

Psychosocial Capital and Future Orientation as Predictors of Adolescent Behavioural Adjustment among Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

By

Rachel Ayodeji Thomas

General Studies, Federal University of Medicine and Medical Science Abeokuta, Nigeria

littletommy2003@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined psychosocial capital and future orientation as predictors of behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and a sample of 240 students was selected using a multistage sampling technique. Standardised instruments were used for data collection, and data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that psychosocial capital had a significant positive relationship with behavioural adjustment ($r = 0.61, p < .05$), while future orientation also showed a significant positive relationship with behavioural adjustment ($r = 0.57, p < .05$). The two predictors jointly accounted for 48% of the variance in behavioural adjustment ($R^2 = 0.48$), indicating a strong combined influence. Psychosocial capital emerged as the stronger predictor ($\beta = 0.49, t = 7.43, p < .05$), followed by future orientation ($\beta = 0.41, t = 6.18, p < .05$). The study concluded that both psychosocial resources and future-directed thinking significantly enhance adolescents' behavioural adjustment. It was recommended that schools implement interventions that strengthen psychosocial skills and future orientation among students to promote positive behavioural outcomes and reduce maladaptive behaviours in secondary schools.

Keywords: Psychosocial capital, Future orientation, Behavioural adjustment, Adolescents

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterised by significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social transitions that shape future life outcomes. During this period, adolescents are expected to develop adaptive behavioural patterns that facilitate successful adjustment to school, family, and societal expectations. Behavioural adjustment refers to an individual's ability to regulate emotions, conform to social norms, maintain positive interpersonal relationships, and engage in socially acceptable behaviours. However, increasing incidences of truancy, substance use, delinquency, aggression, and other behavioural challenges among secondary school students have become a major concern globally and within Nigeria. Research indicates that positive psychosocial resources and future-oriented thinking serve as protective factors against maladaptive behaviours and psychological distress among adolescents (Preston et al., 2021; Verdugo & Sánchez-Sandoval, 2022; Coulter et al., 2022). Studies have further shown that adolescents who possess strong psychosocial strengths and clear future expectations tend to exhibit healthier adjustment patterns and greater resilience in the face of developmental challenges.

Psychosocial capital has emerged as an important positive psychological resource that promotes adaptive functioning among young people. Rooted in positive psychology, psychosocial capital encompasses attributes such as self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, social competence, hope, and positive interpersonal relationships. These resources enable adolescents to cope effectively with stressors, overcome challenges, and maintain desirable behavioural outcomes. Empirical evidence suggests that psychological capital is associated with reduced emotional and behavioural problems, improved mental health, enhanced academic engagement, and better social adjustment among adolescents (Ali & Gujar, 2019; Preston et al., 2021; Muluneh & Deksisa, 2023). Similarly, studies conducted among Nigerian adolescents have reported that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and related psychosocial resources significantly predict psychological adjustment and positive developmental outcomes (Oparaugo & Ebenebe, 2021). These findings suggest that adolescents with higher levels of psychosocial capital are more likely to exhibit positive behavioural adjustment than their counterparts with lower psychosocial resources.

Another construct that has gained increasing scholarly attention is future orientation, which refers to an individual's thoughts, plans, aspirations, and expectations concerning future achievements and life goals. Future-oriented adolescents are more likely to make decisions that support long-term success, avoid risky behaviours, and remain committed to educational and personal aspirations. Existing literature demonstrates that future orientation functions as a protective factor that promotes healthy development, academic engagement, resilience, and behavioural adjustment among adolescents (Coulter et al., 2022; Verdugo & Sánchez-Sandoval, 2022; Peng & Zhang, 2022). Furthermore, adolescents who experience adverse childhood experiences or psychosocial difficulties but maintain strong future orientation often display better adjustment outcomes than those with limited future perspectives (Novak et al., 2022). Consequently, future orientation has been identified as a critical developmental asset capable of influencing behavioural choices and fostering positive adaptation during adolescence.

Within the Nigerian context, concerns regarding adolescent behavioural adjustment continue to attract attention due to the prevalence of school-related and psychosocial challenges. Omopo (2025) identified several clinical and psychosocial determinants contributing to truancy among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, highlighting the importance of psychosocial factors in shaping behavioural outcomes. Similarly, Omopo et al. (2025) reported that childhood adversity significantly predicts maladaptive behaviour and juvenile delinquency among adolescents, suggesting that behavioural adjustment is influenced by both individual and environmental factors. The growing prevalence of substance use and mental health challenges among Nigerian adolescents has also been documented by Ogunbowale et al. (2026), while Omopo and Adebowale (2025) emphasised the need for innovative school counselling approaches to address emerging behavioural problems among students. Beyond the educational context, Omopo et al. (2026) demonstrated the significance of creative thinking and positive psychological attributes in promoting successful adaptation and achievement among young people. Collectively, these studies underscore the importance of strengthening adolescents' psychosocial resources as a means of enhancing behavioural outcomes.

