

**CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF SELF SOCIAL ISOLATION AMONGST  
UNDERGRADUATES AS PERCEIVED BY EDUCATION STUDENTS IN  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN.**

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BENIN CITY.**

**JANUARY 2026.**

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND  
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## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned certify that this project work was carried out by **Jennifer NJOKU**, in the department of curriculum and instructional technology, faculty of education, University of Benin, Benin city, Edo State, Nigeria; in partial fulfilment for the award of B.SC (ED) degree in Biology Education

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God almighty and to my family.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The researcher is grateful to God almighty. She is sincerely grateful to her supervisor prof. E. O. S. IYAMU who has patiently guided the researcher throughout the process of this project. The researcher extends her deepest appreciation to her family who has been a source of encouragement and also to Mr and Mrs Sylvanus Olie who has been an unwavering support system may the almighty God bless you. Also, the researcher extends her profound gratitude to Mr Afam Godstime whose endless encouragement was a source of strength and hope.

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## ABSTRACT

Self-social isolation has increasingly become a critical concern affecting the psychological, social, and academic development of university students. This study critically investigates the causes and consequences of self-social isolation among undergraduates as perceived by Education students in the University of Benin. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the perceived causes of self-social isolation, examine its consequences, and identify possible strategies for reducing the problem among undergraduates. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study.

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin, from which a sample of 210 students was selected through a simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection, consisting of items aligned with the research questions and rated on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and its reliability was established using the test-retest and split-half methods. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage to determine the dominant responses of the participants.

The findings revealed that bullying, excessive phone use, working while studying and low self-esteem are major causes of self-social isolation among undergraduates. The results further showed that self-social isolation negatively affects students' mental health and academic functioning, leading to depression, suicidal tendencies, cognitive decline, loss of motivation, and poor academic performance. Additionally, the study identified viable strategies

for reducing isolation, such as improved mental health support services, increased peer interaction, enhanced social engagement activities, monitoring of screen time, and provision of academic support for struggling students. Based on these findings, the study concludes that self-social isolation poses a serious threat to students' overall development, requiring early identification and proactive intervention. The study recommends that school authorities, teachers, guidance counselors, and policymakers adopt collaborative measures such as anti-bullying policies, counseling programs and inclusive social initiatives to support student well-being, promote social belonging and enhance academic success.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the study**

Isolation is the act of distancing or staying away from people or something. It is also the process of not involving oneself with others, something or an event. Isolation can take place in diverse ways which includes social isolation, emotional isolation, digital isolation, physical isolation, cultural isolation and academic isolation. However, social on the other hand is a process of being interested in building friendship. Accepting to meet people and building strong relationships with them is an act of being social. Individuals can be social by attending religious gatherings, birthdays, weddings, house warming parties and political activities. Social isolation is the absence of interactions and social connections with other people; it is the feelings associated with lack of social connection (Hawthorne, 2008). It happens when a person participates in social activities rarely, has few or no social contacts and interacts with family, friends and community members rarely.

Social isolation is the deliberate absence or scarcity of social interactions, relationships, and encounters with other people (Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, and Stephenson, 2015). However, self social isolation is a condition where a person willingly distance his/herself from social interactions and activities, even when there is a chance for interaction to take place.

Amongst undergraduates' self social isolation is a situation where students intentionally withdraw from peers, friends and campus activities. As they adjust to new environments and

social settings with academic demands, undergraduates sometimes leave behind their existing support system or existing friends making them most likely to be exposed to the chance of being lonely. In order to concentrate on their studies students may withdraw socially because of the high academic demands, competition with other students and performance pressure, all this can result in isolation. The Nigerian educational system is highly competitive, with students facing immense pressure to excel academically. This pressure, coupled with inadequate institutional support systems, can lead to stress, anxiety, and depression, key triggers of social withdrawal (Onyeizugbo & Eseadi, 2019).

Self social isolation can affect both male and females; it is not based on a particular sex or gender. Boys may be socially isolated due to the pressures placed on them in the regard of being the one who shoulders responsibilities in the home in the area of finance, because of this they may limit connections with people and only focus on how to achieve financial stability thereby ignoring other aspects of their life. However girls on the other hand may become socially isolated especially in regards to gathering that involve the male counterpart, the awareness that girls have to be careful of the opposite gender is something that most parents has taught the female because they feel that having connection with the opposite gender can cause them to involve themselves in acts that can be detrimental to them. Before leaving home many female undergraduates has been lectured about how boys can be a threat to their academics and how the consequences can affect their life because of this awareness created by parents many female undergraduates tend to be isolated from the male gender and most times

avoid having interaction with them this also leads to staying away from gatherings that involves the opposite gender.

Self social isolation can also be found in marriages both in husband and wife. Men who are the breadwinners of the home sometimes isolate themselves from extended family and friends because of the pressure on them to provide for the family. They channel all their time to work leaving them with no time to connect with family and friends. Children can also be affected by this isolation from the father because there will be no bond between the father and them because of this they may find it difficult to confide in their father when they are facing challenges. All this can affect the home and create misunderstanding and can also cause anxiety in the children. However, individuals use religion as a coping mechanism during isolation; they make use of religious gatherings to connect with people and build relationships, especially with people of the same faith, although they also make social connections with individuals of different faiths. This enhances the understanding of other religions because as they relate with these individuals from different religious backgrounds, they get to understand their religion better and create an atmosphere for peaceful coexistence.

