

**ACADEMIC SELF-HANDICAPPING, SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS
AND PERSONALITY TRAITS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
OF AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA**

BY

Anna LITVINOVA (B.Ed., Russia, 1996)

M. Ed./EDUC/43016/2012-2013

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER'S DEGREE IN
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING,
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY,
ZARIA, NIGERIA**

NOVEMBER, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation titled: *Academic Self-handicapping, Socio-demographic Factors and Personality Traits among Undergraduate Students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria* is a record of my research work under supervision of Prof. M. Balarabe and Dr. A. I. Mohammed. This work has not been submitted in any form for another degree at any other Institution.

LITVINOVA, Anna

Date

CERTIFICATION

This dissertation entitled: *Academic Self-handicapping, Socio-demographic Factors and Personality Traits among Undergraduate Students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria* by Litvinova, Anna meets the requirements governing the award of Degree of Masters of Education in Psychology in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling of Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

.....
Prof. M. Balarabe
Chairman, Supervisory Committee

.....
Date

.....
Dr. A.I. Mohammed
Member, Supervisory Committee

.....
Date

.....
Prof. M. Balarabe
Head, Department of Educational
Psychology and Counselling

.....
Date

.....
Prof. K. Bala
Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies

.....
Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Parents – Vera and Anatoly Litvinovi, Sister Alexandra, my beloved husband and best friend – Dr Mohammed Bello and my daughters - Samira, Zainab and Naima, without whom I would not have been who I am now.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere appreciations and gratitude to my supervisor Prof. M. Balarabe for his patience, keen interest, skillful guidance and general support from the beginning to the end of this work. I also acknowledge the contributions, constructive criticism, support, corrections and advice of my second supervisor Dr. A. I. Mohammed.

I would also want to express my gratitude to all Staff of the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling for their support and sharing their knowledge and experience with me and also members of Examination Committee: Prof. E. F. Adeniyi, Prof. K. H. Mahmoud, Dr. H. A. Tukur, Dr. Y. Umaru, Prof. R. M. Bello, Prof. S. Sambo, Dr. M. I. Abdullahi, Dr. J. O. Bawa, Dr. D. A. Oliagba, Dr. U. Musa and Dr. Y. Khairat.

I recognize and appreciate the support of the following people for their assistance to me in the collecting of my data in the various faculties of Ahmadu Bello University – Prof. M. I. Umar-Buratai, Mal. Rabiuh Isah, Dr. D.O. Fiki-George and Dr. J.O. Agi from the Faculty of Arts; Dr. A. Abdulwahab of the Faculty of Medicine; Dr. I. M. Dabo, Dr. M. Dauda, Prof. M.B. Muazu, Dr. Idris Abubakar, Mal. Tukur and Mal. Murana from the Faculty of Engineering; Mal. Hayatu, Mal. Muazu Ahmed and Mr. Markus Musa from the Faculty of Education and Faruk M. Dewu. I would like to also acknowledge all other people whose names are not mentioned above for their contribution and help in this work.

I am grateful to my Motherland for giving me free education from my primary school to my first University degree. I am very grateful to Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria for giving me the opportunity to improve my proficiency in English language and further my education at Master's level.

To my parents, I am most grateful for everything that they did and are still doing to me in this life. May Allah reward them in abundance. My special words of gratitude to my husband for his emotional support, moral encouragement and intellectual contribution. I appreciate the support and understanding of my lovely children who endured my absence at home in times of need during the course of my study.

Finally I thank Almighty God for giving me the health, strength and wisdom to carry out this work and Who blessed me with kind parents, good family, talented teachers and true friends indeed.