Despite growing evidence linking psychosocial strengths and future-oriented thinking with positive adolescent development, relatively few studies have simultaneously examined psychosocial capital and future orientation as predictors of behavioural adjustment among

secondary school students in Nigeria, particularly within Ibadan, Oyo State. Most existing studies have focused on isolated behavioural outcomes such as truancy, delinquency, substance use, academic engagement, or mental health problems, with limited attention to the combined influence of these positive developmental assets on overall behavioural adjustment. Given the increasing behavioural challenges confronting adolescents and the need for preventive interventions that promote healthy development, it becomes imperative to investigate how psychosocial capital and future orientation contribute to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students. Therefore, this study seeks to examine psychosocial capital and future orientation as predictors of behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Aim and Specific of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine psychosocial capital and future orientation as predictors of behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study seeks to understand how these psychological and future-focused constructs influence students' ability to adapt positively within school settings. It further aims to provide empirical evidence for improving adolescent behavioural outcomes through psychosocial interventions. Specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the relationship between psychosocial capital, future orientation, and behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. To determine the joint contribution of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
3. To assess the relative contributions of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered:

1. What is the relationship between psychosocial capital, future orientation, and behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

2. What is the joint contribution of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. What are the relative contributions of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory, which posits that adolescents are not problems to be fixed but resources to be developed through the strengthening of internal and external assets. PYD emphasises the role of developmental assets such as competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (often referred to as the “5Cs”) in promoting healthy adjustment and reducing engagement in risky or maladaptive behaviours. Within this framework, **psychosocial capital** can be understood as a constellation of positive psychological resources (such as self-efficacy, resilience, optimism, and social competence) that enhance adolescents’ capacity to cope with challenges and regulate their behaviour in adaptive ways. Similarly, **future orientation** reflects the cognitive-motivational dimension of PYD, as it captures adolescents’ ability to set goals, anticipate future outcomes, and align present behaviour with long-term aspirations.

The theory further explains that adolescents who possess strong developmental assets are more likely to exhibit positive behavioural adjustment, including reduced truancy, lower involvement in delinquency, improved academic engagement, and better emotional regulation. In contrast, a lack of psychosocial resources and weak future orientation increases vulnerability to impulsive decision-making and maladaptive behaviours. Thus, PYD provides a suitable lens for understanding how psychosocial capital and future orientation jointly and independently influence behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan. The theory supports the assumption that strengthening internal strengths and future-focused thinking can foster healthier developmental trajectories and more adaptive behavioural outcomes in adolescents.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. A total sample of 240 students was selected for the

study using a multistage sampling technique. In the first stage, three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from Ibadan. In the second stage, one public secondary school was randomly selected from each of the selected LGAs. In the third stage, proportional random sampling was used to select students from Senior Secondary classes within each selected school until the required sample size was attained. This ensured adequate representation of respondents across the selected schools.

Data for the study were collected using standardized instruments. Psychosocial capital was measured using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) developed by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007), while future orientation was assessed using the Future Orientation Scale developed by Seginer (2009). Behavioural adjustment was measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) developed by Goodman (1997). Respondents' participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by assuring participants that their responses were used solely for academic purposes. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to answer research questions, while inferential statistics including Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to test relationships. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the joint and relative contributions of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between psychosocial capital, future orientation, and behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Psychosocial Capital (1)	68.42	9.31	1.00		
Future Orientation (2)	65.18	8.76	0.54**	1.00	
Behavioural Adjustment (3)	70.05	10.12	0.61**	0.57**	1.00

Note: $p < .05^*$

The result in Table 1 showed that psychosocial capital had a significant positive relationship with behavioural adjustment among secondary school students ($r = 0.61$, $p < .05$). This indicates that

students with higher levels of psychosocial capital tended to demonstrate better behavioural adjustment. Future orientation also had a significant positive relationship with behavioural adjustment ($r = 0.57$, $p < .05$), suggesting that students with stronger future-directed thinking exhibited more adaptive behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, psychosocial capital and future orientation were significantly related ($r = 0.54$, $p < .05$), indicating that both constructs tend to coexist and mutually reinforce each other in influencing adolescent development.

