

**ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES AS EXPRESSED BY IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN OFFA, KWARA STATE****BY****Sanjo: Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin****Abstract**

*This paper examined academic challenges and coping strategies as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey type of research design. The population of the study comprised 5 public and 5 private senior secondary schools in Offa, Kwara State. The target population was all SSS II. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 5 public and 5 private senior secondary schools. Also, Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 SSS II from each of 10 senior secondary schools (public and private) making 200 respondents for the study. Two researcher developed instruments were used to collect the necessary data from the respondents. The questionnaires tagged Academic Challenges Questionnaire (ACQ) and Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ). Frequency count and percentage of descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents, mean rating and ranking order was used to answer the research questions 1 and 2, t-test of inferential statistics were used to test the generated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of this study revealed that in-school adolescents are experiencing academic challenges and adopt coping strategies. Finally, the finding of the study showed that there was no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents based on gender. There was no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents based on school type. There was no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents based on gender. It is therefore recommended that teachers should develop positive relationships with students and stress free classroom activities, which will improve active teaching – learning process and students’ participation in class so that students will benefit maximally, examinations and continuous assessment.*

**Keywords:** *Academic Challenges, Coping strategies, In-school adolescents*

**Introduction**

Adolescence is a stage in life cycle between 11 and 19 years of age characterized by increasing independence from adult controls, rapidly occurring physical and psychological changes, exploration of social issues and concerns, increased focus on activities with a peer group and establishment of a basic self identity (Hurlock, 2001). It is a stressful developmental period filled with major changes in physical maturity and sexuality, cognitive process, emotional feelings and relationship with others. It is a phase of life marked by special attributes like rapid physical, psychological, cognitive and behavioural changes and developments, including urge to experiments, attainment of sexual maturity, development of adult identity, and transition from socio- economic dependence to relative independence. By this, Eke (2004) observed that adolescents stages could be classified according these stages. Early adolescents (12 to 14 years) a phase when the kid is not yet matures but he is no longer a kid. At this stage physical changes are a constant source of irritation.

Middle adolescents (14 to 17 years) this phase is mark by emotional. Cognitive mental maturity develops in early age in girls than in male. Late adolescents (17 to 19 years) finally come close to adulthood to have a firm identity and more stable interests. Adolescents are more wary about security, safety and independence. However, the majority of in-school adolescents are confronted by more or less serious problems connected with their home life, their school experiences, their work activities and their social relationships. The factors responsible for adolescent maladjustment include economic instability, parental discord, inadequacy of school offerings, lack of understanding of adolescent psychology on the part of parents and school faculties, unwholesome neighborhood or community conditions, inadequate recreational facilities etc (Onukwufor & Izuchi, 2017).

Academic challenges for in-school adolescents are compounded because at this level of their development, they are fast developing the skills to deal with life stresses and are going through many physical, emotional and social changes. As they mature, they encounter crises, which may affect their academic, physical, social, emotional and psychological development (Sonia, 2015). Causes of Academic challenges include stress due to teachers, stress due to exams and test, stress due to peer, stress due to parental and social, stress due to time management and infrastructure, and stress due to self-inflicted factors (Abiola, Lawal & Habib, 2015). These can arise from different school based sources of stress, such as school work, discipline and classroom management procedure, extracurricular activities, and public performance. Onukwufor and Izuchi (2017) have identified the following academic challenges especially, among senior secondary school students:

- i. Academics-The worry about academic performance can cause stress symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia or changes in one's appetite and overall mood. The fear of examinations does create stress among students.
- ii. Finances –in-school adolescents experience academic challenges when they do not have money to maintain their lifestyles and fulfil their academic needs. If they fail to fulfil the requirement, then it creates a stress;
- iii. Relationships– in-school adolescents want to have friends, whether they are close friends or just acquaintances. When they are unable to do so or they become depressed and stressed;
- iv. Time Management-A lack of time management among students can cause them academic challenges.

