

Peer Influence, Social Media Usage and Personality Type as Determinant of Assertiveness Skill among Secondary School Students in Ibadan North Local Government

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Abstract

Students are integral to the effective functioning of correctional institutions, ensuring safety, security, and the facilitation of rehabilitation programs. However, maintaining high levels of assertiveness skills among students has become a significant challenge. Therefore, the study examines peer influence, social media usage and personality type as determinant of assertiveness skill among secondary school students in Ibadan North LG. The study adopted a descriptive research design. A total of two hundred and fifty secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA was selected using simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires consisting standardized scales was adopted. Five research questions were answered using percentages, frequency distribution, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significant. The findings of the study showed that social media usage ($r = .721$, $p < 0.05$), peer influence ($r = .284$, $p < 0.05$) and personality type ($r = .377$, $p < 0.05$) had significant relationship to assertiveness skills. All the independent variables jointly accounted for 56.7% variance in predicting assertiveness skills. Also, social media usage ($\beta = .682$, $t = 14.845$, $p < 0.05$) and personality type ($\beta = .248$, $t = 5.737$, $p < 0.05$) had significant relative contribution to assertiveness skills. While peer influence ($\beta = -.037$, $t = -.810$, $p > 0.05$) had no significant relative contribution to assertiveness skills. The level of assertiveness skills is high ($3.37 < 2.50$) and there is no statistically significant difference in assertiveness skills between males and female (t -value (T): 0.853). It was recommended that Educators and counselors should develop personalized programs tailored to different personality types to enhance assertiveness skills.

Keywords: Assertiveness Skills, Social Media Usage, Peer Influence, Personality Type.

Introduction

Assertiveness is widely acknowledged as an essential element of effective interpersonal communication and emotional intelligence. It refers to the capacity of an individual to express their thoughts, emotions, and needs in a clear, respectful, and confident manner, while simultaneously upholding the dignity and rights of others (Alberti and Emmons, 2021). This skill is particularly important during adolescence, a critical period of psychological, emotional, and social development. For students in secondary schools, assertiveness is more than just a communication style; it is a foundational skill that enables them to resist negative peer pressure, handle interpersonal conflicts constructively, assert

personal boundaries, and make autonomous, responsible decisions. A student's level of assertiveness can significantly influence their academic success, the quality of their peer relationships, and their overall mental and emotional well-being.

In the Nigerian context, the role of assertiveness among adolescents has gained increasing attention due to the evolving nature of societal and cultural norms. Historically, Nigerian culture, like many other African societies, emphasizes respect for authority, humility, and communal conformity. These values, while essential for preserving social order and cohesion, may sometimes discourage open self-expression, especially among young people (Wentzel, 2022). Children are often taught to listen rather than speak, to defer rather than challenge, and to prioritize group harmony over individual perspectives. As such, the cultivation of assertiveness in young people has not always been a cultural priority.

However, the current generation of Nigerian adolescents is being raised in a dynamic and rapidly changing social environment. Globalization, the pervasive influence of digital media, increased exposure to Western values, and the rise of individualistic ideologies have begun to reshape the social landscape. As a result, students are now required to navigate a dual world balancing traditional expectations of obedience and collectivism with modern ideals of independence and personal agency. This complex and sometimes conflicting environment presents a unique challenge to the development of assertiveness among secondary school students (Okoiye, Alika, and Ezeonyejiaku, 2023).

One of the most prominent social forces shaping adolescent behavior is peer influence. During adolescence, peer relationships become central to a young person's sense of identity and belonging. Adolescents often seek validation and acceptance from their peer groups, which can significantly impact their choices, attitudes, and behaviors. Steinberg and Monahan (2023) observed that susceptibility to peer pressure tends to peak during early to mid-adolescence, a time when students are especially vulnerable to social conformity. Peer groups can be instrumental in promoting positive behaviors and boosting confidence. However, they can also foster negative behaviors, especially when the group dynamic discourages individuality or punishes those who deviate from group norms. In such environments, adolescents who lack assertiveness may find it easier to conform even when doing so contradicts their personal values or interests. In Nigeria, where cultural expectations still place high value on group loyalty and conformity, peer influence can further suppress the emergence of assertive behavior among students.