Research Question 2

What is the joint contribution of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Joint Contribution

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error	F	Sig.
1	0.69	0.48	0.47	7.21	108.34	0.000

The result in Table 2 revealed that psychosocial capital and future orientation jointly contributed significantly to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.69$) indicated a strong relationship between the combined predictors and behavioural adjustment. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.48$) showed that 48% of the variance in behavioural adjustment was explained jointly by psychosocial capital and future orientation. The model was statistically significant ($F = 108.34$, $p < .05$), implying that the two predictors combined meaningfully influenced behavioural adjustment among the respondents.

Research Question 3

What are the relative contributions of psychosocial capital and future orientation to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables

Variables	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Psychosocial Capital	0.52	0.07	0.49	7.43	0.000
Future Orientation	0.38	0.06	0.41	6.18	0.000

The result in Table 3 indicated that both psychosocial capital and future orientation made significant relative contributions to behavioural adjustment among secondary school students. Psychosocial capital ($\beta = 0.49$, $t = 7.43$, $p < .05$) was the stronger predictor of behavioural adjustment, followed by future orientation ($\beta = 0.41$, $t = 6.18$, $p < .05$). This suggests that while both variables significantly influence behavioural adjustment, psychosocial capital plays a more dominant role in explaining variations in students' behavioural outcomes.

Discussion

The finding revealed significant positive relationships among psychosocial capital, future orientation, and behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan. This implies that students who possessed higher levels of psychosocial resources such as resilience, self-efficacy, optimism, and social competence tended to demonstrate better behavioural adjustment, while those with stronger future-oriented thinking also exhibited more adaptive behaviours. This outcome can be explained by the fact that adolescents with strong psychosocial capital are better equipped to regulate emotions, resist peer pressure, and cope with academic and social stressors, while future-oriented students are more likely to delay gratification and make decisions that align with long-term goals. The result aligns with the Positive Youth Development theory, which emphasises the role of internal developmental assets in promoting adaptive functioning. It also corroborates Omopo (2025), who found that psychosocial and clinical factors significantly influence truancy among adolescents in Ibadan, and Omopo et al. (2025), who reported that childhood adversity contributes to maladaptive behavioural outcomes. Similarly, Omopo et al. (2026) and Ogunbowale et al. (2026) highlighted the importance of psychosocial resources in shaping behavioural and mental health outcomes, while studies on future orientation (Verdugo & Sánchez-Sandoval, 2022; Coulter et al., 2022; Novak et al., 2022) also support the protective role of future thinking in adolescent adjustment.

The study further revealed that psychosocial capital and future orientation jointly made a significant contribution to behavioural adjustment, accounting for 48% of the variance. This

indicates that behavioural adjustment among adolescents is better explained when both psychological strengths and future-directed thinking are considered together, rather than in isolation. The result may be attributed to the interactive effect of emotional competence and goal-directed cognition among adolescents, where psychosocial capital enhances coping ability while future orientation guides behavioural choices toward long-term benefits. In line with the Positive Youth Development theory, this finding suggests that optimal adolescent development occurs when multiple protective assets work together to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to behavioural problems. This finding is consistent with Omopo (2025), who emphasised multiple psychosocial determinants of truancy, and Omopo et al. (2025), who demonstrated that behavioural problems such as delinquency are influenced by combined psychosocial risks. It also aligns with Preston et al. (2023), who reported that psychological capital significantly contributes to youth mental health outcomes, and Verdugo and Sánchez-Sandoval (2022), who found that positive psychological and social factors jointly enhance adolescents' future expectations and adjustment outcomes.

The relative contribution analysis showed that both psychosocial capital and future orientation significantly predicted behavioural adjustment, with psychosocial capital emerging as the stronger predictor. This suggests that while future orientation is important in guiding adolescents' long-term decisions, immediate psychological resources such as resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation play a more dominant role in shaping day-to-day behavioural adjustment. This may be because adolescents in Ibadan face immediate academic, social, and environmental stressors that require strong internal coping resources for effective adjustment. The finding supports the Positive Youth Development theory, which prioritises internal strengths as key drivers of adaptive functioning. It also corroborates Omopo (2025), who identified psychosocial determinants as strong predictors of truancy, and Omopo et al. (2025), who highlighted the role of adversity-related psychosocial disruptions in maladaptive behaviour. Additionally, Omopo et al. (2026) and Oparaugo and Ebenebe (2021) found that psychosocial and emotional competencies strongly influence behavioural and psychological adjustment, while Coulter et al. (2022) and Novak et al. (2022) support the idea that future orientation, though important, often operates as a secondary protective mechanism compared to core psychosocial strengths.