The influence of academic challenges on in-school adolescents brings about poor academic performance, reduced initiative skills in tackling academic problems as well as creating confusion in their minds especially, when study schedules in schools appear challenging (Essel & Owusu, 2017). The act of combining a busy life along with education causes stress and depression. Academic challenges symptoms include but not limited to lack of energy, engaging in self-medication, high blood pressure, feeling depressed, trouble concentrating and restlessness (Nagle & Sharma, 2018). An in-school adolescent experiencing any of these symptoms is likely to be a victim of stress. The negative effects of academic stress on students may vary from one student to another based on their previous encounters and coping strategies applied to debunk them.

Limited academic challenge is beneficial and can lead to excellent performance, uncontrolled academic challenge can lead to exhaustion, depression and several other vices. Students often experience academic challenge when examinations are around the corner, which is a litmus test for their ability to cope and adapt to the situation they find themselves in. Academic challenge affecting in-school adolescents also leads them to have bad performance in school work due to lack of concentration (Samson-Akpan, John, Edet & Uka, 2017). In the long term, academic challenge can even affect their future because it can generate a confused atmosphere of uncertainties for them. Under the influence of stress, most in-school adolescents easily forget what they have been taught. The ultimate effect is therefore, poor academic performance in schools. Coping is the ability to appraise a academic challenge situation in order to regain balance and develop the power to conquer new challenges (Nagle & Sharma, 2018). In order to attain this level, it is necessary to set cognitive and behavioural efforts that would ensure that they are achieved and sustained. In-school adolescents utilize many coping strategies such as diversion, relaxation, self-reliance, avoidance, praying, day dreaming, listening to music. Coping strategies are known to influence an individuals' experience of stress. Students are being pressured frequently by a variety of factors which cause them to have stress in many ways (Delahajj, Van Dam, Gaillard & Soeters, 2011). For most students, managing stress can be extremely challenging. Learning how to manage academic challenges may help in-school adolescents to cope with every day social and academic pressures, and thus have a better education. Coping strategies are labeled as either emotion-focused or problem-focused. Emotion-focused coping involves regulating emotional response to a stressor and reducing psychological

discomfort, while problem-focused coping includes altering the situation to minimize or eliminate the source of the academic challenge.

MacArthur (2014) further categorized coping strategies into active and avoidant coping strategies. Active coping strategies are either behavioural or psychological responses designed to change the nature of the stressor itself, while avoidant coping strategies refers to coping efforts that are directed towards objective events or circumstances associated with the stressor (e.g., leaving the stressful situation), in addition to emotional self-regulation (e.g., managing emotional expression). MacArthur (2014), life for many adolescents is a painful tug of war filled with mixed messages and conflicting demands from parents, teachers, friends, family and themselves. If the problems of adolescents are not identified and helped during their school days, it would continue to have difficulties dealing with academic, society and their problems may become progressively more serious in later life. Adolescents spend a large proportion of their day in school or pursuing school-related activities. Adolescents at secondary school level face more problems from educational and emotional aspects. Problems like anxiety, hot temperedness, academic under-achievements and strict rules of school have a highest percent of occurrence among adolescents. Al-Dubai (2011) showed that the students used active coping strategies (active coping, religious coping, positive reframing, planning, and acceptance) more than avoidant strategies (denial, self-blame, and alcohol or substance use). But this study was in contradiction with the study of Hirsch (2015) found if most of the strategies used by the students in order to try and manage the emotional tension generated by the problem are those that focus on emotions.