The perceived causes of self social isolation include bullying, abuse, excess use of phones and gadgets, relocation and work for undergraduates who are full time students but also work to cater for their needs. The consequences that could arise from self social isolation include depression, anxiety, cognitive decline, loneliness, low self esteem and limited opportunities.

Students who are social tend to have high self esteem because of the level of experience they have with relating with people.

Also, phones and other gadgets have greatly affected the social life of many students causing them to withdraw from their peers. In addition to providing new avenues for connection, the growth of social media and digital contact has also been connected to a decrease in face-to-face interactions, raising the possibility of emotional detachment and loneliness among students. Because of the hardship of the economy many students try to balance working and schooling even though they are full time students, this leaves them with little or no time to be socially active and create relationships with others.

### **Statement of the problem**

Self social isolation has become a growing concern amongst undergraduates in higher institutions due to its effect on academic performance, mental health, depression, anxiety, stress and the total well being of students. Self social isolation among undergraduate students in Nigeria universities is an emerging but understudied phenomenon. In the University there is a perception that there is an increasing number of undergraduates who are experiencing self social isolation with general features which includes voluntarily withdrawing from social interactions, limited participation in campus activities, and reduced engagement with peers and faculty members. Students who engage in self social isolation usually show less interest in class participation, less involvement in extra curricular activities and less use of campus resources and support services.

When students isolate themselves it does not just affect the students alone it also affects the University because the vibrant nature will be reduced and the turn up for classes and other extracurricular activities will be reduced, this could lead to losing opportunities which could

be beneficial to the University for example when a competition is held and people choose not to participate the prize of the competition will not be gotten there by bringing a loss to the University and also suppressing the visibility of the University.

The lack of comprehensive research on self social isolation among undergraduates in the University of Benin indicates that student support services, academic advisors and university administrators currently lack evidence-based understanding to tackle this growing concern very well. The negative effect of self social isolation among undergraduates cannot be handled without understanding the causes and consequences associated with it.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the causes and consequences of self social isolation among undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin with the aim of providing recommendations for addressing this issue and also improving the well being of undergraduates, academic success and overall university experience.

### **Purpose of the study**

The aim of this study is to critically investigate the causes and consequences of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students. Specifically, the study seeks to;

1. determine the causes of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin.
2. investigate the consequences of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin.

3. identify ways of reducing self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are raised to guide the study.

1. What are the causes of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin
2. What are the consequences of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin.
3. What are the ways of reducing self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin.

### **Significance of the study**

The study will be of great significance to teachers, university administrators and guidance counselors. The study would benefit teachers as it will help teachers in identifying isolation early and support the students before the problem gets worse. It will also help teachers to foster more inclusive classroom environments by initiating group projects and engagement from all students. Teachers can improve mental health by showing empathy and directing isolated students to support programs or counselors. Also, teachers will less likely confuse isolation with indolence or disobedience when they are aware of it.

The study would benefit university administrators as it will help them understand the importance of clubs, gatherings and group activities as a means of fostering a more social

university community. The study would also assist guidance counselors in identifying ways to properly tackle isolated students.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the study**

The study will focus on the causes and consequences of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin. As such the population from which the data is to be collected for this study are undergraduate students in the faculty of education, university of Benin.

### **Definition of terms**

**Causes:** the reasons for an event or something.

**Consequences:** the result of an action

**Social:** a gathering to foster introduction.

**Isolation:** the state of being away from other people

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the relevant literature with respect to the causes and consequences of self social isolation as perceived by education students in the University of Benin. It is organized under the following sub-headings;

- Concept of Self Social Isolation
- Causes of Self Social Isolation
- Consequences of Self Social Isolation
- Perceive measures of Reducing Self Social Isolation
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

#### **Concept of Self Social Isolation**

Self Social Isolation can be quantitatively assessed as an objective state of an individual that is indicated by factors such as living in solitude, having limited social contact, and engaging in minimal social activities (Dahlberg, 2021). Social isolation is an experience that includes feelings of not belonging to a group (Nicholson, Feinn, Casey & Dixon, 2020). When someone experiences a social network that is too small or a relationship that has an insufficient quality the person feels more lonely that often (van Tilburg, 2021). However, having social interaction with friends may prevent or ease loneliness and contribute to the individuals wellbeing (Hagan et al., 2020). Although young individuals strive to build a positive image but they may fear being rejected socially or being criticized, this may hinder their willingness to be actively

involved with others (Barbosa, Chkoniya, Somões, Filipe & Santos, 2020). Feelings of social disconnection are known as perceived social isolation, and they are closely linked to loneliness (Hawthorne, 2008). The degree of social and emotional support that a person receives is a key factor in determining how isolated they feel (Hawthorne, 2006). Given its substantial influence on social and behavioral development as well as people's academic abilities, socialization is regarded as one of the most important processes in human life (Berns, 2016). Social ties and face-to-face interaction have reduced as primary ways of communication in recent years due to most people's growing reliance on utilizing electronic devices and spending extended amounts of time with them (AlKandari & AlQashan, 2001; Drago, 2015). Hostility and severe negative affect are produced when important interactions are lost or absent (Cacioppo et al., 2006b).