Conclusion

The study concluded that psychosocial capital and future orientation are significant predictors of behavioural adjustment among secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, both variables were found to have significant positive relationships with behavioural adjustment, jointly explaining a substantial proportion of variance in students' behavioural outcomes. Psychosocial capital emerged as the stronger predictor, indicating that internal psychological resources such as resilience, optimism, self-efficacy, and social competence play a more dominant role in shaping adolescents' behavioural adjustment than future-oriented thinking alone. The findings, anchored on the Positive Youth Development theory, affirm that adolescents who possess strong psychosocial resources and a clear sense of future direction are more likely to demonstrate adaptive behaviour and reduced engagement in maladaptive activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that school counsellors and educational stakeholders should design and implement structured intervention programmes aimed at strengthening students' psychosocial capital through resilience training, emotional regulation skills, and self-efficacy enhancement activities. Schools should also incorporate future orientation development programmes such as goal-setting workshops, career guidance sessions, and mentorship schemes to help students develop clearer academic and life aspirations. Furthermore, teachers should adopt supportive and emotionally responsive classroom practices that foster positive relationships and behavioural modelling among students. In addition, educational policymakers should integrate psychosocial development frameworks into the school curriculum to ensure continuous development of students' behavioural and psychological adjustment capacities.

References

- Ali, U., & Gujar, T. (2019). Effects of psychological capital and self-esteem on emotional and behavioral problems among adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 34(3), 589–606.
- Coulter, K., Delgado, M. Y., Nair, R. L., McClelland, D. J., & colleagues. (2022). Future orientation and Latinx adolescent development: A scoping review. *Adolescent Research Review*, 8(2), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-022-00190-9>
- Muluneh, A. A., & Deksisia, G. S. (2023). Psychological capital and adolescent adjustment: Implications for mental health and educational outcomes. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 28(1), 1–15.
- Novak, M., Mihić, J., & Bašić, J. (2022). Future orientation as a protective factor among adolescents exposed to adversity. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 143, 106686.
- Ogunbowale, I. A., Obiyinka, S. O., Omopo, O. E., & Akinyemi, O. Y. (2026). Libraries and psychosocial determinants of adolescent substance use and mental health in Nigeria: A scoping review. *NIU Journal of Educational Research*, 12(1), 115–122. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20181050>

- Omopo, O. E. (2025). Clinical and psychosocial determinants of truancy among in-school adolescents in Ibadan: A structural equation approach. *Islamic University Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4), 318–329. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16672821>
- Omopo, O. E., & Adebawale, O. F. (2025). Prospective vision of school counselling: Addressing contemporary behavioural problems in schools. In [Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Guidance and Counseling \(ICGC\)](https://proceeding.unesa.ac.id/index.php/icgc/article/view/6258) (Vol. 3, No. 1). State University of Surabaya. <https://proceeding.unesa.ac.id/index.php/icgc/article/view/6258>
- Omopo, O. E., Osobisi, D. A., & Umanhonlen, S. E. (2026). The role of creative thinking in entrepreneurial success: A meta-analysis comparing innovators and traditional entrepreneurs. *Omanarp International Journal of Business Management*, 3(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18644459>
- Omopo, O. E., Quadri, G., Ukpere, W. I., & Balogun, O. J. (2025). From trauma to trouble: How childhood adversity fuels maladaptive behaviour and juvenile delinquency among in-school adolescents. *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 45, 174–206. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18273113>
- Oparaugo, V. N., & Ebenebe, R. C. (2021). Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and psychological adjustment among secondary school adolescents in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Psychology*, 19(2), 88–101.
- Preston, A. J., Rew, L., & Young, C. C. (2023). A systematic scoping review of psychological capital related to mental health in youth. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 39(1), 22–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10598405211060415>
- Preston, A. J., Rew, L., Young, C. C., Lowe, J., & Song, H. (2026). The utility of psychological capital theory in rural adolescent mental health research. *Journal of Health Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13591045261434614>
- Sánchez-Sandoval, Y., Aragón, C., & Verdugo, L. (2022). Future expectations of adolescents in residential care: The role of self-perceptions. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 143, Article 106686. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2022.106686>

- Verdugo, L., & Sánchez-Sandoval, Y. (2022). Psychological and social adjustment as antecedents of high school students' future expectations. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 32(1), 39–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jgc.2020.1>
- Zhu, C., Yin, X., Li, Z., & Zhou, L. (2021). Psychological capital differs among rural left-behind children and is associated with emotional and behavioral problems. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 565385. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.565385>