

**ROLES OF RESILIENCE AND GENDER IN COPING WITH
ACADEMIC CHALLENGES OF UNIVERSITY
UNDERGRADUTES**

BY

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2014/195794

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
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JULY, 2018

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DEDICATION

To Almighty God

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Dedication	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Table of contents	v
List of tables	vi
Abstract	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem	9
Purpose of the Study	10
Operational Definition of Terms	10
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Theoretical Review	12
Empirical Review	19
Summary of Literature Review	24
Hypotheses	25
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD	26
Participants	26
Instruments	26
Procedure	28
Design/Statistics	28
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	29
Results and Analysis	29
Summary of finding	31
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	32
Implication of the Study	33
Limitations of the Study	34

Suggestions for further Research	34
Summary and Conclusion	34
REFERENCES	36
APPENDICES	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table1: Correlations of demographic variables, resilience and coping with academic challenges.

Table2: Regression analysis of coping with academic challenges.

Abstract

This study examined the role of resilience and gender in coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates. Three hundred and eighty (380) including 185(48.6%) males and 195 (51.4%) female students from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka participated in the study. These participants were drawn using probability sampling method. Their age ranged from 18 to 35 years with a mean age of 26.6 years. A total of 221(58.1%) were single and 159 (41.8%) were married. Two scales were used to measure the variables of study. The scales were: Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and Stress Coping Inventory (SCI). A cross-sectional design was adopted for the study and linear regression was used to analyze the data. The result showed that both resilience and gender did not significantly predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates. It was concluded that gender and resilience were not factors in coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

Keywords: Coping with Academic Challenges, Gender, Resilience.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade” is a proverbial statement used to encourage optimism and a positive can-do attitude in the face of adversity or misfortune. Lemons suggest sourness of difficulty in life, while lemonade is a sweet drink. Challenges are part of life, an individual face challenge(s), organizations also face various types of challenges, and the societies too face different type of challenges. The Oxford dictionary defines challenges as a matter or situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome. Challenges at one time quells human knowledge and at the other time probes human comfort and the ability to survive. A University undergraduate faces different kind of challenges especially those in Federal University of higher learning like University of Nigeria, Nsukka. To them, they view challenges as unnatural predicaments encroaching upon their academic pursuit. Challenges are meant naturally expected to surface in our daily life activities but not for a newly admitted student who like many other students are faced with the perplexity. Since challenges are inevitable, solutions are then not farfetched. Some students have been able to counter place the academic challenges facing them to be of a profit to their academic profit. They squeezed out academic lemons of academic pursuit and made academic lemonade of it.

Although research has uncovered personal and social factors that help undergraduate students succeed academically, less attention has been focused on coping responses that help students overcome challenges with influences from resilience and gender. According to Folkman and Lazarus (1980), Coping processes refer to what the person actually thinks and does in a particular encounter and to changes in these efforts as the encounter unfolds during a single episode or across episodes that are in some sense part of the common stressful encounter.

Coping is intimately related to the concept of cognitive appraisal and, hence, to the stress relevant person-environment transactions. Most approaches in coping research follow Folkman and Lazarus (1980, p. 223), who define coping as 'the cognitive and behavioural efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them.' This definition contains the following implications. (a) Coping actions are not classified according to their effects (e.g., as reality-distorting), but according to certain characteristics of the coping process. (b) This process encompasses behavioural as well as cognitive reactions in the individual. (c) In most cases, coping consists of different single act and is organized sequentially, forming a coping *episode*. In this sense, coping is often characterized by the simultaneous occurrence of different action sequences and, hence, an interconnection of coping episodes. (d) Coping actions can be distinguished by their focus on different elements of a stressful encounter (cf. Lazarus and Folkman 1984). They can attempt to change the person-environment realities behind negative emotions or stress (problem-focused coping). They can also relate to internal elements and try to reduce a negative emotional state, or change the appraisal of the demanding situation (emotion-focused coping).

“I remember when I first gained admission into the University; I thought it will be like paradise. My expectations were high, I never thought of any possibilities of academic challenges not until I realized that my parents had to borrow to pay for my acceptance fee, which also I have to temporary squat in a room of 9 occupants in room 304 of Eni-Njoku hostel. At the hostel, hell was let loosed, essential amenities to support students welfare were missing, amenities such as water, good ventilation system, light, security, wifi connection e.t.c were not available. The distance of between my temporal residence and my department was a night mare; trekking 4 kilometres daily was not an easy bargain. My father has been forced to retire in the ministry of

urban development having served vigorously for forty five years; my mother is a primary school teacher with a pay cheque of twenty one thousand naira monthly, lemons were growing in my orchard. Being the first of a family of five children is seen as a dreary trap since is expected of you to display heroism in bad situations and as such present a good example for your younger ones. Paying my school fees was not easy, I was the last to pay in my class and that is after exams, so I missed registering compute- based examinations due to the inability to pay school fees. Accessing scholarly materials for my courses was a big problem also because most of them were said to be online since the ones available at that time has been tagged out-dated by NUC; my Nokia 3310 cannot access internet, I was perplexed. Our lecture rooms were also out-dated; I think that the so called NUC missed that too. Due to the distance between my residential area and the lecture locations, I was left to stand up during lectures almost 80% of the academic session. Distance was not only the contributing factor to this problem, having 80 seats for a possible 220 attendance for a single lecture every day was worst. Learning while standing in a very stuffy classroom with no ceiling board neither a ceiling fan posed a very stringent opposition towards my academic pursuit at 100 level. I almost thought of quitting but going back to Onitsha was not a welcomed idea. Second year was not smooth at all, the higher I was going, the tougher it becomes. Lots of academic research works were given to us by different lecturers not minding if we were opportune enough to tackle them. My experiences in third year totally shaped by life and introduced me into a new understanding of how to walk past challenges, difficulties and disappointments and still succeed very well in life. I faced every challenge squarely; I developed solutions by myself and made them work for my benefits. I learnt extreme financial management, time management, personal tutoring and most especially, my academic life has been enhanced enormously. My ability to turn tables around for my good is it because of

my gender as a male or are there other people of the opposite gender who bounces back like me? I believe this study will reveal that.