ABSTRACT

This research investigated academic self-handicapping among undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and its correlation with personality traits; also differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on socio-demographic factors were investigated. Three instruments - Personal Information Inventory, Self-handicapping Scale and Big Five Inventory were used for collecting data among 440 undergraduate students of ABU from four faculties (Arts, Education, Engineering and Medicine). The collected data were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics, independent samples t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance. The results of data analyses revealed that academic self-handicapping has negative but not significant correlation with students extroversion, on the other hand, significant negative correlation exists between academic self-handicapping of undergraduates and their next personality traits - agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to new experience (with $r = -.322$, $-.317$ and $-.161$ respectively), while with neuroticism this correlation is positive and significant ($r = .439$). No any significant differences in academic self-handicapping were established among undergraduates based on fathers' level of education, gender and family size. Significant differences in academic self-handicapping were found on the base of mothers level of education, family structure, birth order, students age and course of study (with $p = 0.024$, 0.007 , 0.040 , 0.016 and 0.000 respectively). On the basis of these findings, this study made recommendations for teachers, parents and psychologist to pay more attention to student's personality as one of the important factors affecting motivation and achievement. Special consideration should be given to neuroticism as one of the personality traits that affects choosing of unproductive coping strategies, including self-handicapping by students. Students from single parent family should be given special attention as a group at high risk for academic self-handicapping. Also management and lecturers from faculties with highest level of students self-handicapping (Faculties of Arts and Education) should be aware of this fact and take necessary measures for changing situation for better. The study also made recommendation for further research in the area of academic self-handicapping.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Abstract	vii
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xii
List of Appendices	xiv
Operational Definition of Terms	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study	4
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Research Hypotheses	6
1.6 Basic Assumptions of the Study	7
1.7 Significance of the Study	8
1.8 Scope and Delimitations of the Study	9

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Conceptual Framework	11
2.2.1 The Concept of Self-handicapping	11
2.2.1.1 Motive of self-handicapping: self-protection or self-presentation	13
2.2.1.2 Self-handicapping and self-esteem	14
2.2.1.3 Individual differences in self-handicapping	15
2.2.1.4 Types of self-handicapping strategies	16
2.2.1.5 Consequences of self-handicapping	17
2.2.2 The Concept of Personality	18
2.2.3 Socio-Demographic Factors	21
2.2.3.1 Gender	21
2.2.3.2 Birth order	23
2.2.3.3 Family background (parental education, family structure and size)	24
2.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study	27
2.3.1 Theoretical framework of self-handicapping	27
2.3.1.1 Attribution Theory	27
2.3.1.2 Achievement Goal Theory	30
2.3.1.3 Self-Worth Theory	32
2.3.2 Theories of personality	33
2.3.2.1 Early trait theories (Allport and Cattell)	35
2.3.2.2 Eysenck trait theory	36
2.3.2.3 Five-Factor Theory	37
2.4 Review of Related Studies	39

2.4.1 Self-handicapping and personality traits	40
2.4.2 Self-handicapping and socio-demographic factors	42
2.5 Summary	45

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	46
3.2 Research Design	46
3.3 Population of the Study	46
3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique	49
3.5 Instrumentation	51
3.5.1 Personal Information Inventory	51
3.5.2 Big Five Inventory (BFI)	51
3.5.3 Self-Handicapping Scale (SHC)	52
3.5.4 Pilot Testing for BFI and SHC	52
3.5.4.1 Reliability of BFI	53
3.5.4.1 Reliability of SHC	53
3.6 Procedure for Data Collection	54
3.7 Procedure for Data Analysis	54

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction	56
4.2 Demographic Distributions of Students	56
4.3 Hypotheses Testing	61
4.4 Summary of Findings	75

4.5 Discussion	76
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Introduction	83
5.2 Summary	83
5.3 Educational Implications	85
5.4 Conclusion	85
5.5 Recommendations	87
5.6 Suggestions for Further Research	88
REFERENCES	89
APPENDICES	95

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1 Distribution of Undergraduate Students of ABU, Zaria According to Faculties, 2013/2014 Session	47
Table 3.2 Students Statistics by Faculty, Department and Gender	48
Table 3.3 Results of Internal Consistency and Test-retest Reliability for BFI	53
Table 4.1 Distribution of Students by Faculties and Departments	56
Table 4.2 Distribution of Students by Gender	57
Table 4.3 Distribution of Students by Age	57
Table 4.4 Distribution of Students by Their Father's Level of Education	58
Table 4.5 Distribution of Students by Their Mother's Level of Education	59
Table 4.6 Distribution of Students by Family Structure	59
Table 4.7 Distribution of Students by Family Size	60
Table 4.8 Distribution of Students by Birth Order	60
Table 4.9 Results of Descriptive Statistics for Self-handicapping and Big Five Personality Traits	61
Table 4.10 Results of PPMC Analyses on Relationship between Academic Self-handicapping and Personality Traits	62
Table 4.11 Results of Independent Sample t-test Analysis for Gender Differences in Academic Self-handicapping	63
Table 4.12 Descriptive Statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Fathers Educational level	64
Table 4.13 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Father's educational level	64
Table 4.14 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Mothers Educational level	65