### **Causes of Self Social Isolation**

Some of the causes of self social isolation amongst undergraduates includes bullying, excess use of phones, students who combine work with their studies and gender.

### **Bullying**

A hostile action that involves an imbalance of power or strength which is recurrent and intentional is called bullying, it involves the use of one's physical strength to constantly and willingly become hostile towards another person who has less or unequal strength. It occurs in various ways which includes verbal bullying, physical bullying, social bullying and cyberbullying (Palermiti, Bartolo, Musso, Servidio & Constabile, 2022).

Verbal bullying involves the use of words which can be in the form of insults, name-calling, teasing and threats. On the other hand physical bullying can occur in the form of pushing, hitting, stealing or damaging property. However social bullying involves spreading rumors, excluding someone, or embarrassing them publicly. Cyberbullying involves harassment through texts, social media or online platforms that could be in the form of posting hurtful comments or sharing private information about a person. Aggressive behaviors such as threats and intimidation acted by an individual or group of individuals, that is carried out through the use of electronic devices such as phones or laptops through the use of text emails and social media platforms is referred to as cyberbullying (Camerini et al., 2020; Guimetti & Kowalski, 2022; Vismara et al., 2022). The perpetrator is the one who commits the bullying practice and is always looking for ways to harm the victim through what they do in the perpetrator- victim relationship; it involves social power imbalance (Waseem & Nickerson, 2021). The individual who bullies the victim does so because they have higher social power than the victim, the perpetrator takes advantage of the weakness of the victim and demonstrates his/her strength on the victim. Due to the comparison happening on social media it creates a conflict between the self being presented and the real self, this could lead to depression which in turn worsens mental health (Lee, 2020). Because of this different form of bullying individuals can choose to isolate or withdraw themselves from other people. School bullying harmfully affects the victims psychological, cognitive and social development (Anierobi, Okeke & Daniel, 2022).

## **Excess use of phones**

The Internet has become a vital source of entertainment and information for teenagers and students and they are more prone to lack of self control when it comes to using smartphones (Liu, Wu, Zhou, & Wang, 2020). With the emergence of the internet and social media, individuals now spend more time on their phones surfing the internet. This has led to a reduction of face to face interaction (Soraci et al., 2024) thereby causing many individuals to isolate themselves from others. Excess use of phones can also cause physical health problems (Zhang and Wu, 2020), the constant exposure of the phone screen can cause health problems to the eye, academic failure (Albursan et al., 2022), and social anxiety (Caponnetto et al., 2021; Zhan et al., 2021). Since they now feel that being engaged in the internet space can keep them busy they put in most of their time surfing the internet, this plays a significant part in altering people's social life. These detrimental behaviors can affect the individual learning process and even their day to day activities and also damage their social functionalities (Liu et al., 2020). A person who engages in the overuse of the phone may have difficulty in completing work tasks and also engaging in face to face interaction which can lead to social isolation (Soraci et al., 2024). When individuals rely solely on social media platforms it increases social isolation and worsens depression by replacing genuine connections with virtual interactions (Wang, Mo & Fang, 2020). Even in marriages the overuse of phones has greatly affected the communication system between parents and their children because some children prefer to be locked away in their room with their phone than coming out to have conversations with their parents and sometimes their siblings this can bring about an imbalance in the relationship level

between the parents and the children, due to excessive use of phones bonding between parents and children has become fragile (Sanders, Field, Diego and Kaplan, 2000; Bhagat & Sehgal, 2011). Also, between the father and mother if one person focuses on the phone all the time the other person may feel distant and it can bring out arguments and quarrels in the home. In the same way it happens in the university where students are addicted to phones and other gadgets, they tend to ignore their peers. This also could lead to an imbalance in the relationship between undergraduates and their peers. Individuals who are addicted to the internet sometimes find it difficult to communicate effectively face to face (Leung, 2007). In adolescents, the use of the internet as it progresses is controlled by worse sleep (Acikgoz, Acikgoz & Acikgoz, 2022). After surfing the internet all night the urge to sleep becomes very high. Due to the body trying to satisfy the urge to sleep individuals may sleep longer during the day after surfing the internet all night thereby reducing the time for social engagement with people. This can create a pattern in the individual's life which can be surfing the internet and sleeping at their leisure.