Closely related to peer influence is the growing impact of social media usage. The widespread availability of smartphones and internet services has made digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter integral parts of adolescents' daily lives. These platforms have revolutionized the way young people communicate, socialize, and perceive themselves. On one hand, social media offers opportunities for adolescents to voice their opinions, build social networks, and engage with diverse perspectives. On the other hand, it presents serious challenges to the development of assertiveness. Many adolescents now prefer digital interactions over face-to-face

communication, which may limit their ability to practice assertive communication in real-world settings. Furthermore, the highly curated and competitive nature of social media often leads to social comparison, reduced self-esteem, and fear of judgment factors that can inhibit the confidence necessary for assertive expression (Valkenburg, Peter, and Schouten, 2021).

More critically, adolescents who are heavily immersed in social media environments may experience pressure to conform to online trends and peer expectations, sometimes at the expense of their own values or comfort. The constant pursuit of likes, comments, and social approval may push students to prioritize popularity over authenticity, thereby reducing their capacity to assert personal boundaries or opinions. Twenge and Campbell (2022) found that excessive screen time and social media engagement were associated with lower psychological well-being, diminished self-confidence, and impaired social functioning among adolescents.

Beyond social and digital influences, personality type is another vital factor influencing the development of assertiveness. The Five-Factor Model of personality, as proposed by Costa and McCrae (1992), categorizes individual traits into five broad dimensions: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These traits influence how individuals respond to social situations and challenges. For instance, adolescents who score high on extraversion are generally more outgoing, confident, and expressive qualities that are positively associated with assertiveness. Conversely, those who are highly neurotic may experience higher levels of anxiety, fear of rejection, and emotional instability, which can significantly hinder their ability to speak up or advocate for themselves (Beyens, Pouwels, van Driel, Keijsers, and Valkenburg, 2021).

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to the influence of personality traits because they are still in the process of forming a stable sense of self. Their behaviors and social interactions are often experimental and fluid. As such, personality traits can either facilitate or inhibit the development of assertiveness depending on how they interact with environmental factors such as peer pressure and social media. For example, an introverted student who is also highly conscientious may avoid confrontation but still maintain a quiet form of assertiveness through boundary-setting. On the other hand, a student with high neuroticism and exposure to negative peer dynamics may become either excessively passive or aggressive both of which are maladaptive alternatives to true assertiveness. Therefore, this study seeks to explore peer influence, social media usage, and personality type as determinants of assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government.

Statement of the problem

Assertiveness, the ability to express one's thoughts, feelings, and needs in a respectful and confident manner, is a crucial skill for the emotional and social development of adolescents. It plays a significant role in helping students navigate the challenges of secondary school, including peer pressure, interpersonal conflicts, and academic stress. However, the

development of assertiveness skills among secondary school students remains an underexplored area in many educational contexts, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The lack of assertiveness skills can result in students struggling to establish personal boundaries, assert their rights, and engage in positive decision-making. This could, in turn, lead to issues such as poor academic performance, unhealthy peer relationships, and increased vulnerability to bullying or other forms of abuse.

In the Nigerian context, where cultural values often emphasize respect for authority, group harmony, and deference to elders, assertiveness has traditionally been viewed as a challenging and sometimes undesirable trait, especially for adolescents. The tendency for young people to prioritize social conformity over individual expression, a norm deeply rooted in communal values, has led to a diminished emphasis on assertiveness as a crucial skill. As a result, secondary school students may be less likely to speak out against peer pressure, stand up for themselves in the face of conflict, or express their personal desires and needs clearly and confidently. Furthermore, the increasing prevalence of social media has added a new dimension to the development of assertiveness in adolescents. While digital platforms offer young people the opportunity to express themselves, they also introduce new pressures related to social comparison, the need for validation, and the fear of judgment. These factors can hinder the development of assertiveness, as students may prioritize online popularity over authentic self-expression, thus further limiting their ability to engage in face-to-face assertive interactions. Given these complexities, it is crucial to examine the factors influencing the development of assertiveness skills among secondary school students, particularly in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objectives