Table 4.15 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Mother's Educational level	65
Table 4.16 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Mothers' Education (Tukey HSD)	66
Table 4.17 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Students Family Structure	67
Table 4.18 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Students' Family Structure	67
Table 4.19 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Students Family Structure (Tukey HSD)	68
Table 4.20 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Students Family Size	68
Table 4.21 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Students' Family Size	69
Table 4.22 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Students Birth Order	69
Table 4.23 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Students' birth order	70
Table 4.24 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Birth Order (Tukey HSD)	70
Table 4.25 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Students' Age	71
Table 4.26 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Students' Age	71
Table 4.27 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Age (Tukey HSD)	72
Table 4.28 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Course of Study	73
Table 4.29 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) Statistics of Academic Self-handicapping and Students' Course of Study	73
Table 4.30 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons by Course of Study (Tukey HSD)	74

LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page
Appendix A: Introduction Letter	95
Appendix B: Personal Information Inventory	96
Appendix C: Self-Handicapping Scale	97
Appendix D: Big Five Inventory	98

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic Self-Handicapping refers to the proactive self-protective strategies employed by individuals in problem-solving situation and which act as obstacles to performance. These obstacles are used as excuse for possible failure being attributed to external factors rather than internal factors like person's ability.

Socio-Demographic Factors - refer to the demographical status of individuals (gender and age) and their family status (parental education, birth order, family structure and size) that have been identified as explanatory variables in a wide range of settings and can influence the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of individuals.

Birth order - refer to the ordinal position of the person among his own siblings (first born, middle born or last born).

Family size - number of siblings in the family.

Family structure - the type of marital relationship between parents (monogamous, polygamous or single parent).

Gender - is a sum of behaviours and attitudes that a society considers proper for its males and females.

Parental education - level of education attained by each parent. In this study this is going to be measured by five categories - university degree and above, post secondary education, secondary school certificate, primary school certificate/adult literacy, no formal education.

Personality Factors (Traits) - person's relatively stable characteristics or patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that make this person unique and distinguish him or her from other individuals. In this study they are going to be measured by Big Five Inventory (BFI) and include openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Self-handicapping consists of widespread strategies that can be found in variety of cultures and professional areas. It can be observed in any area where people are expected to perform - in the business, sport, daily life and especially in academic environment. Academic settings provide a lot of situations where students display their abilities and performance in the presence of others (teachers and peers) and this achievement situations make some of them worry and concerned with how others will judge them in case of potential failure. This made them to be involved in self-handicapping behaviour and start looking for excuses before actual performance, by creating real or verbal impediments.

Self-handicapping, as originally conceived by Jones and Berglas (1978), was considered to be a strategy with the primary aim of protecting one's self-esteem in the event of failure. People use self-handicapping by creating excuses for their failures before they have tried to attempt the task. The self-handicapper constructs obstacles to success, such as effort withdrawal, so that if failure occurs, it is attributed to the impediment rather than to important personal characteristics, such as ability or intelligence. If the person will fail in the task, he will attribute this failure to the obstacles; if he will succeed the attribution will be pointed on his own ability.

