

# Environmental Insecurity As Correlates Of Social Phobia Among University Undergraduates In Delta State.

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**Abstract:** *This study examined the relationship between environmental insecurity and social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State, Nigeria. Three research questions and one null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted, with a sample of 600 undergraduates selected through a multistage sampling method from a population of 60,970. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Environmental Insecurity and Social Phobia Questionnaire" which was self-constructed by the researcher with guidance from supervisors. The questionnaire was validated by experts in guidance and counselling, and tested for reliability using a pilot study analysed through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Principal Component Analysis and Rotated Factor loading confirmed the instrument's validity. Data analysis was conducted using Mean, Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine relationships, while simple and multiple regression analyses were employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed There is a high prevalence of social phobia among the students, suggesting that a significant proportion of them experience notable levels of social anxiety; the status of environmental insecurity among university undergraduate students in Delta State is high and there is a significant relationship between environmental insecurity and social phobia. It posits that individuals exposed to unsafe neighborhoods, political instability, or frequent natural disasters are more likely to experience heightened social fears and anxieties. This relationship underscores the psychological toll that environmental insecurity exerts on students, potentially affecting their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. It is concluded that addressing environmental insecurity is crucial for mitigating social phobia among university undergraduates. It is therefore recommended that: Universities in Delta State should prioritize improving campus security by installing surveillance systems, increasing the presence of trained security personnel, and providing safe housing facilities*

**Keywords:** Environmental Insecurity, Social Phobia, Undergraduates

## INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans rely on communication to thrive and feel a sense of belonging. Active participation in discussions and feeling at ease during interactions with others are essential components of this process. Without proper communication, disruptions or inadequacies can arise, leading to apprehension for both individuals and society. Mental health has gained increasing attention recently as a critical aspect of overall well-being, particularly among university students. Transitioning to higher education often brings about new challenges and stressors that can impact students' mental health. One of the prevalent mental health issues that affect university students is social phobia, also known as social anxiety disorder. Social phobia is characterised by an intense fear of social situations and a strong desire to avoid them due to the anticipation of judgement, embarrassment, or negative evaluation (Monteiro & Balogun 2017).

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th edition (DSM-5; American Psychological Association [APA], 2013) says that social anxiety disorder (SAD) is characterised by a marked and persistent fear of one or more social or performance situations in which the person is exposed to possible scrutiny by others. The individual fears that he or she will act in a way or show anxiety symptoms that will be negatively evaluated and thus lead to a loss of self-worth. Social situations are avoided or endured with intense fear or anxiety. The fear or anxiety is out of proportion to the actual threat posed by the social situation and the context. The anxiety or fear can occur in restaurants, cafeterias, dining halls, seminars, meetings, and other places where the person feels observed by others. The individual will experience anxiety symptoms that make him or her uncomfortable and shameful. The individual can manifest symptoms like increased sweating, apnoea, tremors, tachycardia, and nausea. Fear of speaking in public is one of the most common symptoms of social phobia; studies found that nearly nine out of ten people with social anxiety are frightened to speak in front of others (Ghazwani *et al.* 2017).

In Delta State, the researchers noticed that certain university students have trouble speaking up. They may find it difficult to express themselves clearly. Also, some students tend to avoid talking to authority figures like lecturers or administrators. They might feel uncomfortable or shy around them. Furthermore, some students struggle to communicate with people they do not know. They might feel nervous or anxious in social situations. Surprisingly, some students would rather go hungry than eat in public places where others can see them. These observations highlight some challenges that university students face in Delta State, which makes this study imperative.

Hakami, Mahfou, and Adawi (2017) posited that social phobia among undergraduate students poses a significant challenge, especially due to its adverse impact on academic performance. It inhibits students from confidently presenting or speaking in front

of teachers and peers, driven by a fear of negative evaluations. Social phobia can be high among university undergraduate students, with some even dropping out of school due to the severity of this condition, leading to an increase in waiting lists at counselling centres. Given that many university undergraduate students fall within the age group at an elevated risk for developing social phobia and are simultaneously grappling with identity and self-management issues, they are particularly susceptible to experiencing social phobia (Harrison & Fazel, 2017).