### **Work and study**

Students who work and study at the same time find it difficult to maintain good social connections among peers and classmates. They tend to focus on only how to get finance for school and attend classes because of this they usually find it difficult to engage in other social activities and school gatherings. This leads them to being isolated from others and their peers. Because of the imbalance in working and studying it may lead to missing classes, the students may be unable to meet deadline for assignment, they may also be unable to take part in tests and other group presentation therefore maintaining a healthy work-study-life balance is crucial

for students to thrive academically because it enables them to set aside enough time for lectures, tests, exams, and skill development (Wilson, Joiner & Abbasi, 2021). Also, students who maintain a good balance will not likely suffer burnout, stress, or anxiety that can be as a result of conflict and work overload (Allen, Herst, Bruck & Sutton, 2000). In developing countries student employment is encouraged by economic needs instead of their choice, students engage in occasional or low- income employment to support their education and families (Cieslik, Barford, & Vira, 2021; Mélodie, 2023). By engaging in employment to meet their financial need to support their education they may be carried away with their job and forget about their social relationship with others which can lead to isolation. To balance work schedules with school schedules is a difficult task therefore leaving little time to study, attend classes and work on assignments. This can contribute to poor performance and can also increase the stress level of students (Ojo, Falola, & Mordi, 2014; Sinmileoluwa, Onibokun & Abiodun, 2020).

### **Gender**

Men and women have distinct opportunities, demands and limitations due to gender, which is a potent structural system that shapes social experiences, including social bonds (Bird and Rieker 2008; Ridgeway 2011). Society has also influenced how men and women become socially connected due to the way both genders have been shaped, men are made to be aware early of their responsibility and dominance over women as such they tend to focus only on those responsibilities being placed on them. Because of this reason, men tend to only give attention to things that drive them to achieve those goals thereby shutting down most social connections in order to create enough time in achieving their goal which most of the time is

financial stability (Barreto et al., 2021). However social forces such as family, education, media and culture push men to be physically and emotionally strong and inattentive to their social interaction with others (Rosenfield and Mouzon 2013; Umberson, Thomeer, and Lodge 2015). Therefore men may be socially isolated than women because of all these factors and pressure that is being placed on them. Social forces such as family, education, media and culture push women to give more attention to social connections and to read and respond to the emotions and what other people's need both in the home as well as the places they work (Erickson 2005; Hochschild 2012; Umberson et al. 2015). Women on the other hand have been made to believe that they should always cater for the emotions of others and because of this they tend to build bonds with people and most especially between mothers and their children. Women place the needs of others above theirs and because of this they tend to build connections with people more than men because they create a friendly, calm and accommodating environment for others. The structural forces that pushes and forces gender differences starts early with girls being pressured more than boys to attend to the emotions and evaluation of others, maintaining and fostering social ties, putting other people first at the expense of themselves in social relationship (Kamis & Copeland 2020:440; Rosenfield & Mouzon 2013).

### **Consequences of Self Social Isolation**

Some of the long-term consequences of self social isolation include depression, cognitive decline and suicidal thoughts.

## **Depression**

This is a state of mind producing serious, long-term lowering of enjoyment of life or inability to visualize a happy future. Individuals who are depressed tend to have no interest in enjoying life and they have no ability of foreseeing a future filled with happiness it is a period of unhappiness which can cause ideation of suicide and self inflicted injury. Both as a contributing factor as well as a symptom of social isolation depression has been linked to social isolation (Chang et al.,2019; Fernandes et al.,2018; Hirsch et al., 2019; Saeed et al.,2018). Individuals who are not depressed before being isolated can become depressed. They may feel they are no longer needed in the society, they may feel people around them no longer love them because of this feeling they may feel irrelevant. All this feeling can lead to them being depressed. Depression is widely known to be detrimental to motivation and concentration which contribute to a lack of academic achievement and it is also known to cause self-worth loss and mood swings, which contribute to social isolation (Chang et al.,2019; Hirsch et al.,2019; Saeed et al.,2018). Depression is a contributing factor that lowers the motivation and concentration of students and it can lead to low academic achievement. Students who are depressed feel less of themselves and have low self esteem and self worth. Depression also leads to mood swings which makes the individual to further dwell in social isolation totally. Further investigation of the literature found depression to be linked to suicidal ideation and anxiety, two factors that both negatively affect academic achievement and social engagement (Cero et al.,2019; Chang et al.,2019;

Keyes et al.,2012). Depression is also linked to individuals having suicidal thoughts, people who are depressed often feel the need to end their life due to the feeling of irrelevance in the society, peers and family also, it could lead to fear. Depression totally affects an individual negatively especially students because their academic achievement and social engagement will be endangered. Living with a roommate or in a house or dorm with other students has a favorable impact on mental health, whereas living alone can be lonely and depressing (Kato et al., 2020). Individuals who live alone are prone to loneliness and depression due to isolation from others.

### **Cognitive decline**

Cognitive decline refers to the gradual loss of cognitive functions such as memory, attention, learning ability, and problem-solving skills. Among undergraduates, especially those in demanding academic environments, sustained cognitive function is critical for success. Students who are socially isolated are prone to cognitive decline that is a reduction of academic performance, inability to process information quickly and inability to carry out critical thinking. Students who are isolated perform worse academically than those who are socially connected (Cero et al.,2015; Keyes et al.,2012; Liu et al., 2019; Luca et al.,2016; Mampaey, 2017; Saeed et al.,2018; Walton & Cohen, 2011). Prolonged isolation may lead to reduced memory retention, difficulty concentrating, and impaired problem-solving abilities due to limited neural engagement and decreased exposure to diverse perspectives. Socially isolated individuals are more prone to rumination, stress, and depressive symptoms, which further contribute to cognitive deterioration over time (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). Regular social

interaction stimulates various cognitive processes, including memory retention, verbal fluency, and decision-making (Cacioppo & Hawley, 2009). When students isolate themselves, they are deprived of conversations, collaborative learning, and peer feedback, which are important for maintaining neural activity and mental flexibility. Isolation limits exposure to diverse viewpoints and reduces intellectual engagement, both of which are vital for developing higher-order thinking skills in university education (Shankar et al., 2013).