Education has long been recognized as a vital key to unlocking underdevelopment in nations. It is the one major instrument for bringing about socio-political, economic scientific and technological advancement of any country. This explains why most nations, both developing and advanced, invest a significant proportion of their annual budget in the education sector of their economy (Martin, 2009). As important as education is, its immediate benefits are not easily discernible just as its actual direct cost and indirect costs are difficult to quantify exactly in monetary terms. But one thing that all nations are worried about is the quality or standard of education offered in their schools right from elementary through secondary to tertiary institutions of learning. Schools, especially tertiary institutions, are complex social systems. But a number of problems may exist within or outside the educational institutions that could make it difficult for the intended outcomes to be achieved (Werner, 1996). Problems are those things that make it difficult for effective teaching and learning and in tertiary institutions they also militate against the achievement of excellence in research, publications and community service. While higher education institutions everywhere experience some degree of difficulty in the pursuit of their vision, mission and goals, those associated with institutions in developing countries, as in Africa, are numerous. Some of these problems include lack of accommodation, dearth of experts in most engineering, medical, technological and information and communication technology disciplines. There are also problems of classroom spaces, lack of laboratories, poorly stocked libraries and most seriously poor funding compounded by large number of student intakes that far outstrip available facilities and staff (Awino2006). It is evident that gender has a contributing role to play

in influencing one's ability to bounce back and excel in academics when facing adversity or stress. This ability to bounce back can be called "Resilience"

Nearly fifty years of research in resiliency has brought forth various perspectives and voice (Dugan, & Coles, 1989; Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Taylor & Wang, 2000; Thomsen, 2002; Unger, 2005). Despite the vast body of research on resilience, there is little agreement on a single definition of resilience among scholars. In fact, scholars define the construct of resilience in a multitude of ways (Carle & Chassin, 2004). Richardson and his colleagues (1990) contended that resiliency is "the process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event" (p.34). Similarly, Higgins (1994) defined resiliency as the "process of self-righting or growth"(p.1), while Wolins (1993) defined resiliency as the "capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself (p.5). Resiliency is commonly explained and studied in context of a two- dimension construct concerning the exposure of adversity and the positive adjustments of that adversity. (Luther & Cicchetti, 2000). While the construct of resilience is examined across various studies and scholarly articles, there is a little consensus as to how students define adversity let alone what defines positive adjustment outcomes. Resiliency is also defined as " a positive adaptation is considered in a demonstration of manifested behaviour on social competence or success at meeting any particular tasks at a specific life stage" (Luther & Cicchetti, 2000), p. 110). With respect to the school setting, scholars often use school achievements or results from state testing as a measure of positive adjustment outcomes (Jew, Green & Kroger, 1999). Masten (1994) contended that resilience refers to (1) people from high-risk groups who have better outcomes than expected; (2) good

adaptations despite stressful (common) experience (when resilience is extreme, resilience refers to patterns in recovery); and (3) recovery from trauma.

During the waves of resiliency research, researchers tended to regard and label individuals who transcended their adverse circumstances as “hardy,” “invulnerable,” or “invincible” (Werner & Smith, 1982). Such labels implied that these individuals were in possession of a rare and remarkable set of qualities that enabled them to rebound from whatever adversity came their way – almost as if these fortunate individuals possessed a sort of magical force field that protected them from all harm. Increasingly, however, researchers has arrived at the consensus that resilience is not some remarkable, innate quality but rather a developmental process that incorporates the normative self-righting tendencies of individuals (Masten,2001). In fact, Garmezy (1993) cautioned against the use of the term invulnerable because it implies that people are incapable of being wounded or injured. Masten (2001) referred to the resilience process as “ordinary magic,” simply because a majority of individuals who undergoes serious adversity “remarkably” manage to achieve normative developmental outcomes. Research in resiliency concludes that each person has an innate capacity for resiliency; a self-righting tendency that operates best when people have resiliency- building conditions in their lives (Bernard, 1995). When coping and adaptation mechanisms come into play, gender should be considered because males and female differ in how they adapt or cope in any adverse situations. Whether one has high resilient or not depends on the gender of the individual. Identifying characteristics that enable academic achievement and that distinguish individuals who are successful from those who are not, setting intellectual capacity aside, remains a worthy pursuit for educational research and practice. One such characteristic is resilience.

Resilience is defined by Masten et al. (1990, p. 426) as “the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances,” and by Riley and Masten (2005, p. 13) as “referring to patterns of positive adaptation in the face of adversity.” On the basis that judgements about risk and adversity and evaluations of competencies and outcomes all relate directly to specific events occurring in specific contexts—in a similar way to self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997)—the existence and relevance of a unidimensional generalized global resilience construct has been questioned in favour of a multidimensional context-specific approach to resilience (Liddle, 1994; Waxman et al., 2003; Riley & Masten, 2005).

As such, academic resilience has emerged as a context-specific form of individual psychological resilience and, as argued by Colp and Nordstokke (2014), was created to offer greater assessment and prediction specificity to resilience research. Closely related to individual psychological resilience, which examines the capacity for dealing with challenge and adversity, academic resilience is concerned primarily with the relevance of resilience in educational contexts and is defined as “a capacity to overcome acute and/or chronic adversity that is seen as a major threat to a student’s educational development” (Martin, 2013, p. 488). Discussing academic resilience, Martin and Marsh (2006) note that whilst there are many students who perform poorly and continue to perform poorly, there are a significant number of others who manage to turn around their academic misfortunes, flourishing and thriving despite adversity. An often-cited adversity that affects academic achievement is poverty (Kanevsky et al., 2008), and it is the capacity of some children to overcome the limitations of poverty and to succeed when

others do not (Gizir, 2004), that illustrates the existence of individual resilience and underlines its importance as a psychological construct.

In an academic context, resilience is characterized by those students that present with the capacity to reverse academic misfortune and failure and succeed while others continue to perform poorly and fail (Martin and Marsh, 2006). Resilience is universally considered a strength or asset, a desirable and advantageous quality, characteristic or process that is likely to impact positively on aspects of an individual's performance, achievement, health and wellbeing (Bartley et al., 2010). Martin and Marsh (2009), for instance, refer to their approach to academic resilience as an inherently asset-orientated, strength-based and inspirational approach to students' response to academic adversity and the benefits of academic resilience are demonstrated by studies that report resilience as a significant predictor of coping at university (McLafferty et al., 2012). This report gave a positive relationship between academic resilience and academic achievement (Fallon, 2010). This suggest that it has the potential to foster increased resilience through interventions (Gardynik, 2008) the report also outlined the positive effects of educational interventions that positively incorporate aspects of academic resilience (Martin and Marsh, 2008).