Many researchers call the self-handicapping a paradoxical phenomenon - from one side people create barriers to protect one's perceived ability or self-esteem from potential failure and on the other side make the probability of failure more certain. Zukerman,

Kieffer and Knee (1998) in their research on consequences of academic self-handicapping reported that, high self-handicapping resulted in poor performance and adjustment, while on the reverse poorer adjustment and performance resulted in high use of self-handicapping, thereby creating a vicious cycle. They (Zuckerman, Kieffer & Knee, 1998) have also indicated the other negative long-term consequences of self-handicapping: poorer performance outcomes, higher levels of negative emotions, loss in intrinsic motivation, and increased substance use. Thus, an important goal of research on self-handicapping is identifying possible antecedences of academic self-handicapping so as to discourage or circumvent this self-destructive behavior among students. A great number of research was conducted on the self-handicapping and its correlates over the past 30 years. Some of the psychological constructs found to be associated with the use of self-handicapping strategies, included cognitive, behavioural, personal characteristics and beliefs (Urduan & Midgley, 2001).

Personality is one of the major variables that influence our behavior, feelings, motivation. Personality refers to the set of unique and relatively stable patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Individuals behave in one way or the other depending of their personality traits or characteristics. We cannot deny the role of situation, but major factor that influences our behavioural outcome is our personality. The hypothesis that personality traits have their own effect on choosing self-handicapping strategies was proposed and tested by number of researchers (Kinon & Murray, 2007; Nosenko, Arshava & Nosenko, 2014; Ross, Canada & Rausch, 2002). By using Five-Factor Model of basic personality traits some researchers (Kinon & Murray, 2007) found that some traits such as neuroticism has positive correlation with self-handicapping, while other traits - conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to new experience negative.

Socio-demographic variables such as gender and family background can be viewed as possible important antecedences for self-handicapping behaviour. Gender is a social characteristic of individual and refers to the attitudes and behaviors that a society considers proper for its males and females (Hensling, 2008). Gender differences are one of the most researchable areas in self-handicapping literature. Research has repeatedly found that men and women use different types of self-handicapping behaviour and the extent of using self-handicapping strategies are different between genders.

Family background variables (in this study - parental education, family structure, family size and birth order) are very important factors in the development of personality and have their own impact in the achievement outcomes and use of different strategies by person in future. According to Dinnel, Hopkins and Thompson (2002) family environment contributes to the development of low self-esteem, low self-concept, anxiety and as a result leads to the development of failure-avoidant tendencies (such as self-handicapping) in child in future. These facts provide importance of study of relationship between personality traits, family variables and academic self-handicapping.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Almost every research conducted in area of education in Nigeria indicated that students' academic achievement at all levels of educational system has become a problem (Popoola & Olarewaju, 2010; Akinsanya & Omotayo, 2013). It was noted that despite the numerous factors contributing to students low achievement, such as declining qualification and commitment of teachers; inadequate provision of facilities; outdated curricula, low social value of education, difficult economic situation (Duze, 2011), the students themselves contribute to their own failure by using self-handicapping strategies.

Although, self-handicapping is general self-protective strategy, academic self-handicapping (ASH) is a common problem particularly significant for students in tertiary system, including Ahmadu Bello University. Students use self-handicapping strategies for protecting their self-esteem, but consequences of this behaviour such as performance decrease, negative emotions and problems with adjustment make these strategies not self-protective, but self-delusional. Considering the negative impact of academic self-handicapping in educational process, it is important to find the extent of this problem among university undergraduate students and to understand personality traits and socio-demographic factors that can contribute to this phenomenon. To be able to provide useful and helpful recommendation for students, teachers and parents at the end, the role of personality traits (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to new experience) and socio-demographic factors such as gender, birth order, parental education, family structure and size in self-handicapping behaviour will be in focus of this research.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the relationship between academic self-handicapping and the five basic personality traits (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to new experience) among undergraduates of ABU, Zaria.
2. To find out if there are gender differences in academic self-handicapping among undergraduate students of ABU, Zaria.
3. To find out if there are any differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education.

4. To find out if there are any differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on mother's level of education.
5. To find out if there are any differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family structure.
6. To find out if there are any differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family size.
7. To find out if there are any differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' birth order.

1.4 Research Questions

The following seven research questions were set for this research:

1. What is the relationship between academic self-handicapping and students' personality traits:
 - a) extraversion
 - b) agreeableness
 - c) conscientiousness
 - d) neuroticism and
 - e) openness to new experience?
2. What are the differences in academic self-handicapping among ABU students based on gender?
3. What are the differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education.

