotional learning as part of co-curricular activities.

Eze and Okpara (2021) examined emotional self-control and academic performance of secondary school students in Social Studies in Rivers State. The population comprised 1,840 students from 10 public schools. The study adopted a descriptive survey design, and 320 students were selected using systematic sampling procedure. Emotional Self-Control Scale (ESCS) and Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) were employed for data collection. Data were analyzed using t-test and regression. Data analyses showed that students with higher emotional self-control demonstrated significantly better academic performance. The authors recommended training workshops on emotional self-discipline. In a related study in Bauchi State, Abubakar and Usman (2020) investigated the influence of emotional regulation on academic performance among senior secondary school students. The population consisted of 1,560 SS 3 students in public schools. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, and 300 students were selected using multistage sampling procedure. The researchers used the Emotional Regulation Inventory (ERI) and Academic Achievement Test Battery (AATB) for data collection. Analysis using multiple regression revealed a weak negative correlation between emotional regulation scores and academic performance. The study found that some emotionally regulated students tended to avoid academic stress by disengaging from academic challenges, leading to underperformance. The authors recommended interventions that promote task-oriented coping and academic resilience alongside emotional regulation skills. From the foregoing therefore, the researchers observed that none of the past studies reviewed investigated the entire independent variables (peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour and emotional self-regulation) and dependent variable (academic achievement in Government) which the present study investigated. In addition, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is paucity of empirical research on the relationship between social adjustment and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. Thus this present study was carried out to fill the existing gap as observed in the past empirical studies reviewed.

### **Research Design**

A correlational design was adopted for the study. A correlational research design is useful in determining the extent to which two or more variables are related. Hence, correlational research design is more suitable for this study because the researcher was interested in establishing the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised 5,076 students offering Government in 25 public senior secondary schools in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State (Rivers State Post Primary Schools Board, Port Harcourt, 2025).

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample of 346 Senior Secondary Two Students offering Government in public secondary schools in Etche Local Government Area was selected for the study using multi-stage sampling procedure. First, purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study to ensure that only students offering Government were selected for the study. Second, simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 public senior secondary schools out of the existing 25 schools. Thereafter, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select SS Two students based on the population of each sampled school.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

Two researcher-made instruments entitled “Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire” (SASQ) and “Government Achievement Test” (GAT) were used for data collection. The instrument - SASQ consisted of 24 items. Eight items were raised to measure each of the Social Adjustment Strategies namely peer interaction, help-seeking behaviour, and emotional self-regulation. The items were presented as statements to which the respondents were instructed to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The second instrument - GAT consisted of 20 multiple choice questions to elicit information on the achievement of Senior Secondary Two students on Government. The students were requested to circle the correct answer from the options labeled A-D. Each correct answer was scored 5 marks.

### **Validation of the Instrument**

The instrument - SASQ was presented to one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Psychological Foundations, and neo expert in Guidance and Counselling, both in University of Uyo for face validation. The second instrument - GAT was presented to two Government teachers for content validation. The researcher ensured that all the areas recommended for corrections were incorporated before producing the final draft.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

In order to establish the internal consistency reliability of the instruments, the instruments were administered on 20 Senior Secondary Two students in the study area who were not part of the study sample. Cronbach alpha was used to calculate the reliability coefficients of the instruments and reliability coefficients of .73 and .75 were obtained for SASQ and GAT respectively which implies that the instruments are reliable.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The two instruments for the study were administered on the sampled SS Two students through direct delivery method. However, the researchers administered the instruments directly on the respondents with the assistance of one research assistant chosen from the public senior secondary schools being investigated. Filled copies of the instruments were retrieved by the researchers on the same spot.



**Method of Data Analysis**

Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance while all data were subjected to analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS).

**Results**

**Table 1:** Pearson product moment correlation between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Peer interaction (X)	346	.71	.000	Sig.
Academic achievement (Y)				
* p<.05*				

The result presented in Table 1 shows the outcome of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis used to determine the relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area. With a sample size of 346 students, the analysis yielded a correlation coefficient (r-value) of .71, indicating a strong positive relationship between the two variables. This means that students who engage more effectively in peer interaction are likely to achieve higher in Government. Furthermore, the p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, showing that the relationship is statistically significant. Based on this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement is rejected. Therefore, it is found that a significant positive relationship exists between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area.