Martin and Marsh (2006) have suggested that all students, at some point, will experience poor performance, challenge or pressure, citing the work of Topham and Moller (2011), along with increasing suicide figures among university students (Office for National Statistics, 2013), Cheng and Catling (2015) suggest that university students have an increased vulnerability to mental illness that implies low resilience in coping with academic stress and change. Considered together, these points help to illustrate the continued relevance of academic resilience and its value as a desirable characteristic in students.

Gender is the final predicting variable of study in this research work. Gender, as opposed to sex, was not introduced until the 1970s. Stoller (1968) a psychologist who worked with individuals born with ambiguous genitalia, was the first to point out a distinction between sex and gender. Gender is how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what is to be a woman or man. Gender identifies and associated expectations of roles and responsibilities are therefore changeable between and within cultures, Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent. Gender is fluid and based in culture. The concept of gender also includes expectations held about the characteristics, coping abilities and likely behaviour of both women and men (femininity and masculinity), (March & Smyth1999). Many research found a significant difference between male and female on their coping ability towards academics related challenges. Williams and Coles (2003) who found that males had significant better coping abilities towards academic related challenges than females.

Statement of Problem

One major area receiving less attention when examining problems facing Universities in Africa, including Nigeria, is those challenges encountered by Students themselves after they have been admitted into the Universities and these are compounded by the institutional challenges and difficulties which negatively impact on the quality of teaching and learning, research and community service. These problems have also contributed immensely to the high ratio of university dropouts among university undergraduates which has in turn propagated all kinds of crimes and societal ills in our communities. Many of these problems are shared together by the different gender in the university communities. But what are the common problems facing these University Students? How do university undergraduates cope with these challenges? Do resilience and gender influence the coping abilities of the students? Universities must take

significant steps to identify these problems so as to either eliminate them or at least minimize them. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the academic challenges encountered by the undergraduate students and to determine whether resilience and gender plays a role in the coping abilities of the students.

Thus, in a bid to achieve this, the present study will specifically seek to provide answers to the following research questions;

1. Would resilience significantly be a factor in coping with academic challenges among university undergraduate students?
2. Would gender significantly correlate with coping with academic challenges among university undergraduate students?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the role of resilience and gender on coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates. Specifically, the study intends to examine whether:

1. Resilience would significantly predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.
2. Gender would significantly predict on coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

Operational Definition of Terms

Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back or recover from stress or to adapt to stressful circumstances and cope with adversity or competitive events, as ;measured by the 6-item Brief Resilience Scale by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Toole, Christopher & Bernard (2008).

Gender: refers to being a male or female as will be measured by an indication made by the participants on the questionnaire.

Coping with Academic challenges refers to ability to taking steps to either remove or manage the sources of challenges by initiating direct action, increasing one's efforts and trying to positively adapt in a systematic way as would be measured by a 28-item student stress coping style inventory by Ying Min Lin & Farn Shin Cheng (2010).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter is divided into two parts, namely theoretical and empirical reviews.

Theoretical Review

Several theories are helpful for understanding the dynamics of coping with academic challenges and they are:

Macro-analytic theory

Trait Oriented theory

Variable focused & Person focused approaches

Macro-analytic theory

The Lazarus model outlined above represents a specific type of coping theory. These theories may be classified according to two independent parameters: (a) trait-oriented versus state oriented, and (b) micro-analytic versus macro-analytic approaches (cf. Krohne 1996). Trait oriented and state-oriented research strategies have different objectives: The trait-oriented (or dispositional) strategy aims at early identification of individuals whose coping resources and tendencies are inadequate for the demands of a specific stressful encounter. An early identification of these persons will offer the opportunity for establishing a selection (or placement) procedure or a successful primary prevention program. Research that is state oriented, i.e., which centres on actual coping, has a more general objective. This research investigates the relationships between coping strategies employed by an individual and out-come variables such as self-reported or objectively registered coping efficiency, emotional reactions

accompanying and following certain coping efforts, or variables of adaptational outcome (e.g., health status or test performance). This research strategy intends to lay the foundation for a general modificatory program to improve coping efficacy. Micro analytic approaches focus on a large number of specific coping strategies, whereas macro-analytic analysis operates at a higher level of abstraction, thus concentrating on more fundamental constructs. S. Freud's (1926) 'classic' defence mechanisms conception is an example of a state-oriented, macro-analytic approach. Although Freud distinguished a multitude of defense mechanisms, in the end, he related these mechanisms to two basic forms: repression and intellectualization (see also A. Freud 1936). The trait-oriented correspondence of these basic defenses is the personality dimension repression–sensitization (Byrne, 1964, Eriksen, 1966). The distinction of the two basic functions of emotion-focused and problem- focused coping proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) represents another macro-analytic state approach. In its actual research strategy, however, the Lazarus group extended this macro-analytic approach to a micro-analytic strategy. In their 'Ways of Coping Questionnaire' (WOCQ; cf. Folkman & Lazarus 1988, Lazarus, 1991), Lazarus and co-workers distinguish eight groups of coping strategies: confrontative coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planful problem- solving, and positive reappraisal. The problem with this conception and, as a consequence, the measurement of coping is that these categories are only loosely related to the two basic coping functions. Unlike the macro-analytic, trait- oriented approach that generated a multitude of theoretical conceptions; the micro-analytic, trait-oriented strategy is mostly concerned with constructing multidimensional inventories (overviews in Schwarzer & Schwarzer, 1996). Almost all of these measurement approaches, however, lack a solid theoretical foundation (cf. Krohne, 1996).

Research on the processes by which individuals cope with stressful situations has grown substantially over the past three decades (cf. Lazarus 1991, Zeidner & Endler 1996). Many trait-oriented approaches in this field have established two constructs central to an understanding of cognitive responses to stress: vigilance, that is, the orientation toward stressful aspects of an encounter, and cognitive avoidance, that is, averting attention from stress-related information (cf. Janis, 1983, Krohne, 1978, 1993, Roth & Cohen, 1986). Approaches corresponding to these conceptions are repression–sensitization (Byrne 1964), monitoring–blunting (Miller, 1980, 1987), or attention–rejection (Mullen & Suls 1982). With regard to the relationship between these two constructs, Byrne's approach specifies a one-dimensional, bipolar structure, while Miller as well as Mullen and Suls leave this question open. Krohne, however, explicitly postulates an independent functioning of the dimensions vigilance and cognitive avoidance.