4. What are the differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on mother's level of education.
5. What are the differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family structure.
6. What are the differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family size.
7. What are the differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' birth order.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The seven Null hypotheses were formulated:

Ho₁ - There is no significant relationship between academic self-handicapping and personality traits of undergraduate students of ABU, Zaria:

- a) extraversion
- b) agreeableness
- c) conscientiousness
- d) neuroticism and
- e) openness to new experience.

Ho₂ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping due to gender of undergraduate students in ABU, Zaria.

Ho₃ – There are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education.

Ho₄ - There are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on mother's level of education.

Ho₅ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family structure.

Ho₆ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family size.

Ho₇ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' birth order.

1.6 Basic Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made before conducting research:

1. It was assumed that there is some relationship between self-handicapping and personality traits of students:
 - a) extraversion
 - b) agreeableness
 - c) conscientiousness
 - d) neuroticism and
 - e) openness to new experience.
2. It was assumed that there are differences in self-handicapping among students of ABU, Zaria based on gender.
3. It was also assumed that there are some differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education.

4. It was also assumed that there are some differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on mother's level of education.
5. It was also assumed that there are some differences in academic self-handicapping based on student's family structure.
6. There are some differences in academic self-handicapping based on student's family size.
7. It is assumed that there are some differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' birth order.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Considering the negative implication of using self-handicapping strategies for academic achievement and emotional wellbeing of students, it is important to know how common this strategy among undergraduate students and how students personality and socio-demographic variables can influence the use of this behaviour.

This study was intended to provide adequate advice to students, parents, teachers, counsellors and school management and it is the hope of researcher that community will benefits from this work. Some of these benefits include the following:

This work will help the school to know the extent of self-handicapping behaviour among undergraduate students and give the picture about the size of this problem in Ahmadu Bello University. This will further assist the management of the University to take corrective measures in tackling the problem.

The findings of this study will assist the students to identify self-handicapping as one of the possible reasons of poor performance, find level of their self-handicapping and take necessary measures to reduce this unproductive behaviour.

Similarly, the knowledge of self-handicapping can be very useful to both teachers and counsellors in taking appropriate actions to remedy possible poor performance among students as a result of using self-handicapping strategies and give the right counselling to the affected students.

Parents can as well, by understanding negative impact of self-handicapping strategies in future performance of their children can take the necessary approach to support their proper personality development.

This study can provide some direction for the further researches in this area and can serve as a reference material for theory building. Also the study adapted a Self-handicapping Scale (Jones & Rhodewalt, 1982), which has not been previously used in this environment. The combination of above mentioned points justify the need for this study.

1.8 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The area of coverage of this study is all undergraduate students from the twelve faculties of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Considering the challenges of feasibility of the study, the research will focus on four selected faculties, namely Art, Education, Engineering and Medicine. These faculties were chosen as representatives with Faculty of Arts, representing the arts, science based faculties Medicine, Engineering Faculty - technical sciences, while Faculty of Education representing humanitarian sciences. The study will be limited to only 200 level undergraduate students of the selected faculties. This level is most

suitable for this study considering the fact that they are more adapted to high education system than the 100 levels students, while in the event of the need to interact with them again they can be accessible at 300 or 400 levels.

One of the limitations of this study is the number of socio-demographic factors, although socio-demographic factors include a large set of variables such as parenting style, family conflict and emotional climate, parental involvement, parental expectations and beliefs about children, parental bonding and so on, this study will investigate only five socio-demographic factors - gender, birth order, parental education, family structure and size.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study will be discussed. It will focus on concept and theories of self-handicapping, individual differences in self-handicapping, types of self-handicapping (behavioural and claimed) and its consequences. Conceptual and theoretical framework of personality and personality traits and their correlation with self-handicapping are going to be described. Socio-demographic factors, such as gender, birth order, parental education, family structure and size will also be discussed. The empirical studies that were conducted in the area of research will be reviewed in this chapter.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 The Concept of self-handicapping