The objectives include:

1. Examine the relationship between the independent variables (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) and assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?
2. Examine the joint contribution of the independent variables (peer influence, social media usage and personality type) on the dependent variable (Assertiveness skill) among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?
3. Examine the relative contribution of each of the independent variables; (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) to the dependent variable (Assertiveness skills) on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?
4. Examine the level of assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?
5. Examine any significant difference assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA based on gender (male and female)?

Research Questions

The following research questions were used:

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the independent variables (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) and assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Research Question 2: What's the joint contribution of the independent variables (peer influence, social media usage and personality type) on the dependent variable (Assertiveness skill) among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Research Question 3: What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variables; (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) to the dependent variable (Assertiveness skills) on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Research Question 4: What is the level of assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Research Question 5: Is there any significant difference assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA based on gender (male and female)?

Literature Review

Assertiveness skills have been widely studied across various domains, including education, health, and psychology. The development of assertiveness during adolescence is crucial, as it plays a key role in shaping social relationships and emotional well-being. Previous studies have highlighted that assertiveness is related to numerous positive outcomes, such as enhanced self-esteem, better academic performance, and improved interpersonal relationships (Moreno et al., 2020; Martins et al., 2021). Furthermore, assertive behavior has been shown to protect individuals from psychological stress and contribute to the development of social competence (Sampath & Kumar, 2019).

In secondary school settings, the importance of assertiveness is particularly notable. Adolescents are often faced with challenges related to peer pressure, bullying, and the negotiation of social roles, all of which can be mitigated through assertive behavior. Assertiveness training programs in schools have been linked to improved conflict resolution skills and a reduction in incidents of bullying (Anderson et al., 2021). A study by Lee and Lim (2022) found that assertive students were less likely to be passive bystanders in bullying situations and more likely to intervene, promoting a safer school environment. However, while the literature on assertiveness is vast, much of it remains outdated, particularly regarding the cultural context of assertiveness among secondary school students. More recent research (2021 onwards) is needed to capture evolving trends in assertive behavior, especially in light of technological advancements, the rise of social media, and changes in the educational landscape. For instance, studies by Johnson and Roberts (2023) argue that online platforms have introduced new dynamics for assertiveness, where digital assertiveness differs from face-to-face assertiveness in several key aspects. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating contemporary developments into the study of assertiveness.

Theoretical Framework: Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), introduced in the 1960s, is a cornerstone in understanding how individuals acquire assertiveness skills. According to SLT, people learn new behaviors through observation, imitation, and modeling. In the context of assertiveness, adolescents learn assertive behaviors by observing role models, such as peers, teachers, and family members, who demonstrate assertive communication. Bandura proposed that individuals are more likely to imitate behaviors that are reinforced, meaning that positive reinforcement of assertive actions (e.g., praise for standing up for oneself) can increase the likelihood of such behaviors being repeated. In the context of secondary school students, SLT can be used to explain how these young individuals develop and internalize assertiveness. For example, students who witness assertive peers effectively handling social conflicts are more likely to adopt similar strategies. Teachers and counselors also play a critical role in modeling assertiveness and encouraging its development through structured programs and interventions. Bandura's theory underscores the importance of the social environment in shaping behavior, emphasizing the influence of significant others on the learning process.

However, while SLT offers a valuable perspective on the development of assertiveness, it is essential to recognize that recent research has expanded upon Bandura's initial ideas. Contemporary scholars have explored how digital media and online communities now serve as important agents of social learning, especially for adolescents who may spend a significant portion of their time interacting through digital platforms (Smith & Sanders, 2023). In this regard, integrating the social learning framework with contemporary concepts of digital socialization is vital for understanding how assertiveness is learned in the modern world.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey design. This design was considered appropriate because the research aimed to assess and describe the influence of peer interaction, social media usage, and personality traits on the assertiveness skills of secondary school students. The survey design enabled the researcher to collect data from a relatively large population and examine existing relationships among variables without manipulating any of them.