Loneliness, depression and anxiety are psychological conditions that can impair brain regions which are responsible for cognitive control, attention, and memory processing (Matthews et al., 2016).

### **Suicidal thoughts**

social isolation has occasionally been connected to a higher risk of suicide (Koo et al., 2021). Individuals who are socially isolated may begin to have thoughts of suicide. Suicidal ideation is the act of thinking, having ideas, or fantasies about ending one's life that is, the individual may begin to use words like I wish I could sleep and not wake up, life is too hard, I wish I could just disappear etc. Suicidal ideation could be active or passive. passive suicidal ideation which involves the individual wishing to die or disappear without actively planning to commit suicide. active suicidal ideation which involves thinking about and possibly planning suicide, sometimes with a specific method in mind or a specific time. According to Van Orden et al. (2010), suicidal thoughts might be directly influenced by sentiments of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, which are frequent consequences of isolation.

## **Perceive measures of Reducing Self Social Isolation**

Self Social Isolation can be reduced by encouraging social engagement, peer support, mental health support, academic support programs and limiting the excess use of phones.

### **Encouraging social engagement**

Social engagement is the interaction and connection with people in the society or community where the individual lives or finds himself. Social connections protect and also promotes mental health as well as physical health; it also decreases death rates (Lamblin, Murawski, Whittle & Fornito, 2017). Social engagement can be encouraged by asking individuals to join clubs, participate in group projects or campus events such as politics. Individuals may contest for political positions or vote for those who are contesting for positions. By doing this they can meet other people who share common interests with them and in turn promote social relationships. Also, social engagement helps to improve how people communicate with others when an individual is actively involved in social activities it builds confidence; this makes it very easy to maintain friendship and reduce social isolation. By engaging in social activities, it creates a sense of belonging and reduces the feeling that one is not part of a community. An individual who is socially active has a sense of belonging. Through social engagement individuals can have support from peers emotionally, academically this will help in reducing social isolation as a coping mechanism for individuals who feel isolated because of lack of friends.

## **Peer support**

The emotional and practical help that is provided by individuals who share similar experiences is characterized by empathy and connection (Gillard, 2019). It has been linked with increased engagement in taking care of oneself, improvement of the individual's life, the reduction of the use of substance, depressive symptoms, and also it has reduced the rates of mental health disorder which has also reduced hospital admission (Davidson, Bellamy, Guy & Miller, 2012). Peers can support individuals with depression (Joo, Hwang ,Abu, & Gallo, 2016). Involving in peer support can reduce feelings of isolation, it can also improve coping strategies and promote personal growth through the connection with other people who have similar challenges. Peers with similar experiences can provide an understanding that is unique, particular and genuine which reduces the stigma and shame that is often associated with social isolation.

## **Mental health support**

Mental health support helps to tackle the psychological conditions that influence self social isolation. Depression, which is a mental health condition, can be addressed through mental health support provided by professionals who treat the symptoms associated with depression by reducing the avoidance behavior of the individual that causes self social isolation. They help in addressing the fear of social situations while also helping students to cultivate coping mechanisms to aid social interaction. Through therapy isolated individuals can be supported mentally, they are given the opportunity to talk to professionals about how they feel especially those who feel they are not good enough, those who do not feel any sense of belonging or those who feel irrelevant when involved with others socially and also those who fear social gatherings

professional help can be of great significance to them in promoting their mental health in the process of therapy the professional points out the negative effects isolation has on the individual which the individual might not know about. The professional can encourage the individual to attend a small social gathering in order to gradually expose the individual to social situations, build tolerance for social fear and also reduce avoidance behavior of the individual in order to build confidence. Also outreach and awareness programs will help in tackling early mental health issues like depression stating the importance of social connections to individuals during these outreaches will help in promoting and supporting mental health.

### **Academic support program**

Self Social Isolation can be reduced through academic support by encouraging study groups, peer tutoring, academic clubs or organization, mentorship programs, workshops and seminars. Peer tutoring is an approach where students help their fellow students learn and understand their academic material. It enables students to learn from each other. Some students find it difficult to understand in class while some are shy to ask questions in class. The frustration of finding it difficult to understand in class can lead to depression. With peer tutoring close relationships can be formed thereby reducing self social isolation due to academic workload. Also forming study groups can also reduce self social isolation, students will be able to have interactions with people who are of the same academic level who understand the stress that comes with studying instead of staying away from others in a bid to combat the stress alone and cause isolation they can be relieved with the association of others through study groups. The formation of academic clubs and or organization can help in reducing self social isolation

among students because apart from the general academic discussion close relationships can be built through these organizations as a result of this self social isolation can be combated. Many individuals have people they look up to in one way or the other mentorship programs can be provided and students can pick their area of interest and be involved in this creates a sense of belonging and relevance in social gathering so instead of isolating themselves they see the need to get involved in this mentorship programs as a means of training themselves to be like their mentors and in the process self isolation is reduced because they will have face to face interaction with people in one way or another. Organizing workshops and seminars for students can also help in combating self social isolation.