The term of Self-handicapping was introduced by Steven Berglas and Edward E. Jones in 1978. Jones and Berglas (1978) conceptualized self-handicapping as a self-protective strategy that is used for protecting internal characteristics of individual such as self-esteem. Self-handicapping is the type of behaviour that helps individuals to reduce responsibility for failure in their own eyes, as well as in the eyes of the public (Jones & Berglas, 1978). People actively use this strategy to arrange circumstances or their behaviour in the way that if failure will occur, the reason will be seen in these circumstances rather than in lack of ability, people prefer to be seen as victims of circumstances, but not as unable or incompetent (Midgley & Urdan, 1995). The aim of self-handicappers is to maintain

positive feelings about themselves at the cost of dealing effectively with the situation (Zuckerman, Kieffer & Knee, 1998). Strube (1986) define self-handicapping as "strategic attempts to create performance settings that will channel post performance attributions in a self-serving manner". The basic principles for self-handicapping, according to Jones and Berglas (1978), are principles of discounting and augmentation, formulated by Kelly. In case of failure self-handicappers will discount an attribution for poor performance to lack of ability and attribute it to the obstacles. In the event of success ability will be augmented because the self-handicapper succeeds despite the impediments (Rhodewalt & Hill, 1995). The nature of self-handicapping is paradoxical - from one side individuals have desire to avoid failure and trying to protect their self or public esteem, but at the same time they create impediments that make this failure more possible. This contradiction between motives and behavior of self-handicappers has been explained by Elliot and Church (2003) in their work on motivational analysis of self-handicapping. They divided failure into two types - specific failure on task in a given situation and global failure as a person or his ability or intellect. Self-handicappers have desire to avoid global failure and they create obstacles that can make specific failure more likely, but these obstacles (excuses) eliminate the possibility of global failure.

Self-handicapping has two important features - it occurs before activity and it is intentional. First and foremost, self-handicapping is proactive or anticipatory strategy, that occurs before an event. The individuals here start looking for explanation and rationalization for possible failure and create obstacles before the activity. If the self-handicapping person does poorly, he or she will have a ready excuse for it and will blame obstacles for this failure. If the person does well, he can say that he or she overcame the impediment. This proactive nature distinguishes self-handicapping from causal attribution, when explanations

are made after the performance. According to Urban and Midgley (2001), self-handicapping is a prior strategy, not just post-factum excuse.

Secondly, self-handicapping is intentional and self-regulatory behaviour for coping with expected poor performance (Urban & Midgley, 2001). If a student didn't prepare for exam because he has forgotten about it - it is not self-handicapping, but if he intentionally didn't read before exam and already has excuses for this - it is self-handicapping.

Self-handicapping behaviour can be observed in any settings where individuals are expected to demonstrate abilities; academic environment is typical of such places. There are some conditions that encourage or facilitate self-handicapping. If the task is important and criteria for evaluation are unclear, self-handicapping are more likely to occur in this situation (Graham & Williams, 2009). Uncertain self-esteem, presence of an audience, some personality characteristics and beliefs, such as belief that ability is innate characteristic, can increase the possibility of self-handicapping (Urban & Midgley, 2001). One of the strongest predictors of self-handicapping is a history of low achievement (Zuckerman, Kieffer & Knee, 1998). Once the individuals had experiences of failure, they can develop belief that they are going to fail in the future task and as a result of this belief they are more likely to be engaged in self-handicapping behaviour.

2.2.1.1 Motive of self-handicapping: self-protection or self-presentation

The nature or motives of self-handicapping has different explanation, debate is still continuing as to whether self-handicapping strategies are motivated by private esteem or public esteem. Some psychologist such as Berglas and Jones (1978) suggested that self-handicapping is a protective strategy that is motivated by person's private self-esteem and have aim to protect self-worth. Jones and Berglas (1978) emphasized that the public value

of self-handicapping strategy is not the prime reason for it, even in the absence of audience, self-handicapper will try to protect his "private conception of self-competence from unequivocal negative feedback".