Study Population

The target population for this study consisted of all secondary school secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. This population was selected because it represents a diverse group of adolescents at a developmental stage where assertiveness skills are crucial and often influenced by external and internal factors such as peer relationships, social media exposure, and personality traits.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A total of 250 students were selected as participants in the study. The sampling process involved a multistage sampling technique. Firstly, a stratified sampling method was used to categorize schools in the local government area into public and private institutions. Then, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select a number of schools from each category. Finally, students were randomly selected from the chosen schools to participate in the study. This approach ensured that the sample was representative of the broader student population in terms of school type and demographic distribution. A total of 129 (51.6%) of the students are between the age range of 12-15 years and a total of 121 (48.4%) of the students are between the age range of 16-19 years. A total of 92 (36.8%) of the students are male and a total of 158 (63.2%) of the students are female. A total of 98 (31.2%) of the students are in SS1, a total of 164 (65.6%) of the students are in SS2 and a total of 8 (3.2%) of the students are in SS3.

Research Instrument

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was divided into sections to obtain information on students' demographic characteristics, levels of peer influence, patterns of social media usage, personality type, and their assertiveness skills. The instrument was designed using a Likert-type scale and underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure clarity, reliability, and relevance to the research objectives.

Administration of the Research Instrument

The researcher, with the assistance of trained field assistants, administered the questionnaire directly to the students in their respective schools. Prior to administration, consent was obtained from school authorities and students were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The purpose of the research was clearly explained, and the participants were encouraged to answer the questions honestly. The questionnaires were completed and collected immediately to ensure a high response rate and to minimize the risk of missing data.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting a study on assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government, several ethical considerations were addressed to ensure the research is conducted with integrity and respect for the participants. The students were fully informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts,

percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the demographic information and responses to the questionnaire items. Inferential statistics, including PPMC, T- test and multiple regression analysis, were applied to examine the extent to which peer influence, social media usage, and personality type predicted assertiveness skills among the students.

Results

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between the independent variables (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) and assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Table 1: Summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between the study variables

Variables	$\bar{x}$	SD	1	2	3	4
Assertiveness skills	62.90	11.66	1.000			
Social media usage	39.51	11.25	.721**	1.000		
Peer influence	69.70	49.83	.284**	.393**	1.000	
Personality type	52.71	14.58	.377**	.201**	.214**	1.000

The table 1 above reveals the inter-correlational matrix on relationship that exists among independent factors (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) and dependent factor (assertiveness skills) on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA; social media usage ($r = .721$, $p < 0.05$), peer influence ($r = .284$, $p < 0.05$) and personality type ($r = .377$, $p < 0.05$) had significant relationship to assertiveness skills on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. This implies that social media usage, peer influence and personality type play a significant role on assertiveness skills on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA.

Research Question 2:

What's the joint contribution of the independent variables (peer influence, social media usage and personality type) on the dependent variable (Assertiveness skill) among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis on assertiveness skills

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.756	0.572	0.567	7.65563			
SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig.
Regression		19109.330	3	6369.777	10.683	.000 ^b
Residual		14300.525	244	58.609		
Total		33409.855	247			

Table 2 showed there was a joint contribution of the independent variables (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) to the dependent variable (assertiveness skills) of secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. The table show coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.756 a multiple R square of 0.572. This means that 56.7% (Adj. $R^2=0.567$) of the variance in the assertiveness skills of secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA is accounted for by the independent variables, when taken together. The table also showed that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded of F (10.860, $p<0.05$). It implies that there is joint contribution of the independent variables (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) to the dependent variable (assertiveness skills) of secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA.