Repression–sensitization. The repression–sensitization construct (cf. Byrne, 1964, Eriksen, 1966) relates different forms of dispositional coping to one bipolar dimension. When confronted with a stressful encounter, persons located at one pole of this dimension (repressors) tend to deny or minimize the existence of stress, fail to verbalize feelings of distress, and avoid thinking about possible negative consequences of this encounter. Persons at the opposite pole (sensitizers) react to stress-related cues by way of enhanced information search, rumination, and obsessive worrying. The concept of repression–sensitization is theoretically founded in research on perceptual defence (Bruner & Postman 1947), an approach that combined psychodynamic ideas with the functionalistic behaviour analysis of Brunswik (1947).

Monitoring and blunting: The conception of monitoring and blunting (Miller 1980, 1987) originated from the same basic assumptions formulated earlier by Eriksen (1966) for the repression–sensitization construct. Miller conceived both constructs as cognitive informational

styles and proposed that individuals who encounter a stressful situation react with arousal according to the amount of attention they direct to the stressor. Conversely, the arousal level can be lowered, if the person succeeds in reducing the impact of aversive cues by employing avoidant cognitive strategies such as distraction, denial, or reinterpretation. However, these coping strategies, called blunting, should only be adaptive if the aversive event is uncontrollable. Examples of uncontrollable events are impending surgery or an aversive medical examination (Miller & Mangan, 1983). If control is available, strategies called monitoring, i.e., seeking information about the stressor, are the more adaptive forms of coping. Although initially these strategies are associated with increased stress reactions, they enable the individual to gain control over the stressor in the long run, thus reducing the impact of the stressful situation. An example of a more controllable stressor is preparing for an academic exam. The general relationship between a stressor's degree of controllability and the employment of monitoring or blunting strategies can be moderated by situative and personal influences. With regard to situation, the noxious stimulation may be so intense that blunting strategies, such as attentional diversion, are ineffective with respect to reducing stress-related arousal. Concerning personality, there are relatively stable individual differences in the inclination to employ blunting or monitoring coping when encountering a stressor.

Person focused approaches

Several theories are helpful for the understanding of Resilience in explanation of coping with stress. Rutter has established several principles for resilience theory based on his extensive research (Rutter, 2006, Rutter, 2007, Rutter, 2012, Rutter, 2013). One of the principles Rutter adheres to is that resilience is not related to individual psychological traits or superior functioning, but rather it is an ordinary adaptation given the right resources. He openly criticises

the ideas of ‘superkids’ or ‘invulnerables’ and suggests that individual differences in resilience may be due to genetic effects that make some children more or less susceptible to environmental change or physiological responses to environmental hazards. He emphasises that it is the environment, not the child that is the catalyst for these differences.

Rutter takes a lifespan approach to resilience, as he states that resilience is “not the chemistry of the moment” but something that may be more evident at different times in one’s life (Rutter, 2007). Rutter asserts that individual differences (e.g. genetics, personality, temperament) create differences in how each person responds to risk and protective factors. He states that there is a “requirement to assess individual needs in relation to particular circumstances, rather than assume that all risk and protective factors have similar effects in all conditions in all people” (Rutter, 2013). He states that in some cases, resilience can result from factors that have no effect or are risky in the absence of a risk experience.

Werner held an ecological view of resilience, focusing on protective factors that promoted resilience at the individual, family and community level (Werner, 1989). These protective factors included dispositional attributes of the individual (sociability, activity level), affectional ties within the family that provide emotional support, and external support systems (church, work). Werner noted that the more stress one experiences, the more protective processes are needed (Werner, 1982). She also believed that protective factors operate both directly and indirectly (Werner, 1989).

Masten indicates there must be two criteria present to be considered resilient, namely a measure of positive adaptation or development and the past or current presence of conditions that threaten to disrupt positive adaptation (Masten et al., 2009). She defines positive adaptation or development as meeting developmental tasks and fundamental human adaptation systems.

Developmental tasks are the expectations of a given society or culture in a historical context for the behaviour of children in different age periods and situations (e.g. going to school, getting a job, romantic relationships).

Fundamental human adaptation systems include attachment relationships and parenting, pleasure-in-mastery motivational systems, self-regulatory systems for emotion, arousal and behaviour, families, formal education systems, cultural belief systems, religion and spirituality (Masten et al., 2009). The two models of resilience frequently referred to by Masten are the Variable Focused and Person Focused approaches (Masten et al., 2009, Masten, 2011, Masten, 2001). A Variable Focused approach looks at associations among variables through multivariate analysis and patterns of association. While this approach has statistical power and can show patterns between variables (individual, environment and experiences) it is unable to encapsulate the experience of the whole person. In a Person Focused approach, it is the study of whole individuals, comparing resilient and non-resilient individuals, examining life course trajectories, and attempting to understand how they are different. Groups of variables are studied as they naturally occur within each individual. Masten suggests both approaches have utility.

Similar to Miller's monitoring-blunting conception, the model of coping modes (MCM) deals with individual differences in attention orientation and emotional-behavioral regulation under stressful conditions (Krohne 1993). The MCM extends the (largely descriptive) monitoring blunting conception (as well as the repression-sensitization approach) in that it relates the dimensions vigilance and cognitive avoidance to an explicative cognitive-motivational basis. It assumes that most stressful, especially anxiety evoking, situations are characterized by two central features: the presence of aversive stimulation and a high degree of ambiguity. The experiential counterparts of these situational features are emotional arousal (as being primarily

related to aversive stimulation) and uncertainty (related to ambiguity). Arousal, in turn, should stimulate the tendency to cognitively avoid (or inhibit) the further processing of cues related to the aversive encounter, whereas uncertainty activates vigilant tendencies. These two coping processes are conceptually linked to personality by the hypothesis that the habitual preference for avoidant or vigilant coping strategies reflects individual differences in the susceptibility to emotional arousal or uncertainty. Individuals who are especially susceptible to states of stress-induced emotional arousal are supposed to habitually employ cognitive avoidance. The employment of avoidant strategies primarily aims at shielding the person from an increase in arousal (arousal-motivated coping behavior). Individuals who are especially affected by the uncertainty experienced in most stressful situations are supposed to habitually employ vigilant coping. Thus, the employment of vigilant strategies follows a plan that is aimed at minimizing the probability of unanticipated occurrence of aversive events (uncertainty-motivated coping behavior). The MCM conceives the habitual coping tendencies of vigilance and cognitive avoidance as independent personality dimensions. That means, aggregated across a multitude of stressful encounters, the employment of vigilant strategies and of avoidant ones does not preclude each other. Thus, four coping modes can be defined. (a) Persons who score high on vigilance and low on cognitive avoidance are called sensitizers. These persons are primarily concerned with reducing uncertainty by directing their attention towards stress-relevant information. (b) Individuals with the opposite pattern are designated as repressers. These persons minimize the experience of arousal by avoiding aversive information. (c) Non defensives have low scores on both dimensions. These persons are supposed to flexibly adapt to the demands of a stressful encounter. Instead of frequently employing vigilant or avoidant coping strategies, they prefer to act instrumentally in most situations. (d) Individuals who exhibit high scores on both