Smaller classes will also help in building close relationships with classmates. A large class can discourage people who find it difficult to be effective in a crowded environment. The monitoring department on bullying of students should also be put in place for students who are being bullied so that they can have people who they can meet for help. This can also reduce the rate at which students are being bullied which in turn reduces self social isolation in school.

### **Limiting excess use of phones**

Students should be encouraged to practice face to face interaction as it builds a stronger connection because facial expression and body language is essential for building strong relationships and connections. Also when individuals spend less time with phones they can redirect their time to joining clubs, participating in group assignments, attending classes and attending social events which in turn will reduce self social isolation.

### **Summary of reviewed literature**

Studies of self social isolation have highlighted multiple causes which includes bullying, excess use of phones, work and study as well as gender. Bullying which is an hostile action that involves imbalance of strength can be done in several ways which includes abusing an individual verbally, cyberbullying which involves the use of internet and social media and also physical bullying which includes the use of one's strength to oppress another person. On the other hand, the excess use of phones means constantly being involved in the use of phones without connecting to people through face to face interaction to build strong relationships. However, individuals who work and study have little or no time to involve themselves in social activities this creates an opportunity for isolation to occur. Gender differences encourage men to focus solely on building financial stability thereby ignoring social relationships and connections.

The consequences of self social isolation include depression, cognitive decline and suicidal thoughts. Depression which is a feeling that involves an individual being unable to visualize a happy life or have any form of enjoyment can make the individual to remain unhappy. Cognitive decline can reduce an individual's ability to understand things effectively and also reduce the memory retention of the individual. The individual can begin to have suicidal thoughts due to unhappy feelings and assumptions of irrelevance in the society they may feel they are not needed by the society or people around them.

Self Social Isolation can be reduced by encouraging social engagement, peer support, academic support, mental health support and limiting the excess use of phones. Individuals can be encouraged to attend social events and also get support from people who are facing the same problem with them by sharing their experiences with one another, professionals can provide mental health support by providing therapy session where these individuals can talk to them about how they feel also the school can provide study groups for students, encourage peer tutoring where students can teach their fellow students and learn from each other. Also, the excess use of phones can be limited by replacing it with face-to-face interaction in order to build strong relationships.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter is concerned with the description of the method and procedures employed in this study.

- Research Design
- Population of the study
- Sample and sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

This study will adopt a descriptive survey research design. This approach is suitable for collecting quantitative data to assess the causes and consequences of self-social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students. Descriptive survey research allows for the collection of information by utilizing structured questionnaires, enabling the researcher to analyze the current status of the phenomenon under investigation.

## **Population of the study**

The population of the study includes Faculty of Education students in the University of Benin. The faculty has 7 departments. The respondents were 100 – 400 level students. The population is suitable because the students have varying experiences regarding self-social isolation making them suitable for providing meaningful data for the study.

## **Sample and sampling techniques**

The sample of this study consisted of 210 undergraduates' that is 30 students from each department of the Faculty of Education, University of Benin. These participants were selected to represent the broader population of Education. The study will employ a simple random sampling technique. This method will allow for the inclusion of students from different departments. This method will also ensure fair, unbiased and correct data.

## **Research instrument**

The instrument for data collection will be a structured questionnaire designed to gather information on the causes and consequences of self-social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students. The questionnaire will consist of two sections: Section A and B: Section A contains demographic information of respondents. Section B consists of questions drawn from the research questions on the causes and consequences of self-social isolation amongst undergraduates as well as the perceived ways of reducing self-social isolation amongst undergraduates. The response will be rated on a four (4) point like scale ranging from strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree(A)=3, Strongly Disagree (SD)=2, and Disagree ((D)=1.

**Validity of the instrument**

The instrument for this study will be subjected to the researcher's supervisor for validation. And the corrections, suggestions and comments will be affected.

**Reliability of the instrument**

To establish the reliability of the instrument, a test- retest method will be carried out. This method involves giving the same questionnaire to the same group of people twice, with a gap of two weeks. This approach helps to check how consistent the responses are over time, ensuring the questionnaire measures what is supposed to. The responses of the respondents will be scored and the reliability coefficient will be later determined by using a split-half method which then determines the internal consistency of the instrument. The value obtained will be used to show the reliability of the instrument.

**Method of data collection**

Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researcher to faculty of education students in the University of Benin and it was retrieved on the spot after completion.

**Method of data analysis**

Data collected for the study will be analyzed using a simple percentage. This method presents the frequency of responses as the percentage. The basis for decision making was guided by the majority percentage. Responses with higher percentages were interpreted as reflecting the dominant views of the participants

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the results of data analysis for the study. The results provide answers to research questions earlier raised in chapter one of the study.