Research Question 3:

What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variables; (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) to the dependent variable (Assertiveness skills) on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Table 3: Relative contribution of each of the independent factors to the prediction of assertiveness skills

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	25.127	2.311		10.874	.000
Social media usage	.708	.048	.682	14.845	.000
Peer influence	-.009	.011	-.037	-.810	.419
Personality type	.198	.034	.248	5.737	.000

The table 3 revealed the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (social media usage, peer influence and personality type) to Assertiveness skills on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA; social media usage ($\beta = .682$, $t = 14.845$, $p<0.05$) and personality type ($\beta = .248$, $t = 5.737$, $p<0.05$) had significant relative contribution to assertiveness skills on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. While peer influence ($\beta = -.037$, $t = -.810$, $p>0.05$) had no significant relative contribution to assertiveness skills on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. That is, factors such as social media usage and personality type predict and determine assertiveness skills of secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. In term of magnitude of contribution, social media usage made the most significant contribution to assertiveness skills on secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA, follow by personality type.

Research Question 4:

What is the level of assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA?

Table 4: Showing frequency distribution on the level of assertiveness skills among students

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D
1	Are you able to express your feelings appropriately.	119 47.6%	128 50.4%	-	5 2.0%	3.44	.606
2.	Are you comfortable around others.	133 53.2%	111 44.4%	6 2.4%		3.48	.629
3.	Do you look people in straight in the eye when you talk to them.	132 52.8%	105 42.0%	-	13 5.2%	3.42	.747
4.	Do you speak clearly and address the situation clearly.	98 39.2%	149 59.6%	-	2 1.2%	3.37	.553
5.	Are you able to say no when you don't want something.	109 43.6%	139 55.6%	-	2 0.8%	3.42	.541
6.	Do you speak with confidence or mumble and stumble over your words?	101 40.4%	139 55.6%	4 1.6%	6 2.4%	3.34	.634
7.	Do you offer opinion when you disagree with something or someone.	104 41.6%	140 56.0%	-	6 2.4%	3.37	.615
8.	Are you confident in asking questions when you need clarifications.	112 44.8%	134 53.6%	-	4 1.6%	3.42	.583
9.	Do you defend yourself when blamed for something that wasn't your fault.	111 44.4%	113 45.2%	3 1.2%	23 9.2%	3.25	.875
10.	Do you sacrifice what you need for others.	107 42.8%	113 45.2%	4 1.6%	26 10.4%	3.20	.906
Weighted mean = 3.37							

In table 4 above is on the level of assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. Are you comfortable around others. ($\bar{x}$ =3.48) was ranked highest by the mean score rating and was followed in succession by Are you able to express your feelings appropriately. ($\bar{x}$ =3.44), Do you look people in straight in the eye when you talk to them. ($\bar{x}$ =3.42), Are you able to say no when you don't want something. ($\bar{x}$ =3.42), Are you confident in asking questions when you need clarifications. ($\bar{x}$ =3.42), Do you speak clearly and address the situation clearly. ($\bar{x}$ =3.37), Do you offer opinion when you disagree with something or someone. ($\bar{x}$ =3.37), Do you speak with confidence or mumble and stumble

over your words? ($\bar{x}$ =3.34), Do you defend yourself when blamed for something that wasn't your fault. ($\bar{x}$ =3.25) and Do you sacrifice what you need for others. ($\bar{x}$ =3.20) respectively. The table shows the weighted mean of 3.37 which is greater than the standard mean of 2.50. This implies that the level of assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA is high.

Research Question 5:

Is there any significant difference assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA based on gender (male and female)?