Consequently, undergraduate students with social phobia encounter various challenges that impede their social interactions. These challenges manifest as a reduced ability to form friendships, feelings of loneliness, disappointment over missed opportunities for social connection, and a tendency to withdraw from social activities. These difficulties extend into adulthood and affect various aspects of life. (Paz, Collado, Horta, Rey, Rivero & Berriolo, 2017). Preeti (2019) identifies several contributing factors to social phobia, including a low educational status, substance use, poor daily functioning, and an unstable life situation. These factors result in significant impairment of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Adolescents in secondary school face a higher risk of developing social phobia, especially if they have a history of poor academic performance, engage in alcohol consumption, reside in rural areas, are younger, have experienced victimisation, suffer from comorbid chronic medical illnesses, or have a family history of mental illness. The researcher ascertained whether environmental insecurity is predictive of social phobia among undergraduate students in Delta State.

The environment in which individuals reside has long been recognised as a pivotal factor in shaping their mental health. Environmental factors, encompassing economic instability, crime rates, and social cohesion, play a profound role in influencing the psychological well-being of individuals (Turner et al., 2019). One factor that can impact an individual's mental health is environmental insecurity. This concept, characterised by a perceived lack of safety or stability in one's surroundings, is a multifaceted construct encompassing economic, social, and safety-related dimensions. In regions facing economic challenges and safety concerns, such as Delta State, Nigeria, individuals often grapple with heightened uncertainty and vulnerability. In the context of environmental insecurity, the availability of social support can mitigate feelings of isolation and enhance feelings of security, thereby reducing vulnerability to mental health disorders like social phobia.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Social phobia is a critical issue in mental health research that affects people of all ages, particularly university students. It goes beyond just academic performance and impacts individuals from different backgrounds. The challenges of higher education can bring a lot of stress to undergraduates, such as difficulties in making new friends, participating in seminars and workshops, and performing well in their studies. These challenges may seem normal, but they can make social phobia worse, making it difficult for students to engage fully in their studies. If social phobia is not addressed, it can lead to serious problems like low self-esteem, feeling sad, dropping out of school, and loneliness.

The researcher equally observed that those who experience social phobia frequently avoid people, feel lonely, and have serious mental health issues such as mood problems and even emotional homeostasis disequilibrium (EHD). In university life, social phobia does not just make it difficult to make friends; it also stops students from making good career choices. The effects may go on into later life, causing problems like a lack of support, job dissatisfaction, and frustration. Social phobia has many causes, including a lack of education, substance use, an unstable life, different parenting styles, and different types of personalities. Given these challenges, this study seeks to investigate environmental insecurity as a correlate of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the status of social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State?
2. What is the status of environmental insecurity among university undergraduate students in Delta State?
3. What is the relationship between environmental insecurity and its components of economic instability, social unrest, perceived lack of safety, violence, mistrust, nervousness, and social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

### **Hypotheses**

The researcher formulated and tested the under-listed hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between environmental insecurity and its components of economic instability, social unrest, perceived lack of safety, violence, mistrust, nervousness, and social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State.

## Method

### Design of the Study

The research design for this study was a correlational design as it examines the relationship among environmental insecurity as correlate of social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta state.

### Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all university undergraduates in Delta State. The total population is 60,790 of four public Universities in Delta State.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of this study consists of 600 students drawn from the entire population. The rule of thumb was adopted to get the sample for the study. The rule of thumb according to Lake (2018). states that 600 is adequate for a 60,790 population size. Multi-stage sampling procedures comprising purposive and simple random sampling techniques was employed in selecting the sample for the study. At the first stage, Two Universities were selected using the purposive sampling technique. In the second stage, five faculties were selected from each of the selected Universities in Delta State using the simple random sampling technique by ballot method. In the third stage, a Simple random sampling technique by ballot method was used to select students from the chosen faculties.

### Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire which is self-constructed by the researcher with the help of the supervisors. It is titled "Environmental Insecurity and Social Phobia Questionnaire (EISPQ)." This questionnaire will be divided into two sections: Section A gathered basic demographic information from respondents, including the name of their institution, gender (male or female), academic level, and course of study. Section B measured the Environmental Insecurity Scale (EIS), The instrument contains a total of 19 items. Each item is rated on a four-point scale with the following response options and scoring: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1)

### Validity of the Research Instrument

The validity of the instrument was established by the researcher supervisor and two other lecturers who are experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling. The experts validated the instrument for appropriateness and suitability for the study, and their suggestions were effected for correction(s). The content and construct validation of the instrument was done using factor analysis Specifically, the Content validity of the instrument was determined by evaluating the cumulative variance of all items. In the factor analysis, components with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were retained, while those with eigenvalues less than 1.0 were discarded. The retained factors were subsequently subjected to orthogonal rotation using the Varimax method to assess the loading of each item within these components. The results indicated strong content validity for all subscales, with total percentages of 60.8%, Notably, the unexplained variances were minimal, affirming the validity and appropriateness of the instrument employed in this study.

### Reliability of the Research Instrument

A pilot test of the instrument was conducted with a sample of 100 university undergraduate students from Kogi State to assess its reliability. The reliability coefficient for the instrument was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The results revealed that the Environmental Insecurity Rating Scale demonstrates a high level of reliability with a coefficient of 0.85. These reliability coefficients demonstrate the instruments' consistency in measuring the intended constructs, with the instrument showing varying degrees of reliability, ensuring the robustness of the data collected.

### Methods of Data Collection

The instrument was administered to the selected respondents in the universities following the sampling procedures outlined for this study. Both the researcher and three trained research assistants will visit each of the universities to carry out the data collection process.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and the coefficient of determination. On the other hand, the hypotheses were tested using both Linear and Multiple Regressions, with a significance level of 0.05.

## Results

**Research Question 1** What is the status of social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

**Table 1** Mean and standard of status of social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State.

Variable	Mean	SD	Prevalence
Social phobia	52.68	8.24	High prevalence

The research question sought to determine the status of social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State. Table 1 presents the findings, revealing a mean score of 52.68 with a standard deviation of 8.24. These values indicate a high prevalence of social phobia among the students, suggesting that a significant proportion of them experience notable levels of social anxiety.

**Research Question 2** What is the status of environmental insecurity among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

**Table 2 Mean and standard of status of environmental insecurity among university undergraduate students in Delta State.**

Variable	Mean	SD	Prevalence
Environmental insecurity	53.80	5.44	High prevalence

The second research question explored the status of environmental insecurity among university undergraduate students in Delta State. Table 2 shows a mean score of 53.80 with a standard deviation of 5.44, indicating a high prevalence of environmental insecurity. This suggests that many students in the region face significant concerns or challenges related to their environmental safety and stability.

**Research Question 3** What is the relationship between environmental insecurity and its components of Economic Instability, Social Unrest, Perceived Lack of Safety Violence, Mistrust and Nervousness with social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State?

**Table 3: Correlation matrix of environmental insecurity and its components of Economic Instability, Social Unrest, Perceived Lack of Safety Violence, Mistrust and Nervousness with social phobia.**

Variable	Mean	SD	ECI	SU	PLOS	VO	MT	NV	EI	SP
ECI	20.85	3.34	1							
SU	8.38	1.62	-.006	1						
PLOS	7.77	1.88	.141	.684	1					
VO	8.99	1.56	-.158	.477	.043	1				
MT	3.04	.815	-.170	.379	-.145	.272	1			
NV	4.83	1.32	-.010	.485	.092	.170	.138	1		
EI	53.80	5.44	.049	.193	-.027	-.015	-.014	.234	1	
SP	52.68	8.24	.002	.485	.339	.062	-.007	.042		1