However, the academic challenges experienced by in-school adolescents can be altered and influenced by the coping strategies they choose to employ. Effective coping strategies help students to perform markedly better in regards to their studies; coping strategies also aid in relieving students' stress (Khater, Akhu-Zaheya & Shaban, 2014). Also coping with stress for a student nurse is a dynamic and ongoing process, aimed at survival, growth, maintenance of the individual integrity and by using various coping strategies whether healthy or unhealthy, the imbalance and disequilibrium is restored (Nancy, 2011). The findings of the various studies revealed that academic challenges and coping strategies that can be adopted by adolescents in controlling their studies. The major academic coping strategies identified by the respondents include; integrating stress management lessons in guidance and counseling sessions, teaching assertiveness so that for the adolescent will have high selfesteem, communicating with parents of concerned adolescents on how they could intervene and through stress prevention training programme among others. Kempf (2011) supported the finding on integrating stress management lessons in guidance and counselling by arguing that one option is to teach coping strategies for a healthy lifestyle such as exercising and talking to someone through student support groups and counseling services. Hampel, Meier and Kummel (2008) carried a study on comparing students who went through training in a prevention programme, with those who did not receive. The results showed that students who participated in the programme experienced healthy development in coping, self efficiency and recovery.

Also, there is gender difference in the academic challenges and coping strategies adopted by male students than their female counterparts. This indicates that gender had an influence on adolescent academic challenges and coping strategies. The mean difference between male and female on academic challenges and coping strategies was further strengthened by a t-test statistic which shows that there is significant difference in the mean scores of male and female on academic challenges and coping strategies. Also, Kumar and Bhukar (2013) who reported in a study carried out to investigate the academic challenges levels and coping strategies of professional students belonging to Physical Education and Engineering professions that coping strategy was higher in boys than girls of their respective professions. This result is also in conformity with the studies of Yahaya (2004) and Abar et al., (2009) who reported significant difference in male and female coping strategies.

Kempf (2011), also found from the study that the major academic coping strategies identified by the respondents include; integrating stress management lessons in guidance and counselling sessions, teaching assertiveness so that the adolescent will have high self-esteem, communicating with parents of concerned adolescents on how they could intervene and through anxiety prevention training programme among others which was also found to have influence on gender.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Student's performance remains a top priority for educators. Stakeholders in education have affirmed that the goal of education cannot be achieved without the students' academic success. Coping with academic challenges by the adolescents plays a vital role in preventing educational, personal, social, mental and emotional problems. Adegoke (2004) affirmed that students encounter a lot of academic challenges which they find difficult to cope with. Oluwatimilehin (2012) explained that indiscipline, drug addiction, poverty, non-challant attitude of the students have resulted into poor academic performance. As such, students need the several strategies to cope with academic challenges they confront with in the schools. Muller (2004) opined that effects of academic challenges on students' life can have serious impacts on their ability to perform or succeed in school. Earning failing grades that do not meet expectations of students themselves, caregivers, parents or teachers create stress among students and academic failure leads to increased levels of truancy and school dropout. Mclaughlin (2009) observed that adolescents may have difficulties in making decisions academically when adopt no coping strategy. It is in view of these concerns that this study was carried out to determine the academic challenges and coping strategies as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. Find out academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State
2. Find out strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State
3. Determine the difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender
4. Determine the difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type
5. Investigate the difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender.
6. Investigate difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this study

1. What are the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State
2. What are the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State?
3. Is there is any significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender?
4. Is there any significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type?
5. Is there is any significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender?
6. Is there is any significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study;

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type

### Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive study of the survey type. This survey method of research generally tries to collect information from a representative group and based on such information inferences are drawn about the behaviour of the entire population. The population of the study comprised all the 5 public and 5 private senior secondary schools in Offa, Kwara State. The target population was all SSS II. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 5 public and 5 private senior secondary schools making 10 senior secondary schools as sample schools. Also, Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20 SSS II from 10 senior secondary schools (public and private) making 200 respondents for the study. Two researcher developed instruments were used to collect the necessary data from the respondents. The questionnaires tagged Academic Challenges Questionnaire (ACQ) and Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ). The reliability of the instrument a pilot testing was done using 10 public and 10 private senior secondary school students (SSS II) in Offa, Kwara State. A test-re-test method was used. The data obtained were analyzed using the Pearson product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of Academic Challenges Questionnaire (ACQ) indicated a correlation coefficient of 0. 60, while the result of Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ) indicated a correlation coefficient of 0. 65.