#### Presentation of Results

Data collected are presented and analyzed with respect to the research questions that guided this study. Raw scores were used in preparing the frequency distribution table weighted under Strongly agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly disagree (SD) = 1.

#### Discussion of field and survey finding

**Section A:** Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 210)

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 210)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	98	46.7%
	Female	112	53.3%
Level	100 Level	40	19.0%
	200 Level	56	26.7%
	300 Level	62	29.5%
	400 Level	52	24.8%

The demographic data shows that out of the total respondents, 98 were male (46.7%) while 112 were female (53.3%), indicating a slightly higher female representation. In terms of academic level, 40 students (19.0%) were in 100 level, 56 students (26.7%) in 200 level, 62 students (29.5%) in 300 level, and 52 students (24.8%) in 400 level. This reflects a fairly balanced

distribution across the academic levels, with the highest proportion of respondents being in 300 level.

**Section B: Causes of Self-Social Isolation**

**Table 2: Causes of Self-Social Isolation**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Bullying leads to isolation	72 (34.3%)	90 (42.9%)	32 (15.2%)	16 (7.6%)
2	Excessive phone use	88 (41.9%)	76 (36.2%)	30 (14.3%)	16 (7.6%)
3	Working while studying	54 (25.7%)	84 (40.0%)	48 (22.9%)	24 (11.4%)
4	Gender influences isolation	40 (19.0%)	60 (28.6%)	72 (34.3%)	38 (18.1%)
5	Low self-esteem	96 (45.7%)	74 (35.2%)	28 (13.3%)	12 (5.7%)

The responses in Section B indicate that several factors contribute to self-social isolation among students. A majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that bullying (77.2%) and excessive phone use (78.1%) are significant causes of isolation. Working while studying was also identified as a contributing factor, with 65.7% agreeing. However, opinions were more divided on gender influence, with only 47.6% agreeing, while 52.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Low self-esteem was widely recognized as a cause of isolation, with 80.9% of respondents agreeing. These findings suggest that personal, social, and behavioral factors all play roles in influencing student isolation.

## Section C: Consequences of Self-Social Isolation

**Table 3: Consequences of Self-Social Isolation**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Leads to depression	102 (48.6%)	78 (37.1%)	20 (9.5%)	10 (4.8%)
2	Suicidal thoughts	84 (40.0%)	72 (34.3%)	36 (17.1%)	18 (8.6%)
3	Cognitive decline	64 (30.5%)	88 (41.9%)	38 (18.1%)	20 (9.5%)
4	Affects academic performance	110 (52.4%)	72 (34.3%)	20 (9.5%)	8 (3.8%)
5	Reduces motivation	96 (45.7%)	74 (35.2%)	26 (12.4%)	14 (6.7%)

The data from Section C reveals that self-social isolation has serious consequences on students' well-being and academic life. A large percentage of respondents agreed that isolation leads to depression (85.7%) and can trigger suicidal thoughts (74.3%). Many also believed it causes cognitive decline, with 72.4% supporting this view. An overwhelming majority (86.7%) agreed that isolation negatively affects academic performance, while 80.9% stated it reduces students' motivation. These findings highlight the profound emotional, mental, and educational impact of self-social isolation among students.

## Section D: Reducing Self-Social Isolation

**Table 4: Reducing Self-Social Isolation**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	Social engagement helps	104 (49.5%)	78 (37.1%)	18 (8.6%)	10 (4.8%)
2	Peer support	92 (43.8%)	82 (39.0%)	24 (11.4%)	12 (5.7%)
3	Mental health support	88 (41.9%)	84 (40.0%)	24 (11.4%)	14 (6.7%)
4	Limiting phone use	70 (33.3%)	80 (38.1%)	42 (20.0%)	18 (8.6%)
5	Academic support	84 (40.0%)	90 (42.9%)	24 (11.4%)	12 (5.7%)

The data from Section D indicates that students believe several strategies can effectively reduce self-social isolation. A high percentage (86.6%) agreed that increased social engagement helps, while 82.8% supported the importance of peer support. Similarly, 81.9% of respondents recognized the value of mental health support. Limiting phone use was also seen as beneficial by 71.4%, suggesting that overuse may contribute to isolation. Finally, 82.9% agreed that academic support plays a key role in reducing isolation. These findings highlight a strong belief in both social and institutional strategies to address and prevent self-social isolation among students.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Findings in Section B indicate that students perceive bullying, excessive phone use, working while studying, and low self-esteem as key contributors to self-social isolation. The majority agreed that bullying and excessive phone use play a major role. This aligns with the findings of Twenge et al. (2017), who reported that increased digital device usage correlates with social withdrawal in adolescents. Also, low self-esteem was highly rated, confirming Rosenberg's (2015) argument that individuals with low self-worth are more likely to withdraw socially. However, opinions were more divided on gender influence, with 47.6% agreeing and 52.4% disagreeing. This suggests that while gender may play a role, it is not a dominant factor for all students, which partially contrasts with Lee and Stapinski (2018), who identified gender differences in isolation tendencies.