The results outlined in Table 3 show the correlation matrix examining the relationship between environmental insecurity (EI) and its components with social phobia (SP) among university undergraduates in Delta State. Social Unrest (SU) has a moderate positive correlation with social phobia (0.485), suggesting that higher levels of social unrest are associated with increased social phobia. Perceived Lack of Safety (PLOS) also shows a notable positive correlation (0.339), indicating that a sense of insecurity about safety contributes to social phobia. Other components, such as Violence (VO) (0.062), Mistrust (MT) (-0.007), and Nervousness (NV) (0.042), show weak or negligible correlations with social phobia, implying minimal direct associations. Economic Instability (ECI) has an almost non-existent correlation (0.002) with social phobia, showing little to no relationship. Social unrest and perceived lack of safety are the most significantly related to social phobia, while other components show weaker connections.

### Research hypotheses

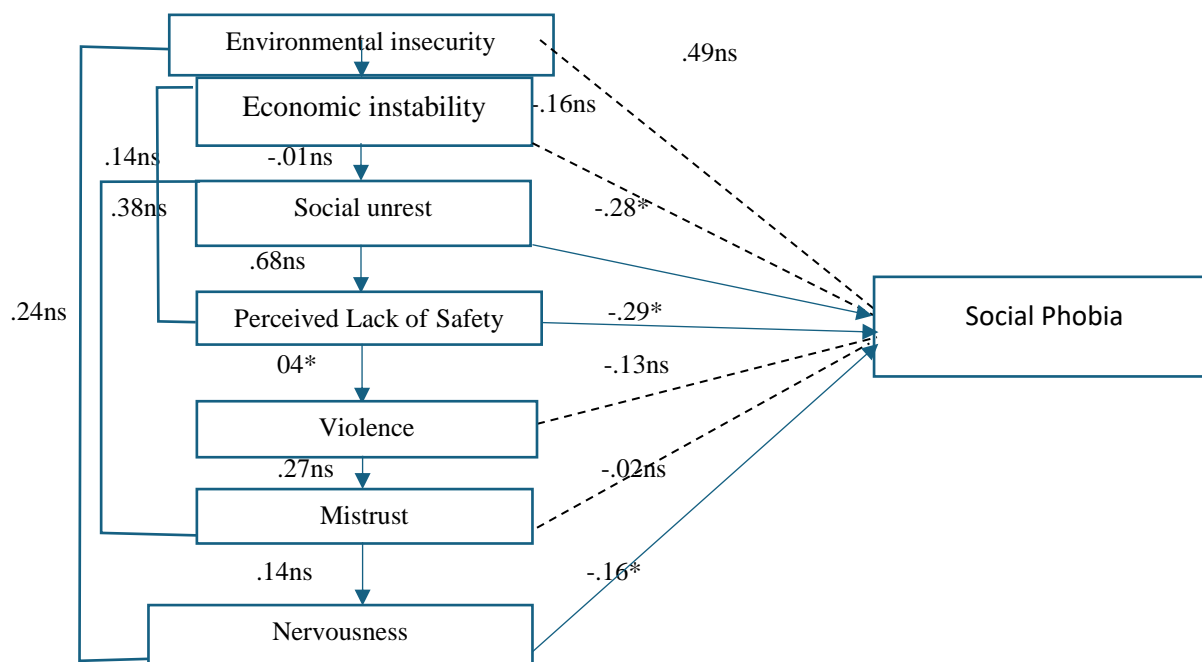
**Hypothesis 1** There is no significant relationship between environmental insecurity and its components of Economic Instability, Social Unrest, Perceived Lack of Safety Violence, Mistrust and Nervousness with social phobia among university undergraduate students in Delta State.