dimensions are called high anxious. In employing vigilant as well as avoidant coping strategies, these persons try to reduce both the subjective uncertainty and the emotional arousal induced by stressful encounters. Because the two goals are incompatible in most situations, high-anxious persons are assumed to show fluctuating and therefore less-efficient coping behaviour. Approaches to assess individual differences in vigilance and cognitive avoidance are described in Krohne et al. (2000).

Empirical Review

Coping with Academic Challenges and Resilience

In a study with Mexican American college students, Garcia-Vazquez, Vazquez, and Huang (1998) found that students used active coping when faced with challenges. Of the nine possible coping responses from which students could choose, the two most supported responses were taking a planned action (i.e., proactive) and talking with friends (i.e., seeking support), while two others, that is, drawing on past experiences and seeking assistance from a professional counsellor, were among the least supported. In another study with Latina college students, Gloria, Castellanos, and Orozco (2005) found that a planned action was used by most participants, while two of the least supported coping responses included seeking professional help from a counsellor and not worrying about a stressful situation. In addition, Edwards and Romero (2008) found that Mexican American youth used active coping responses when faced with discriminatory experiences in an academic setting. Although research has provided insight into undergraduate student's coping responses, most studies have been quantitative, thereby forcing participants to answer from a predetermined set of responses. A qualitative research design may augment the existing literature base by allowing Latina/o students to elaborate on the

coping responses that they use to overcome challenges. As noted by Gloria et al. (2005), “In addition, to using standardized measures of coping responses that are circumscribed, allowing students to identify their coping systems and responses and differentiating types of coping responses is warranted” (p. 178).

In higher education, research indicates that students use various coping responses to manage stressful situations. In their study with minority college students, Phinney and Haas (2003) identified five coping responses and the number of times each response was used to overcome stressful situations during an academic semester: (a) proactive, 45; (b) seek support, 23; (c) distancing/avoidance, 8; (d) acceptance, 7; and (e) positive reframing, 2. First, a proactive approach includes activities that are designed to solve problems. For example, if a student is faced with an academic crisis, he or she takes specific action to solve the problem. Second, seeking support is the desire to resolve the matter by including others, such as friends or teachers. These individuals may provide support via comfort and/or encouragement. Third, distancing/avoidance involve either neglecting the problem to relax or neglecting the problem with the intent of forgetting it. Fourth, acceptance involves dealing with the fact that the problem is part of life. This coping response acknowledges that some events are beyond one’s control. Finally, positive reframing refers to an optimistic mentality and self-belief that one will overcome an obstacle (Phinney & Haas, 2003).

Another study was conducted by Stephen & Kwadwo, (1997) to investigate if students of the Winneba Campus of UEW (University of Education, Winneba Ghana), have appropriate strategies to cope with stress. Four hundred students who were selected based on stratified random sampling technique from all the departments at the Winneba Campus of the university were involved in the study. The questionnaire which was adapted to suit the study environment

was pre-tested at the University of Cape Coast. The results of the study showed that among the ten strategies used, “active coping” and “positive reinterpretation and growth” were the two most predominant for problem-focused and emotion-focused styles of coping respectively. The study also indicated that students of the Winneba Campus of UEW used more of emotion-focused strategies than problem-focused strategies in managing stress. Among the recommendations is that the Counselling Unit of UEW should strengthen its services by having social support groups that consist of lecturers and students, so that supportive skills, such as talking and sharing, can be developed and students may then become very comfortable to let out their feelings.

Several studies have found a relationship between stress and poor academic performance (Clark & Ricker, 1986; Linn & Zeppa, 1984; Struthers, Perry & Menec, 2000). Blumberg and Flaherty (1985) found an inverse relationship between academic performance and self reported stress level. In a similar study, Struthers et al., (2000) found that a high level of academic stress was associated with lower academic results. Students experience high levels of stress due to assignments, time pressure, exam pressure and result pressure. This shows stress has a negative effect on students’ academic performance.

The beliefs that students develop about their academic capabilities help determine what they do with the knowledge and skills they have learned. Consequently, their academic performances are in part the result of what they come to believe that they have accomplished and can accomplish. This helps explain why students' academic performances may differ markedly when they have similar ability. Researchers have suggested that these self-beliefs may play a key role in relation to cognitive engagement and that enhancing them might lead to increased use of cognitive strategies that, in turn, lead to improve performance (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

Frazier and Schauben (1994) used the Psychological Distress Inventory to obtain information regarding stress experienced by a group of female college students. The researchers found that female college students experienced stress related to financial problems, test pressure, failing a test, rejection from someone, dissolution of relationships, depression and feelings of low self-esteem. On the contrary, Ross et al. (1999) conducted a study on college students of both genders and found a different set of stressors that were common among all college students; those experiences associated with stress included a change in eating and sleeping habits, new responsibilities, heavier workloads and breaks. Similarly, Phinney and Haas (2003) reported a unique set of stressful experiences among ethnic minority, first generation 'college freshmen'. More specifically, sources of stress included difficult financial challenges, domestic responsibilities, responsibilities related to holding a job while in school, and a heavy academic load. Also, the ethnic minority 'college freshmen' experienced stressors such as conflicts in time management, pressure associated with their academic workload and problems within their family (Phinney & Haas, 2003).

Coping with Academic Challenges and Gender

Research on impact of gender on resilience has not been consistent in all studies. In their research, Conner and Davidson observed no group differences in gender. Conversely, Lees undertook a study on the impact of resilience on the academic achievement of at-risk students in the upward bound program in Georgia; USA. The results indicated group differences in gender, where the females were reported as more resilient than the males.

McCarthy (2014) investigated the role of resilience in the performance of managers. In this study 'performance' is understood to be individual and separate from the concepts of productivity and effectiveness either in a job context or as an indicator of career success. The study supported the

inclusion of resilience and resilient behaviour as important components of increased performance in managers. The results demonstrate that higher levels of resilient behaviour are strongly associated with better management of challenges where as lower levels of resilient behaviour are associated with poor management of critical incidents directly impacted their performance in the workplace.