In Section C, students strongly agreed that isolation leads to depression, suicidal thoughts, cognitive decline, reduced motivation and poor academic performance. These findings are consistent with those of Holt-Lunstad et al. (2015), who found that social isolation significantly increases risks for mental health disorders and poor academic functioning. Similarly, Orben et al. (2020) highlighted the association between prolonged isolation and cognitive impairments in youth. The agreement across these consequences supports previous research, showing that self-social isolation can severely affect emotional, cognitive, and academic well-being.

Section D revealed that students believe strongly in social engagement, peer support, mental health services, limiting phone use, and academic support as effective interventions. These results align with Santini et al. (2020), who emphasized peer relationships and mental health interventions as critical in combating isolation. The emphasis on limiting phone use also mirrors the findings of Przybylski and Weinstein (2017), who found that excessive screen time weakens real-life social interactions. The preference for academic support also suggests that performance-based inclusion can reduce isolation, aligning with McClelland et al. (2015), who identified academic engagement as a protective factor.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary and conclusion of the results relating to the research questions postulated and objective tested.

#### **Summary**

The study investigates the causes and consequences of self social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students. Findings revealed that key causes of self-social isolation include bullying, excessive phone use, working while studying, and low self-esteem. While most students agreed these factors contributed significantly to isolation, responses were divided on whether gender plays a major role, indicating that gender influence on isolation may be more individual-specific.

The study also found that self-social isolation has serious consequences on students' well-being and academic life. Respondents reported that isolation often leads to depression, suicidal thoughts, cognitive decline, reduced motivation, and poor academic performance. This suggests that isolation not only affects students emotionally and mentally but also undermines their academic success and participation.

In terms of solutions, the students identified several strategies to reduce self-social isolation. These include promoting social engagement, strengthening peer support, providing access to mental health services, encouraging limited phone use, and offering academic support. Overall, the study highlights the urgent need for schools and stakeholders to implement supportive

programs and interventions that promote student interaction, well-being, and academic engagement, thereby reducing the risk and impact of social isolation.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shed light on the significant issue of self-social isolation among students, identifying its major causes, consequences, and possible interventions. The findings revealed that factors such as bullying, excessive phone use, working while studying, and low self-esteem play major roles in pushing students into isolation. These causes often go unnoticed but have deep emotional, social, and academic impacts on students, making early detection and intervention essential.

Furthermore, the study confirmed that self-social isolation has far-reaching effects, including increased rates of depression, suicidal thoughts, cognitive decline, poor academic performance, and reduced motivation. These outcomes not only affect students' academic growth but also their mental health and overall development, which may persist beyond school if not addressed. The research also emphasized that self-social isolation can be reduced through practical strategies such as peer support, mental health services, structured academic support, social engagement, and reduced screen time. Therefore, school authorities, parents, counselors, and policymakers must take a collaborative and proactive approach in creating a supportive educational environment. By prioritizing student mental health and fostering a sense of belonging, institutions can greatly reduce isolation and promote well-being, motivation, and academic success.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should establish effective anti-bullying policies and awareness programs to prevent bullying, which was identified as a major cause of self-social isolation among students.
2. Mental health support services such as regular counseling, workshops, and peer mentoring programs should be made readily available in schools to help students cope with low self-esteem, academic stress, and emotional challenges.
3. Schools and parents should collaborate to regulate and monitor students' phone usage, encouraging more face-to-face interactions and participation in extracurricular activities to reduce excessive screen time.
4. Institutions should provide academic support systems, especially for students who work while studying, to help them manage time and workload effectively without becoming socially withdrawn.
5. Awareness campaigns should be launched to educate students on the importance of social engagement and peer connection in building emotional resilience and academic performance.

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## APPENDIX

### DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY (CIT)

#### UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

#### Questionnaire

Title: causes and consequences of self-social isolation amongst undergraduates as perceived by education students in the University of Benin

**Instructions:** Please answer all questions honestly. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used solely for academic research purposes. Tick [✓] the option that best applies.

#### Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. Level: 100 [ ] 200 [ ] 300 [ ] 400 [ ]

#### Section B: What are the causes of self-social isolation amongst undergraduates

**Instructions:** Tick the box that best reflects your level of agreement with each statement.

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

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
1	Bullying by peers and others can lead to self social isolation				
2	Excessive use of phones can lead to self social isolation				
3	Working while studying can lead to self social isolation				
4	Gender influences self social isolation amongst students				
5	Low self esteem contributes to self social isolation				

**Section C: What are the consequences of self-social isolation amongst undergraduates**

**Instructions:** Tick the box that best reflects your level of agreement with each statement.

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

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
1	Self Social Isolation can lead to depression				
2	Isolated students are more likely to experience suicidal thoughts				
3	Cognitive decline is a possible effect of long-term self social isolation				
4	Self Social Isolation affects academic performance negatively				
5	Self Social Isolation affects motivation to participate in school social activities				

**Section D: what are the ways of reducing self-social isolation amongst undergraduates**

**Instructions:** Tick the box that best reflects your level of agreement with each statement.

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

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
1	Encouraging social engagement helps reduce self social isolation				
2	Peer support system makes students feel more socially connected				
3	Mental health support can prevent the effects of self social isolation				
4	Limiting the use of phones improves students interaction				
5	Academic support programs help in reducing self social isolation				