**Table 4 Multiple regression and multiple correlation analysis of environmental insecurity and its components of Economic Instability, Social Unrest, Perceived Lack of Safety Violence, Mistrust and Nervousness with social phobia**

Model	SS	df	MS	F	R	B	SE	β	t	P
Regression	2795.818	8	349.477	5.457	-.01					.000*
Residual	37849.456	591	64.043							
Total	40645.273	599								

(Constant)	55.88	3.59		15.571	.000*
Environmental insecurity	.74	.46	.49	1.601	.110ns
Economic instability	-.39	.48	-.16	-.825	.410ns
Social unrest	-1.41	.51	-.28	-2.79	.005*
Perceived lack of safety	-1.28	.51	-.29	-2.51	.012*
Violence	-.70	.51	-.13	-1.38	.168ns
Mistrust	-.27	.635	-.02	-.43	.668ns
Nervousness	-1.03	.548	-.16	-1.877	.061*

Table 4 shows the multiple regression and correlation analysis for the relationship between environmental insecurity (EI) and its components with social phobia (SP) among university undergraduates in Delta State indicates the following: The overall regression model is significant, as shown by an F-value of 5.457 and a p-value of .000, suggesting that the components of environmental insecurity collectively contribute to the variation in social phobia. Individually, social unrest ( $B = -1.41$ ,  $t = -2.79$ ,  $p = .005$ ) and perceived lack of safety ( $B = -1.28$ ,  $t = -2.51$ ,  $p = .012$ ) show significant negative relationships with social phobia, indicating these factors are influential contributors. Nervousness approaches significance ( $p = .061$ ), hinting at a potential link with social phobia, but it does not meet the threshold for statistical significance. Other components, including economic instability, violence, and mistrust, show non-significant relationships ( $p$ -values  $> .05$ ), implying minimal or no direct impact on social phobia in this context. The constant ( $B = 55.88$ ,  $p = .000$ ) is significant, highlighting a baseline level of social phobia independent of these predictors. From the above, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between environmental insecurity and its components of economic instability, social unrest, perceived lack of safety, violence, mistrust and nervousness with social phobia is therefore rejected. The strength of the relationship observed among environmental insecurity and its components of economic instability, social unrest, perceived lack of safety, violence, mistrust and nervousness with social phobia is illustrated in the path analysis model in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Path Analysis model indicating the strength of the relationship among environmental insecurity and its components with social phobia.**



The path analysis in Figure 1 shows the predictive power between the predictor variables and criterion variable figure 1 revealed that a negative significant relationship was observed between social unrest and social phobia, ( $\beta = -.28^*$ ), perceived lack of safety and social phobia, ( $\beta = -.29^*$ ), nervousness and social phobia ( $\beta = -.16^*$ ). To justify that there was no multicollinearity among the independent variables, a multicollinearity test was conducted.

**Table 5: Multicollinearity Diagnosis of environmental insecurity and its components of Economic Instability, Social Unrest, Perceived Lack of Safety Violence, Mistrust and Nervousness with social phobia**

	Zero-order	Correlations		Collinearity Statistics	
		Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
Environmental insecurity	-.01	.07	.06	.02	59.74
Economic instability	.14	-.03	-.03	.04	23.85
Social unrest	-.16	-.11	-.11	.16	6.26
Perceived lack of safety	-.17	-.10	-.09	.12	8.57
Violence	-.01	-.06	-.06	.17	5.89
Mistrust	.04	-.02	-.02	.39	2.51
Nervousness	.00	-.08	-.08	.21	4.86

The zero-order coefficients of -0.01, 0.14, -0.16, -0.17, -0.01, 0.04, and 0.00 indicate the relationships between environmental insecurity and its components—Economic Instability, Social Unrest, Perceived Lack of Safety, Violence, Mistrust, and Nervousness—about social phobia. Additionally, the partial correlation coefficients of 0.07, -0.03, -0.11, -0.10, -0.06, -0.02, and -0.08 highlight these relationships as well. The tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the independent variables have also been calculated.