Less (2009) has sought to examine the relationship resilience has with coping, engagement, and life satisfaction. Data was collected via a survey that included standard measures for the variable of interest and two open-ended questions targeting sources of stress and sources of satisfaction. Findings show a positive relationship between resilience and task- focused coping, engagement, and life satisfaction. No relationship was between resilience and maladaptive coping or social support.

A current study by Thorne (2015) exploring resilience and individual differences, result indicated significant positive relationship between resilience and optimism. Min and Yun (2015) investigated the influences of high school students' spirituality and resilience on their career attitude maturity and found a significant correlation between resilience and career attitude maturity.

A cross sectional population based study by Edwin explored the effect of age and gender on resilience and protective factors for mental health in primary school aged children in Brisbane, Australia. Surveys were administered to 1109 male and 1163 female students (n=2492). The study assessed self perception of resilience and associated protective factors. Female students were found to be more likely to report higher levels of communication, empathy, help-seeking and goals for future and aspirations. They also reported more positive connections with parents,

teachers and adults in the community, peers in school and outside school, as well as sense of autonomy experience.

A study by Morales explored gender differences in academic resilience of 31 female and 19 male low socio-economic college students of color. The findings indicated that statistically significant differences were found among males and females in academic resilience, in favour of females. This was similar to the findings of Shehu and Mokgwathi . They carried out a descriptive case control design that compared internal resilience factors and health locus of control between physical education and non-physical education students exposed to other elective subjects, who were termed as the controls or referents (N = 1700). The sample was drawn from the central and south regions of Botswana. Females were 52% while males constituted 48% of the sample. Girls in this study reported higher resilience than males. This finding was consistent with earlier research indicating gender differences in locus of control. This may imply that girls have a higher capacity than boys due to socialization patterns that may engender differential socio-emotional development and relations with peers and adults.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review of this study examined both theoretical and empirical propositions and findings. The major theories as regard to the dependent variable of interest are Trait oriented approaches versus State oriented approaches, Micro-analytic versus Macro-analytic. The trait-oriented (or dispositional) strategy aims at early identification of individuals whose coping resources and tendencies are inadequate for the demands of a specific stressful encounter. Research that is trait oriented, i.e., which centres on actual coping, has a more general objective. This research investigates the relationships between coping strategies employed by an individual and out-come variables such as self-reported or objectively registered coping efficiency,

emotional reactions accompanying and following certain coping efforts, or variables of adaptational outcome (e.g., health status or test performance). Micro analytic approaches focus on a large number of specific coping strategies, whereas macro-analytic analysis operates at a higher level of abstraction, thus concentrating on more fundamental constructs. Micro-analytic trait oriented coping theories was reviewed with highlights on various constructs which tend to explain more fundamental constructs of coping that can also be used to explain coping among university undergraduates. These approaches were Repression and Sensitization, Monitoring and Blunting. Few theories on resilience were the principles postulated by Rutter (2013), Masten (2009) and Werner (1989). One of the principles Rutter adheres to is that resilience is not related to individual psychological traits or superior functioning, but rather it is an ordinary adaptation given the right resources.

The results of the study showed that among the ten strategies used, “active coping” and “positive reinterpretation and growth” were the two most predominant for problem-focused and emotion-focused styles of coping respectively. The study also indicated that students of the Winneba Campus of UEW used more of emotion-focused strategies than problem-focused strategies in managing stress. Previous researches have been conducted examining differently Resilience and gender on coping with academic stress and different coping strategies: others have also treated such together but in a different geographical context. This study tend to compare previous findings related to this problem from a Nigerian student perspective considering our environmental factors while paying less attention to existing coping strategies and creating an avenue to discover more.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. Resilience would not significantly predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.
2. Gender would not significantly predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

Participants

Four hundred (380) University Undergraduates 185 males and 195 females participated in the study. The participants' age ranged from 18 years to 35 years with mean age of 26.5 years. Participants were drawn from University of Nigeria Nsukka Undergraduates using probability sampling method.

Instruments

Two instruments were used for the study, they included: Resilience Scale by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Toole, Christopher & Bernard, 2008 and Stress Coping style Inventory by Ying Min Lin & Farn Shin Cheng (2010)

Brief Resilience Scale

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) was developed by Smith, Dalen, Wiggins, Toole, Christopher and Bernard (2008) to assess an individual's ability to bounce back or recover from stress or adapt to stressful circumstances and cope with adversity or competitive event. The scale consists of six items; out of which 1, 3 and 5 are positively worded. The BRS is scored reverse coding items 2, 4, and 6. It is a 5 – point response format ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample of the BRS include; “I tend to bounce back quickly after hard time”, “I have hard time making it through stressful events”, “it is hard for me to snap back when something happens”. Items “I have a hard time making it through stressful events”, “it is hard for me to snap back when something happens” and “ I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks

in my life” will be reverse scored while items “I tend to bounce back quickly after times”, “it does not take me long to recover from stressful events” and “ I usually come through difficult times with little trouble” will be scored directly. The scale has items total coefficients ranging from .68 to .90, while its Cronbach alpha ranges from .84 to .91 as reported by the developers. Nwankwo (2016) validated the scale in Nigeria and reported a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .80 pilot study using 100 participants of undergraduates yielded a Cronbach alpha of .87. Pilot study using 80 participants from the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus was conducted with the scale and the result yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of .71

The Stress Coping Inventory

The scale was developed to assess the coping style of students of universities and college of technology. The SCI is divided into four factors, with a total of 28 items. Likert’s five-point scale was used, ranging from 5 completely agree to 1 completely disagree. The higher the points achieved in each factor represented, the higher is the rate of this coping style used. On the other hand, the lower the points represented, the lower is the type of coping style used. Sample of the item of the SCI includes; “I try to do or think some things that will make me feel happier, and allow myself to relax”, “I try to adjust my mindset and allow myself to be happier”, “I consider it to be a type of self –challenge., “I do not give up when I argue with my friends”, “I blame myself, retreat or shun myself away when I face stress. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the overall 28 item stress coping style inventory is .83. Pilot study using 80 participants from the University of Nigeria Enugu Campus was conducted with the scale and the result yielded a Cronbach’s alpha of .83

Procedure

The instruments were distributed to the participants who would have given their consent of participation having explained the purpose of the study. The instruments were collected from the participants immediately after proper completion. Those instruments that are properly filled were used for data analysis. Four hundred (400) questionnaire was distributed, three eighty five (385) was recovered, five (5) were improperly filled; three hundred and eighty (380) was used for the study with a recovery rate of 95%.