The questionnaire has 3 sections; Section A contains personal data of the respondents such as school type, gender, age and class level. Section B contains 15 items on Academic Challenges and Section C 20 contains items on Coping Strategies. A Four likert-type rating scale used include (SA) strongly agree, (A) agree, (SD) strongly disagree, (D) disagree. Frequency count and percentage of descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents, mean rating and ranking order was used to answer the research questions 1 and 2, t-test of inferential statistics were used to test the generated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

**Research Question 1:** *What are the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State?*

**Table 4: Mean and Rank Order on the Respondents' on Academic Challenges**

Item No.	The following are the academic challenges I experience;	Mean	Rank
2	H a v i n g m u c h h o m e a s s i g n m e n t t o d o	3.55	1 <sup>st</sup>
1	H a v i n g m u l t i p l e s u b j e c t s t o l e a r n i n a d a y	3.43	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	H a v i n g m u c h c l a s s w o r k t o d o	3.34	3 <sup>rd</sup>
6	L a c k o f a d e q u a t e l e a r n i n g m a t e r i a l s	3.08	4 <sup>th</sup>
14	I n a b i l i t y t o g e t a l o n g w i t h t e a c h e r s	2.99	5 <sup>th</sup>



10	F e a r o f f a i l u r e	2.99	5 <sup>th</sup>
5	Fear to stand before mates in the classroom	2.85	7 <sup>th</sup>
4	Inadequate time to engage in personal study	2.78	8 <sup>th</sup>
11	Poor communication with parents on the academic issue	2.72	9 <sup>th</sup>
8	In adequate educational facilities in the school	2.72	9 <sup>th</sup>
9	Lack of time to study at home	2.68	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	Absence of extra curriculum activity	2.57	12 <sup>th</sup>
15	Inability to comprehend topics/subjects taught	2.53	13 <sup>th</sup>
13	Boredom with school activities	2.52	14 <sup>th</sup>
7	Lack of parental support for educational needs	2.49	15 <sup>th</sup>

Table 4 presents the mean and rank order of respondents' academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State. The result in the table revealed that items 2 (having much home assignment to do) was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with mean score of 3.55, item 1(having multiple subjects to learn in a day) was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with mean score of 3.43 and item 3 (having much class work to do) was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> with mean score of 3.34. On the other end, item 15 (inability to comprehend topics/subjects taught) was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> with mean score of 2.53, item 13 (boredom with school activities) was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> with mean score of 2. 52 and item 7 (lack of parental support for educational needs) was ranked 15<sup>th</sup> with mean score of 2.49. The table indicates that most of the items have the mean scores that are above the mid-cut off point of 2.50; this indicates that the respondents attested to academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State listed above.

**Research Question 2:** *What are the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State?*

**Table 5: Mean and Rank Order on the Respondents' Strategies for Coping with Academic Challenges**

Item No.	The following are the strategies use to cope with academic challenges that I experienced	Mean	Rank
1	Prepare personal study time table	3.55	1 <sup>st</sup>
15	Having appropriate and relevance learning materials	3.34	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	Read ahead of the lesson on each subject	3.34	3 <sup>rd</sup>
18	S m o k i n g a n d d r i n k i n g	3.08	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	L e a r n i n g a s s e r t i v e n e s s	3.08	4 <sup>th</sup>
20	A v o i d i n g a c a d e m i c a c t i v i t i e s	3.06	6 <sup>th</sup>