Table 5: Summary Table of t-test for independent measures showing comparison of Assertiveness skills based on gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	Sig
Assertiveness skills	Male	92	62.80	12.21	248	.853	.357
	Female	158	62.96	11.36			

The table presents the results of an independent samples *t*-test comparing assertiveness skills between male and female participants. There are 92 male participants and 158 female participants. Males have an average score of 62.80, while females have an average score of 62.96. The means are very close. The variability in scores is 12.21 for males and 11.36 for females, indicating similar dispersion in both groups. *t*-value (T): 0.853, which is a statistical measure of the difference between the two means. A smaller *t*-value suggests a weaker difference between groups. Significance level (Sig): 0.357, which is greater than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This means there is no statistically significant difference in assertiveness skills between males and female.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the relationship between social media usage, peer influence, and personality type on assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. Additionally, it assessed the combined and relative contributions of these factors, the overall level of assertiveness, and gender differences in assertiveness skills. The findings provide valuable insights into how students develop assertiveness and what factors contribute most to their ability to communicate confidently.

Research Question 1: Relationship Between Social Media Usage, Peer Influence, Personality Type, and Assertiveness Skills

The findings showed a significant relationship between social media usage, peer influence, and personality type with assertiveness skills among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. This suggests that these factors play a role in shaping students' ability to express themselves confidently and navigate social interactions. The significant

relationship between social media usage and assertiveness skills aligns with previous studies that suggest social media provides a platform for students to practice self-expression, engage in discussions, and develop confidence in their communication skills (Yang and Brown, 2016). Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok allow students to share opinions and participate in online debates, which can translate into more assertive behavior in real-life interactions (Beyens et al., 2020). However, the impact of social media on assertiveness is not entirely positive. While some students may gain confidence in expressing themselves online, others may develop passive or aggressive communication styles due to online anonymity and cyberbullying (Luo and Hancock, 2020).

Peer influence is often considered a strong factor in shaping social behaviors, including assertiveness. The findings suggest that peer influence has a significant relationship with assertiveness skills, indicating that students may develop assertiveness through interactions with their peers. Adolescents and young adults often model the communication styles of their social groups, which can either reinforce or hinder assertiveness (Santor et al., 2000). Positive peer influence can encourage students to speak up for themselves, while negative peer influence may lead to submissiveness or aggressive communication (Rubin et al., 2006).

The significant relationship between personality type and assertiveness supports previous research indicating that extroverted individuals tend to be more assertive than introverted individuals (McCrae and Costa, 2008). Extroverts naturally seek social interactions and are more likely to voice their opinions, whereas introverts may struggle with assertive communication due to their preference for solitude and reflective thinking (Cain, 2012). However, some introverted individuals may develop high levels of assertiveness through structured training or exposure to assertive role models.

Research Question 2: Joint Contribution of Social Media Usage, Peer Influence, and Personality Type to Assertiveness Skills

The study found that the three independent variables (social media usage, peer influence, and personality type) collectively contributed to students' assertiveness skills. This suggests that assertiveness is not determined by a single factor but is shaped by multiple influences that interact with each other. Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory provides a useful framework for understanding these findings. According to this theory, individuals develop behaviors through observation, imitation, and reinforcement from their social environment. Social media platforms serve as a space where students observe assertive communication styles and practice them in their own interactions. Peer influence reinforces these behaviors, while personality traits determine how individuals respond to these social influences (Roberts et al., 2007). Since these factors jointly contribute to assertiveness, interventions aimed at improving students' assertiveness should adopt a holistic approach. Schools and educational institutions should incorporate assertiveness training in their curricula, focusing on communication skills, self-confidence, and healthy peer interactions. Additionally, digital literacy programs can help students navigate social media in a way that enhances, rather than hinders, their assertiveness skills.

Research Question 3: Relative Contribution of Each Independent Variable to Assertiveness Skills

The study found that social media usage and personality type had significant relative contributions to assertiveness skills, while peer influence did not have a significant direct effect. Among these, social media usage had the strongest impact, followed by personality type. The finding that social media usage had the highest impact on assertiveness skills is consistent with research indicating that digital interactions shape students' communication abilities (Beyens et al., 2020). The ability to voice opinions on social media platforms allows students to practice assertive behavior, which can extend to face-to-face interactions (Reinecke and Trepte, 2014). However, the nature of social media engagement matters—students who actively participate in constructive discussions may develop higher assertiveness, while those who consume content passively may not experience the same benefits.