**Table 2:** Pearson product moment correlation between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Uyo Local Government Area

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Help-seeking (X)	346	.77	.005	Sig.
Academic achievement (Y)				
* p<.05 *				

Table 2 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area. With a total of 346 respondents, the analysis produced a correlation coefficient (r-value) of .77, indicating a strong positive relationship between help-seeking and academic achievement. This means that students who actively seek help from teachers, peers, parents, or other academic support systems tend to perform better in Government. The p-value obtained is .005, which is less than the significance level of .05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. Based on this result, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement is rejected. Therefore, it is found that a significant positive relationship exists between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area.

**Table 3:** Pearson product moment correlation between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area

Variables	n	r-value	p-value	Remark
Emotional self-regulation (X)	346	.74	.001	Sig.
Academic achievement (Y)				

\*p<.05\*

Table 3 shows the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis used to examine the relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area. The analysis, based on a sample of 346 students, yielded a correlation coefficient (r-value) of .74, which indicates a strong positive relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement. This means that students who are able to manage and control their emotions effectively are more likely to perform better in Government. The associated p-value is .001, which is less than the significance level of .05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement is rejected. It is therefore concluded that a significant positive relationship exists between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area.

### Discussion of Findings

Analysis of data on research question one and its corresponding hypothesis one revealed a significant positive relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement of secondary school students in Government. This suggests that students who actively engage with their peers through academic discussions, group studies, cooperative learning, and social interactions tend to perform better in Government as a subject. Peer interaction creates an enabling environment for students to share knowledge, clarify concepts, exchange ideas, and motivate each other toward academic excellence. When students feel accepted and supported by their peers, it boosts their confidence and enhances their willingness to participate in class activities, thereby improving their understanding of the subject. This result supports earlier findings by Ume and Okorie (2020), who reported a significant positive relationship between peer interaction and academic achievement, particularly in subjects requiring collaborative learning. Similarly, Okonkwo and Eze (2019) found that students who reported high levels of positive peer interaction scored significantly higher in Civic Education. However, the study by Aigbe and Omoregie (2019) revealed a negative correlation between peer group association and academic performance. More so, analysis of data on research question two and its corresponding hypothesis two showed that there is a significant positive relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area. This indicates that students who actively seek academic assistance when faced with challenges tend to perform better in the subject. Help-seeking, whether from teachers, classmates, parents, or other sources, allows students to clarify difficult concepts, receive guidance, and build a stronger understanding of subject matter. Such behaviour reflects a proactive and responsible approach to learning, which ultimately enhances academic performance.

This finding is consistent with the study of Yusuf and Ibrahim (2020), who found that there is a significant positive relationship between help-seeking behaviour and academic achievement. Similarly, Adebayo and Ogundipe (2019) found that that perceived teacher

support significantly influenced students' willingness to seek help, which in turn predicted higher academic achievement. However, Aina and Ojebola (2020) found that students who frequently sought help tended to rely excessively on others for academic tasks, leading to reduced autonomy and lower performance. Finally, analysis of data on research question three and its corresponding hypothesis three revealed a significant positive relationship between emotional self-regulation and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area. This indicates that students who are capable of managing their emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger, or frustration tend to perform better academically in Government. Emotional self-regulation allows students to maintain focus, remain calm under pressure, cope with academic demands, and respond to challenges in constructive ways, all of which contribute to improved learning outcomes. This finding is supported by the work of Efe and Odili (2022), who reported that the emotional self-regulation dimension significantly influenced students' academic performance. Similarly, Eze and Okpara (2021) found that students with higher emotional self-control demonstrated significantly better academic performance. However, Abubakar and Usman (2020) found that some emotionally regulated students tended to avoid academic stress by disengaging from academic challenges, leading to underperformance.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social adjustment strategies play a crucial role in enhancing the academic achievement of secondary school students in Government in Etche Local Government Area. Specifically, the study established that peer interaction significantly contributes to students' academic performance, as those who engage effectively with their peers tend to achieve better results. Similarly, help-seeking behaviour was found to have a significant positive influence on academic achievement, indicating that students who actively seek academic support perform better in Government. Finally, emotional self-regulation was also significantly related to academic success, suggesting that students who can manage their emotions effectively are more likely to excel academically. These findings underscore the importance of promoting positive social behaviours and emotional competence as integral components of academic development among secondary school students.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Secondary schools in Etche Local government Area should promote collaborative learning activities such as group discussions, debates, and peer tutoring to enhance peer interaction among students.
- ii. Teachers should encourage an open-door policy where students feel comfortable seeking academic and emotional assistance without fear of ridicule or judgement.
- iii. Government of Rivers State should organize regular sessions on self-regulation skills to equip students with tools for handling academic pressure and emotional challenges.

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### Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire (SASQ)

**Instruction:** Please, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following items by ticking ( √ ) the appropriate option.