13	Engage in little play with mates	2.99	7 <sup>th</sup>
9	Schedule of activities after the school closing hour	2.89	8 <sup>th</sup>
17	Free revision	2.84	9 <sup>th</sup>
4	Join group discussion during free period	2.84	9 <sup>th</sup>
16	Listening to music	2.78	11 <sup>th</sup>
3	Attend extra moral classes	2.78	11 <sup>th</sup>
10	Attend to class work at appropriate time	2.72	13 <sup>th</sup>
7	Thought replacement	2.71	14 <sup>th</sup>
8	Take a break from stressful activities or situations	2.68	15 <sup>th</sup>
11	Communicating with parents on the academic issue	2.57	16 <sup>th</sup>
14	Watching movie to reduce anxiety	2.53	17 <sup>th</sup>
12	Engage in short relaxation	2.52	18 <sup>th</sup>
19	Daydreaming	4.49	19 <sup>th</sup>
6	Giving self assignment	4.48	20 <sup>th</sup>

Table 5 presents the mean and rank order of respondents' strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State. The result in the table revealed that items 1 (preparing personal study time table) was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with mean score of 3.55, items 15 and 2 (listening to music and reading ahead of lesson on each subject) were ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with mean score of 3.34. On the other end, item 12 (engaging in little play with mates) was ranked 18<sup>th</sup> with mean score of 2.53, item 19 (avoiding academic activities) was ranked 19<sup>th</sup> with mean score of 2.49 and item 6 (attempting exercise in my text for practice) was ranked 20<sup>th</sup> with mean score of 2.48. The table indicates that most of the items have the mean scores that are above the mid-cut off point of 2.50; this indicates that the respondents attested to strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State listed above.

### Testing of Research Hypotheses

*H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender.*

**Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on the Academic Challenges as expressed by in-school Adolescents based on Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	77	40.31	5.68	198	1.52	1.96	.128
Female	123	39.40	5.71				

Table 6 indicates that the calculated t-value of 1.52 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with corresponding p-value of .128 which is higher than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender is not rejected.

*H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the academic challenges face by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type.*

**Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on Academic Challenges as expressed by in-school Adolescents based on School type**

School type	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Private	100	39.88	5.70	198	0.45	1.96	.655
Public	100	39.69	5.73				

Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.45 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with corresponding p-value of .655 which is higher than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type is not rejected.

*H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender.*

**Table 8: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on Strategies for Coping with Academic Challenges based on Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	77	55.04	8.05	198	1.45	1.96	.149
Female	123	53.82	7.97				

Table 8 indicates that the calculated t-value of 1.45 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with corresponding p-value of .149 which is higher than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender is not rejected.

*H0<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type.*

**Table 9: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value on Strategies for Coping with Academic Challenges based on School type**

School type	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Private	100	54.43	8.06	198	0.35	1.96	.728
Public	100	54.14	7.98				

Table 9 indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.35 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with corresponding p-value of .728 which is higher than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the critical t-value, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type is not rejected.



### Discussion of Findings

The major findings of this study revealed that academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State include having much home assignment to do, having multiple subjects to learn in a day and having much class work to do, Inadequate time to engage in personal study, Fear to stand before mates in the classroom among others. This finding corroborates with Muller (2004) found that causes of academic challenges include too much of academic work load, lack of extra curriculum activities, too much of home assignments to cover, inadequate of school facilities/instructional materials and inadequate time to study. Similarly, Onukwufor and Izuchi (2017) found that following academic challenges are experienced among senior secondary school students fear of examinations among students, having many subjects to learn in a day, lack of financial support for educational needs and poor time Management among others.

Also, findings of this study revealed that strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State include preparing personal study time table listening to music and reading ahead of lesson on each subject among others. The finding of this study corroborate with (Khater, Akhu-Zaheya & Shaban, 2014) found that strategies for coping with academic challenges by secondary school students include having personal study time table, reading a head of the class, regular relaxation, listening to music, Watching movie to reduce anxiety, Join group discussion during free period e.t.c. The finding equally agreed with Abiola, Lawal & Habib, (2015) who found that academic challenges are overcome by the students through giving self assignment, having appropriate and relevance learning materials to read, attend to class work at appropriate time, communicating with parents on the academic issue.