## Discussion of Findings

### Status of social phobia among University Undergraduate Students in Delta State.

Social phobia, also known as social anxiety disorder (SAD), is notably prevalent among university undergraduate students. This heightened status can be attributed to several interrelated factors stemming from developmental, social, and academic contexts. University students are primarily in the late adolescence to early adulthood stage, a period marked by significant identity formation and heightened sensitivity to social evaluation. According to Erickson's psychosocial theory, this is a time when individuals strive to establish their identity and social roles. Fear of negative evaluation, a hallmark of social phobia, can be exacerbated during this stage, as students feel an intense need to meet social and academic expectations.

The transition to university often involves adjusting to a new and demanding academic environment. Public speaking, group presentations, and frequent interactions with peers and instructors can trigger anxiety in socially phobic individuals. These situations expose students to potential scrutiny and fear of judgment, which reinforces avoidance behaviours. Furthermore, competitive academic settings may amplify fears of inadequacy or failure, perpetuating social anxiety symptoms. The university experience typically requires the formation of new relationships, which can be daunting for students with social phobia. Knappe et al. (2020) highlights that peer interactions are a significant stressor for individuals with social anxiety, as these situations are laden with the risk of rejection or embarrassment. Fear of such negative outcomes can lead to isolation, which further entrenches the disorder.

In many cultures, societal expectations for confidence and extroversion place undue pressure on students to appear socially adept. In collectivist societies, fear of being a burden or failing to meet group norms may exacerbate social anxiety, while in individualist cultures, the emphasis on assertiveness and self-promotion may feel overwhelming to socially anxious students. University campuses, often bustling with diverse activities and events, can amplify feelings of inadequacy and alienation in those struggling with social phobia. The pervasive role of social media among undergraduates also contributes to the high prevalence of social phobia. The pressure to maintain a curated online persona and fear of judgment in the virtual space can mirror and magnify offline anxieties. Lin et al. (2021), supported that excessive use of social media platforms correlates with increased social anxiety, particularly among young adults who are susceptible to upward social comparison. Social phobia often coexists with other psychological conditions, such as depression and generalized anxiety disorder, which are also prevalent in university settings. The interplay of these disorders can intensify the symptoms of social anxiety, making it harder for students to engage in academic and social activities.

### Status of environmental insecurity among University Undergraduate Students in Delta State.

Environmental insecurity, defined as a sense of instability or unpredictability in one's surroundings, is increasingly a pressing concern among university undergraduate students. Several factors contribute to this heightened status, ranging from housing challenges to broader societal and institutional influences. One significant contributor is the issue of housing and accommodation. Many undergraduates, especially those studying far from home, face difficulties in securing affordable and safe living spaces. Poorly maintained dormitories or unsafe off-campus housing exacerbate these challenges. Overcrowded residences, insufficient privacy, and inadequate security measures, such as poor lighting or the absence of surveillance systems, leave students feeling vulnerable. Crime and violence within or around university campuses further compound this issue. Reports of theft, harassment, physical assault, and in extreme cases, shootings, have increased awareness of safety risks among students. Such incidents instill fear and discourage participation in essential academic and social activities, particularly during evening hours. Urban campuses, in particular, often mirror the crime trends of their surrounding areas, leaving students to navigate environments fraught with danger.

In regions affected by political instability or civil unrest, students face additional challenges. Strikes, protests, and clashes between opposing groups often disrupt academic activities and create physical risks. For instance, students in politically volatile areas frequently express concerns about safety due to violent confrontations, roadblocks, and campus shutdowns. This instability makes the learning environment unpredictable, hindering academic progress. Economic insecurity is another critical factor that feeds into environmental insecurity. Financially constrained students often have no choice but to live in high-crime neighborhoods or take on night shifts in unsafe environments to fund their education. This combination of financial stress and physical danger creates a cycle of anxiety that is difficult to escape.