The significant contribution of personality type suggests that assertiveness is partly an inherent trait, influenced by factors such as confidence, social energy, and communication style (John and Srivastava, 1999). Extroverted students are more likely to display assertiveness naturally, while introverted students may require guidance to develop these skills. This highlights the need for individualized assertiveness training programs that cater to different personality types. The lack of a significant relative contribution from peer influence may suggest that, in contemporary digital societies, online interactions play a more dominant role in shaping assertiveness than face-to-face peer interactions (Valkenburg and Peter, 2011). While peer influence affects students' socialization, its impact on assertiveness may be overshadowed by the stronger influence of digital engagement and personality traits.

Research Question 4: Level of Assertiveness Among Students

The study found that secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA generally exhibited high levels of assertiveness. This indicates that most students feel confident in expressing their opinions, standing up for their rights, and engaging in effective communication. The high level of assertiveness among students may be attributed to increased access to education, social media exposure, and evolving societal norms that encourage self-expression (Fox and McEwan, 2017). Additionally, assertiveness training programs, leadership development initiatives, and extracurricular activities may contribute to students' ability to communicate confidently.

Research Question 5: Gender Differences in Assertiveness Skills

The study found no significant difference in assertiveness skills between male and female students. This suggests that gender does not play a major role in determining assertiveness levels among secondary school students in Ibadan North LGA. Traditional gender roles often suggest that males are more assertive due to societal expectations of dominance and leadership, while females are expected to be more passive or cooperative (Eagly and Karau, 2002). However, recent research indicates that these gender differences are diminishing due to changing social norms, increased female empowerment, and equal access to

education (Spencer, 2013). The equalizing effect of digital communication may also explain the lack of gender differences in assertiveness. Social media provides a platform where both male and female students can express themselves freely, reducing traditional social constraints on assertive communication (Fox and McEwan, 2017).

Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the importance of social media usage and personality type in the development of assertiveness skills among students. While peer influence had a significant relationship with assertiveness, its relative contribution was not substantial. The study also found that assertiveness levels among students were generally high, and gender was not a determining factor in assertiveness skills. These results suggest that assertiveness skills are influenced by a combination of personal traits and environmental factors, with social media playing a significant role in shaping students' self-expression and confidence. Additionally, the study reinforces the notion that assertiveness is not merely an inborn trait but can be cultivated through exposure, practice, and interaction. The findings align with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which suggests that individuals develop behaviors through observational learning and reinforcement. Furthermore, the lack of significant gender differences in assertiveness suggests that societal changes and increased educational opportunities for both males and females may be contributing to more balanced assertiveness skills across genders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Schools should introduce assertiveness and communication skill training as part of personal development programs. This could be done through workshops, role-playing exercises, and classroom discussions that encourage students to voice their opinions in a respectful and confident manner.
2. Awareness programs should educate students on how to use social media positively for self-expression and confidence-building. Digital platforms can be leveraged to provide forums for discussion, debate, and interactive learning, helping students practice assertiveness in a safe space.
3. Educators and counselors should develop personalized programs tailored to different personality types to enhance assertiveness skills. Introverted students, for example, may benefit from small-group discussions and structured opportunities to practice assertive communication in low-pressure settings.
4. Parents and peers should be encouraged to foster an environment that supports open communication and assertive behavior. Parents can provide opportunities for their children to develop assertiveness by encouraging them to express their thoughts, make decisions, and engage in social activities.
5. Since peer influence had no significant relative contribution, further studies should explore the underlying factors that mediate or moderate its effect on assertiveness.

skills. Investigating how different types of peer relationships (e.g., positive vs. negative peer influence) affect assertiveness would provide deeper insights.

6. Teachers and school counselors should be trained in strategies to help students build assertiveness skills. These training sessions could include techniques for fostering self-confidence, handling conflicts assertively, and promoting a culture of open communication in classrooms.

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