Design/Statistic

The study employed a cross sectional design and linear regression statistics was used for data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1 CWAC	92.50	8.55	1.00											
2 Marital_Sta	1.09	.29	-.19**	1.00										
3 Yr_of_Study	2.37	1.11	.04	-.04	1.00									
4 Ethnicity	1.74	1.10	-.23**	.28**	-.32**	1.00								
5 Religion	1.41	.70	-.08	.05	-.35**	.38**	1.00							
6 PELevel	3.34	1.17	-.06	.13**	-.17**	.22**	.11*	1.00						
7 Locality	2.14	.84	.32**	.13**	.27**	-.18**	-.29**	-.07	1.00					
8 Family_Apt	3.64	1.23	.03	-.05	.26**	-.12*	-.19**	.03	.23**	1.00				
9 OOFRB	1.55	.67	-.08	.11*	.05	.32**	.22**	.04	.12**	.03	1.00			
10 SOFH	3.48	.66	.07	.06	.29**	.01	-.10*	.11*	.15**	.07	.38**	1.00		
11 Resilience	17.49	2.55	-.04	-.09*	-.08	-.16**	-.27**	-.05	-.00	-.08	-.20**	-.08	1.00	
12 Gender	1.34	.47	.04	.16**	-.04	-.04	.06**	.18**	.11*	.05	-.11*	-.03	.16**	1.00

* $p, .05$, ** $p, .01$, $N=380$. The measures are all in a likert response options such that a higher score represented greater strength of that construct. CWAC= Coping with Academic Challenge; Family_Apt= family apartment; PE Level=parental education level; OOFRB= ownership of family residential building; SOFH= source of family health.

Results of correlation in Table 1 showed that marital status ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$) and ethnicity ($r = -.23$, $p < .01$) negatively correlated with coping with academic challenges. Locality ($r = .32$, $p < .01$) correlated with coping with academic challenge. Year of study, religion, parents educational level, family apartment, ownership of family residential building, source of family health, resilience and gender did not correlate with coping with academic challenge. However, the results also illustrated a number of other (negative) correlations among the variables.

Table 2: Regression analysis of coping with academic challenges.

Variables	MODEL 1				MODEL 2				MODEL 3			
	B	SE	Beta	t	B	SE	Beta	t	B	SE	Beta	t
CWAC												
Marital Status	-5.72	1.46	-.19	-3.93**	-5.86	1.45	-.20	-4.04**	-6.30	1.47	-.21	-4.29**
Yr_of_Study	-.88	.42	-.11	-2.09*	-1.01	.43	-.13	-2.37*	-.93	.43	-.12	-2.18*
Ethnicity	-1.51	.44	-.19	-3.42**	-1.55	.44	-.20	-3.52**	-1.47	.44	-.19	-3.34**
Religion	1.21	.66	.10	1.84	.80	.69	.07	1.16	1.19	.72	.10	1.65
PELevel	-.03	.36	-.00	-.07**	-.04	.36	-.01	-.10	-.18	.36	-.02	-.49
Locality	3.82	.52	.38	7.30	3.80	.52	.38	7.27**	3.80	.52	.38	7.30**
Family_Aprt	-.31	.32	-.05	-.96	-.37	.33	-.07	-1.14	-.38	.32	-.06	-1.17
OOFRB	-1.25	.70	-.10	-1.78	-1.34	.70	-.11	-1.92	-1.68	.72	-.13	-2.32*
SOFH	1.36	.69	.11	1.96*	1.33	.69	.10	1.93	1.52	.69	.12	2.19*
Resilience					-.32	.17	-.10	-1.93	-.36	.17	-.12	-2.11*
Gender									1.67	.93	.09	1.79

* $p, .05$, ** $p, .01$, $N=380$. The measures are all in a likert response options such that a higher score represented greater strength of that construct. CWAC= Coping with Academic Challenge; Family_Aprt= family apartment; PE Level=parental education level; OOFRB= ownership of family residential building; SOFH= source of family health. $\Delta R^2=.21$, $F(9, 369)=11.03$, $p < .001$; $\Delta R^2=.01$, $F(1, 368)=3.72$; $\Delta R^2=.01$, $F(1, 367)=3.23$ for models 1,2 and 3 respectively

The results of Table 2 showed that when the demographic variables (marital status, year of study, ethnicity, religion, parental educational level, locality, family apartment, ownership of family residential building and source of family health) were included, they were able to contribute a significant 21% variance ($\Delta R^2=.21$, $F(9, 369)=11.03$, $p < .001$) to the prediction of coping with academic challenges as shown in Model 1. When resilience was added in Model 2, it was unable to account for any significant variance to the prediction of coping with academic challenges ($\Delta R^2=.01$, $F(1, 368)=3.72$). Similarly, gender did not significantly contribute towards the prediction of coping with academic challenges ($\Delta R^2=.01$, $F(1, 367)=3.23$).

Summary of Major Findings

Resilience did not predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

Gender was not also a significant predictor of coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The study examined the role of resilience and gender on coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates and in effect two hypotheses were tested. The findings indicated that resilience did not predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates. The first hypothesis which stated that resilience would not significantly predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates was supported. Resilience simply put is the ability to bounce back from some real, experienced adversity. In other words, it refers to an individual's utilization of inner strengths and outer resources in order to overcome seriously adverse, even traumatic, circumstances and still continue to pursue and succeed in one's endeavour. It is a multi-determined attribute and varies according to personal hardiness and social support, as well as the nature and degree of the imposed hardship or impediment. A number of reasons could have accounted for the result of the present study. They include; Lack of cogent resources to leverage on to facilitate quick resilience process; the presence of heavier and more demanding academic engagement, abject poverty, deprivation and stress on families, making coping more difficult, and diminishing opportunities for personal growth, family dysfunction/discord/upheaval imposes an environmental chaos and instability on undergraduates who benefit most from stability predictability, and nurturance. Parental psychopathology if untreated or managed, has been shown to affect offspring in two ways either genetic vulnerability, or by adding to chaos and turmoil (Li 2008). . Inadequate/poor schools can also make up for the psychosocial deficits elsewhere in a child's life. Absence of mentors and models which serves as a source of inspiration for student might result to lack of inspiration, guidance and counsel for the individual. Inconsistencies in the educational system and functionalities can also be one of

the causes for which resilience could not predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

The result is however consistent with the findings of Blumberg and Flaherty (1985), and, Struthers et al., (2000). That students experience high levels of stress due to assignments, time pressure, exam pressure and result pressure. This shows that stress from heavier and more demanding academic engagement affects resilience which reflects on students' academic performance. This finding also support the further investigation of the five coping styles postulated by Phinney and Haas (2003) which are proactively facing the problems, support seeking, distancing /from the problem to either neglect or forget them.