Natural disasters and the effects of climate change also play a role in environmental insecurity. Universities located in disaster-prone regions are increasingly exposed to risks such as floods, hurricanes, and wildfires. Students in these areas are often left vulnerable due to inadequate disaster preparedness plans. Poorly constructed dormitories in flood-prone areas, for example, intensify feelings of insecurity, particularly during extreme weather events. In many cases, institutional shortcomings exacerbate these feelings of insecurity. Insufficient campus security, poorly lit walkways, and limited mental health support systems contribute to a lack of safety. When universities fail to address student complaints promptly or neglect to implement proactive safety measures, students are left feeling unsupported and at risk.

Social pressures and discrimination further deepen the sense of insecurity among students. Experiences of bullying, sexual harassment, or discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, or gender create hostile environments. As supported by Linos et al. (2021), who state that minority students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, often report heightened feelings of insecurity due to exclusionary practices and micro-aggressions. This sense of alienation not only impacts their academic engagement but also their overall well-being. Additionally, the increasing reliance on digital platforms has introduced a new dimension to environmental insecurity. Students are now exposed to risks such as cyberbullying, identity theft, and data breaches, which often have real-world implications. The pressure to navigate both physical and virtual threats adds a layer of complexity to their experiences of safety.

### **Relationship between Environmental Insecurity and Social Phobia among University Undergraduate Students in Delta State.**

The result of hypothesis one shows that there is a significant relationship between environmental insecurity and social phobia. It posits that individuals exposed to unsafe neighborhoods, political instability, or frequent natural disasters are more likely to experience heightened social fears and anxieties. Environmental insecurity fosters a persistent atmosphere of threat and fear, which elevates anxiety and stress levels. Over time, this chronic exposure increases a person's overall sense of vulnerability, leading to the development of social phobia. One key explanation for this relationship is that living in unpredictable and unsafe environments encourages individuals to adopt overly cautious and self-protective behaviours, often resulting in social withdrawal and avoidance—defining characteristics of social phobia. Furthermore, insecure environments typically limit opportunities for positive social interactions and support networks, exacerbating feelings of isolation and reinforcing fear in social situations. This prolonged isolation can lead individuals to develop negative beliefs about their social competence, perpetuating their social anxiety. In essence, environmental insecurity, directly and indirectly, contributes to the onset and maintenance of social phobia by shaping cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses to perceived threats.

These findings resonate with those of Patel et al. (2002), who argued that prolonged exposure to unsafe environments fosters pervasive fear and psychological instability, aligning with the notion that environmental insecurity heightens stress and anxiety. Similarly, Alisia et al. (2018) highlighted that individuals in insecure settings often experience limited social support, which mirrors the idea that social withdrawal and isolation compound social phobia. Holmes et al. (2020) further corroborated these observations, noting that chronic environmental stressors amplify feelings of vulnerability and reinforce negative self-perceptions, contributing to sustained social avoidance behaviours. Collectively, these studies provide compelling evidence that environmental insecurity serves as a critical determinant in the development and persistence of social phobia.

### **Conclusion**

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The study investigated environmental insecurity as a correlate of social phobia among university undergraduates in Delta State. The findings revealed a high prevalence of social phobia among the students, indicating that a significant proportion of them experience considerable levels of social anxiety in their academic and social interactions. Additionally, the status of environmental insecurity among the students was found to be high, encompassing unsafe neighborhoods, political instability, and the impacts of natural disasters.

The study further established a significant relationship between environmental insecurity and social phobia, suggesting that exposure to an insecure environment contributes to heightened social fears and anxieties. This relationship underscores the psychological toll that environmental insecurity exerts on students, potentially affecting their mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. It is concluded that addressing environmental insecurity is crucial for mitigating social phobia among university undergraduates.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Universities in Delta State should prioritize improving campus security by installing surveillance systems, increasing the presence of trained security personnel, and providing safe housing facilities.
2. Institutions should strengthen counseling centers that focus on mental health support for students. These centers should provide programs aimed at managing social anxiety, such as social skills training, group therapy, and stress management workshops.
3. Universities should collaborate with government agencies and community leaders to address broader issues of environmental insecurity.

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