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender. The finding of this study is in line with finding of Mclaughlin (2009) who found that that adolescents both male and female have similar academic challenges in making decisions academically while in school. Onukwufor and Izuchi, (2017) found that the majority of in-school adolescents of male and female are confronted by more or less serious problems connected with their home life, their school experiences, their work activities and their social relationships. The factors responsible for adolescent maladjustment include economic instability, parental discord, inadequacy of school offerings, lack of understanding of adolescent psychology on the part of parents and school faculties, , inadequate educational needs etc.

Hypothesis two revealed that there was no significant difference in the academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type. The finding of this study corroborate with Sonia (2015) who found that Academic challenges for in-school adolescents regardless of gender are compounded because at this level of their development, they are fast developing the skills to deal with life stresses and are going through many physical, emotional and social changes. As they mature, they encounter crises, which may affect their academic, physical, social, emotional and psychological development and causes of academic challenges among them include stress due to teachers, stress due to exams and test, stress due to peer, stress due to parental and social, stress due to time management and infrastructure, and stress due to self-inflicted factors.

Hypothesis three revealed that there was no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on gender. This study is in line with Al-Dubai (2011) found that the students both male and female used active coping strategies with academic challenges (active coping, religious coping, positive reframing, planning, and acceptance) more than avoidant strategies (denial, self-blame, and alcohol or substance use) through giving self assignment, having appropriate and relevance learning materials to read, attend to class work at appropriate time, communicating with parents on the academic issue.

Hypothesis four revealed that there was no significant difference in the strategies for coping with academic challenges as expressed by in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State based on school type. This finding corroborate with Finding of Nagle and Sharma (2018) found that almost all the students of secondary schools regardless of type that is both private and public adopt similar coping strategies for academic challenges. These include the followings such as diversion, drinking, relaxation, self-reliance, avoidance, praying, day dreaming, listening to music, reading ahead of the class, group discussion, discussion academic related issue with parents, guardians and teachers. Also, Kumar and Bhukar (2013) who reported in a study carried out to investigate the academic challenges levels and coping strategies of professional students belonging to Physical Education and Engineering professions that coping strategy was higher in boys than girls of their respective professions. This result is also in conformity with the studies of Yahaya (2004) and Abar who reported significant difference in male and female coping strategies. Kempf (2011), also found from the study that the major academic coping strategies identified by the respondents include; integrating stress management lessons in guidance and counseling sessions, teaching assertiveness so that the adolescent will have high self-esteem, communicating with parents of concerned adolescents on how they could intervene and through anxiety prevention training programme among others which was also found to have influence on gender.

### Conclusion

From findings of this study, it can be concluded that in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State are facing academic challenges which include having much home assignment to do, having multiple subjects to learn in a day and having much class work to do, Inadequate time to engage in personal study, Fear to stand before mates in the classroom, lack of extra curriculum activities, too much of home assignments to cover, inadequate of school facilities/instructional materials and inadequate time to study among others. Similarly, in-school adolescents in Offa, Kwara State adopt some certain coping strategies with academic challenges that include preparing personal study time table listening to music and reading ahead of lesson on each subject among other, regular relaxation, listening to music, Watching movie to reduce anxiety, Join group discussion during free period e.t.c.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should develop positive relationships with students and stress free classroom activities, which will improve active teaching – learning process and students’ participation in class so that students will benefit maximally.
2. Examinations and continuous assessment tests as well as assignments should be well planned and the students put into consideration during such planning to avoid undue challenges on the students which most likely triggers anxiety.
3. School counsellors should as well establish warm relationship and friendship with students. This is necessary to understand students’ concerns and provide necessary assistance to them.
4. Schools should incorporate lessons regarding academic challenges in order to build coping skills, problem solving skills before adolescents reach a more critical level of challenges.
5. Parents/guardians should ensure frequent and consistent communication with adolescent on academic purpose and other social issues and provide them more support and care to help them cope with various challenges.

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