- SA = Strongly Agree  
A = Agree  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly Disagree

S/N	Peer Interaction	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I enjoy working together with my classmates during group assignments.				
2.	I feel comfortable expressing my opinions in discussions with classmates.				
3.	My classmates encourage me to do better academically.				
4.	I regularly participate in peer study groups.				

5.	I feel accepted by most of my classmates.				
6.	I feel motivated when I see my friends performing well academically.				
7.	I believe that peer interaction makes learning more enjoyable.				
8.	I freely share my academic materials and resources with my classmates.				
	<b>Help-Seeking Behaviour</b>				
9.	I ask my teachers for clarification when I do not understand a topic.				
10.	I seek help immediately when I face academic challenges.				
11.	I ask questions in class whenever I am confused.				
12.	I visit the school counsellor when I experience academic stress.				
13.	I feel confident seeking help from people I trust in school.				
14.	I ask my family members for support with my schoolwork.				
15.	I seek help from online resources when I am stuck with a school task.				
16.	I believe asking for help is a smart way to learn.				
	<b>Emotional Self-Regulation</b>				
17.	I am able to stay calm when I am angry or upset.				
18.	I control my emotions so they do not affect my schoolwork.				
19.	I can cheer myself up when I feel sad.				
20.	I am good at managing my feelings during stressful situations.				
21.	I avoid reacting immediately when someone annoys me.				
22.	I am able to express my emotions in a calm way.				
23.	I try not to let my emotions affect my relationships with others.				
24.	I reflect on my emotions before making important decisions.				

### **Government Achievement Test (GAT)**

**Instruction:** Circle the correct answer from the options labelled A-D.

- The principle of separation of powers was popularized by**
  - Plato
  - Aristotle
  - Montesquieu
  - Rousseau
- Which of the following is a feature of a federal system of government?**
  - Unicameral legislature
  - Concentration of power in the central government
  - Division of powers between levels of government
  - Absence of constitution
- The body responsible for making laws in Nigeria is the**
  - Executive
  - Judiciary
  - Police
  - Legislature
- A government that is ruled by a few privileged individuals is called**
  - Autocracy
  - Monarchy
  - Oligarchy
  - Democracy
- The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides for a system of government that is**
  - Unitary
  - Federal
  - Confederal
  - Monarchical

6. **The highest court in Nigeria is the**
  - A. Court of Appeal
  - B. Supreme Court
  - C. High Court
  - D. Customary Court
7. **Which of the following best describes the rule of law?**
  - A. Power lies with the majority
  - B. No one is above the law
  - C. The executive is superior to other arms
  - D. Laws apply only to the citizens
8. **The term 'suffrage' refers to**
  - A. Tax collection
  - B. The right to vote
  - C. Impeachment of the president
  - D. Freedom of speech
9. **The type of government in which power resides with the people is**
  - A. Totalitarianism
  - B. Aristocracy
  - C. Democracy
  - D. Theocracy
10. **Public opinion is mainly expressed through**
  - A. Secret cults
  - B. Political appointments
  - C. The media
  - D. Military coups
11. **The executive arm of government is responsible for**
  - A. Interpreting laws
  - B. Making laws
  - C. Enforcing laws
  - D. Reviewing laws
12. **A constitution is said to be rigid when it is**
  - A. Easy to amend
  - B. Written in simple language
  - C. Difficult to amend
  - D. Based on custom
13. **The head of government in a parliamentary system is the**
  - A. President
  - B. Prime Minister
  - C. Governor-General
  - D. Monarch
14. **Which organ of government interprets the laws?**
  - A. The legislature
  - B. The judiciary
  - C. The executive
  - D. The cabinet



15. **Which of the following countries practices confederalism?**  
A. United States  
B. Nigeria  
C. Switzerland  
D. United Kingdom
16. **A bill becomes a law after**  
A. Presidential speech  
B. Debate in parliament  
C. Approval by the judiciary  
D. Presidential assent
17. **Military regimes are characterized by**  
A. Separation of powers  
B. Supremacy of the constitution  
C. Rule by decrees  
D. Multiparty elections
18. **An electoral system in which the candidate with the highest number of votes wins is**  
A. Proportional representation  
B. Simple majority system  
C. Second ballot system  
D. Absolute majority system
19. **Citizenship by birth in Nigeria is granted to**  
A. Anyone born in Nigeria  
B. Children of foreigners  
C. Persons born to Nigerian parents  
D. Immigrants with residence permits
20. **One major function of political parties is to**  
A. Conduct elections  
B. Appoint judges  
C. Educate the electorate  
D. Print money