The second hypothesis which stated that gender would not significantly predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates was supported. It indicated that gender did not predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates. This means that being an undergraduate male or female student did not guarantee that he/she would cope with academic challenges better than the other. In essence, both males and females are expected to have equal coping academic ability.

This finding contradicts the works of Lees (1997) and Morales (1996). The result indicated group differences in gender, where females were reported to be more resilient than males. Li (2008) found that males had higher rates of resilience to academic challenges. Some studies have found that females have greater difficulties adjusting to university life (Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin, & Uli, 2009). Howell (2004) reported that women have many dispositional barriers in the academic setting, including a lack of self confidence and poor self esteem.

Implications of the Findings

The study which investigated the role of resilience and gender on coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates has some implications. The first is that bouncing

back from adversities or real harsh life experiences does not guarantee coping with the challenges surrounding academics. This further implies that the recovery process, availability of resources to leverage on and the experience will always play a role in coping with academic challenges of a university undergraduate.

The study also brings out that gender does not necessarily predict coping with academic challenges. So that one is a males or female does not guarantee that one will cope better in front of challenges surrounding academics.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations encountered during the course of the study includes; the issue of trust from the respondents responding honestly to the research instruments and difficulty in completing the questionnaires.

Another limitation of this study is that the respondents were not given an option to identify specific coping styles which they personally use while facing academic challenges. The study was somewhat limited to only a specific population and not generally all students.

Recommendations for further Studies

A larger sample size that will encompass different schools, disciplines and those in secondary schools should be used in order to boost the generalizability of the findings. Also, other findings can investigate the relationships of other related variables such as personality, poverty, low self esteem, emotional intelligence on coping with academic challenges of university undergraduate.

Summary and Conclusion

This research work was aimed at examining whether resilience and gender would predict coping with academic challenges among university undergraduates.

Theoretical framework for the study was built on the Macro-analytic theory, Trait-Oriented theory, Variable and Person focused approaches. These theories formed the basis for the current study. Two hypotheses were proposed. The participants were 380 undergraduates drawn from University of Nigeria Nsukka, consisted of 185 (48.6%) males and 195 (51.4%) females who age range from 18- 35 years with mean age of 26.6 years. The instruments used were 6 items questionnaire (BRS) measuring resilience and, a 28 items questionnaire (SCIS) measuring stress coping among students. The study employed a cross sectional design and linear regression statistics for data analysis. The result showed that both resilience and gender did not significantly predict coping with academic challenges. Implications, limitations and recommendations for further research were made.

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Faculty of the Social Sciences
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Dear Respondent,

I am a student from the above mentioned university and department; conducting a research as a requirement for the award of a B.Sc in Psychology. Please read the information contained in each of the sections carefully and respond to them as they apply to you appropriately. Please note that there is no right or wrong answer and therefore endeavour to respond honestly.

Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Soronnadi Victor Onyemaechi.

Personal data

Please sign here _____ to indicate that you will fully consent to participate in the study

Gender: Male [] Female [] Age [] Marital Status _____ Year of study _____

Ethnicity: Igbo [] Yoruba [] Hausa [] Others [] Religion _____

Parental Educational qualification: FSLC [] WASSCE [] OND [] NCE [] HND [] BSC []
MSC [] PHD []

Socio-Economic Status:

INSTRUCTION: Indicate to what extent of the following statements describe you by ticking the number that corresponds to how you feel.

Resilience Scale (Brief Resilience Scale)

Strongly Disagree **Disagree** **Neutral** **Agree** **Strongly Agree**

1 **2** **3** **4** **5**

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.					

2	I have a hard time making it through stressful event.					
3	It does not take me long to recover from a stressful Event.					
4	It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.					
5	I usually come through difficult times with little Trouble.					
6	I tend to take a long time to get over set-backs in my life.					

SCSI

Please read the following statements: To the right of each you will find five numbers, ranging from “5” completely agree to “1” completely disagree. Tick the below number which best indicates your feelings about how you cope with academic stress. Note that your complete honesty is highly needed.

**Strongly Agree
disagree**

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly

5

4

3

2

1

S/N	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	I try to do or think of some things that will make me feel happier, and allow myself to relax.					
2	I try to adjust my mindset and allow myself to be happier.					
3	I talk with classmates or friends, or disclose to my online friends.					
4	I let myself calm down first and think of how to reconcile the negative emotions.					
5	I eat and have fun to decrease the stress first.					
6	I consider it to be a type of self-challenge.					
7	I do usual things such as watching TV, reading comics, listening to music, sleeping, eating or going out to temporarily forget these frustrating things.					
8	I tell myself to persevere.					
9	I give up and blame God for being unfair when I face stress.					

		5	4	3	2	1
10	I make my friends uncomfortable when they provoke me when I am feeling down.					
11	I do not give in when I argue with my friends.					
12	I put my anger or fretful emotions on others.					
13	I blame myself, retreat or shut myself away when I face stress.					
14	I generalise that I have bad luck when I face stress.					
15	I search and look for related data from the library or the Internet to do my home work.					
16	I discuss issues with teachers, family, seniors or friends and classmates and ask for their opinions.					
17	When I encounter conflicts in my academic study and activities, I will first arrange and plan.					
18	I simplify the question and make it easy to solve					
19	I use a calm and optimistic attitude to think about how to cope With the problem.					
20	I stay up finishing my homework until midnight.					
21	I leave aside the problem first.					
22	I passively let nature take its course.					
23	I am used to leaving aside the problem and not handling it for the time being					
24	I decrease my standards and try again with new standards.					
25	I look for religious hope or comfort for my soul.					
26	The numbers of classes I bunk are becoming more and more					
27	I make myself numb by drinking alcohol or drug abuse. I leave the problem aside.					
28	I study the subjects I like better when I am in class I do not like.					