While others researchers (Shepperd & Arkin, 1989), suggested that self-handicapping is a self-presentation strategy and motivated by public (or social) esteem. According to Shepperd and Arkin (1989), self-handicapping occurs in order to protect oneself from the negative judgment of others, by using impression management. Impression management (also called self-presentation) refers to the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions that others form of them (how others perceive, evaluate, and treat them) (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Individuals try to appear able and competent and project this image to an audience. When projecting such positive image become impossible, individuals will try to avoid making a negative impression by using a variety of protective strategies such as self-handicapping (Baumgardner, Lake & Arkin, 1985).

Shepperd and Arkin (1989) examined the relationship between public self-consciousness and self-handicapping in a public setting and found that individuals with high level of public self-consciousness were more likely to use self-handicapping behaviour by selecting distracting music than individuals with low level in public self-consciousness. This research gave evidence that impression management is an important issue in understanding motives for self-handicapping.

2.2.1.2 Self-handicapping and self-esteem

Self-esteem is the attitude or belief about the self, it is a personal evaluation or judgment of the self, is the feeling of being satisfied or not with oneself (Tesser, 2009). Level of self-esteem (positive or negative) is one of the main factors affecting psychological well-being

and adjustment. Self-esteem is one of the important constructs in the concept of self-handicapping. Some studies (Jones & Berglas, 1978; McCrea & Hirt, 2001) have demonstrated that self-handicapping is effective in protecting self-esteem and conceptions of ability in the face of failure. Use of self-handicapping allows individuals to shift attributions in a poor performance from ability to the handicap.

Another question within the relationship between self-handicapping and self-esteem is whether or not level of self-esteem can predict the use of self-handicapping strategies by individuals. Does low self-esteem lead to increase in use and high level of self-esteem reduce use of self-handicapping? Or level of self-esteem does not affect self-handicapping. Discussion on this issue is not closed. Zuckerman, Kieffer and Knee (1998) proposed that there is a strong relationship between level of self-esteem and self-handicapping, these two constructs reinforce each other, forming a vicious circle. Low self-esteem leads to greater use of self-handicapping strategies, resulting in decrease in performance and consequently decreases in self-esteem. Decrease in self-esteem creating a greater need to use self-handicapping. At the end it is difficult to understand whether use of self-handicapping leads to low self-esteem or low self-esteem leads to use of this strategy.

2.2.1.3 Individual differences in self-handicapping

Individuals differ in the extent to which they self-handicapped, research have found a number of personality traits and characteristics that have been related to self-handicapping. Kinon and Murray (2007) in their own study on a profile of college self-handicappers found that self-handicapping was negatively related to openness to new experiences, conscientiousness, agreeableness, autonomy, positive relations with others, self-acceptance, personal growth, optimism, college self-efficacy, generalized self-efficacy, and satisfaction

with life, while self-handicapping was positively related to neuroticism. The positive correlation was also found between self-handicapping and external locus of control (Akca, 2012), depression, anxiety and stress (Sahranc, 2011), perfectionism (Pulford, Johnson, & Awaida, 2005).

2.2.1.4 Types of self-handicapping strategies

Research has shown that people use different types of self-handicapping strategies, some individuals can use reducing amount or even withdrawal of effort (Hirt, McCrea & Kimble, 2000), listening to distracting music (Shepperd & Arkin, 1989), or ingesting drugs or alcohol (Jones & Berglas, 1978), others claim test anxiety and stress (Hendrix & Hirt, 2009), negative mood or other depressive symptoms (Baumgardner, 1991; Baumgardner, Lake & Arkin, 1985) before an important exam or performance. The most widely used classification of self-handicapping is behavioural and claimed type of self-handicapping. Behavioural self-handicapping is the actual behaviour that can hinder a performance. This type of self-handicapping involves some physical action that is typically carried out before a performance (procrastination, withdrawal of effort, lack of practice, drug use, alcohol use, lack of sleep).

The second type of self-handicapping is self-reported or claimed. It is a verbal claim of handicaps before performance. Individual are not involved in any active construction of obstacles, he or she just claims that there are obstacles to his performance such as test and social anxiety, stress, bad mood, shyness, emotional problems and so on.

These two types of self-handicapping are different in the motives that underlying them. Self-reported self-handicapping has primarily self-presentational motive for protective

public self-esteem, while motive for behavioural are more likely to be self-protective, with the aim to protect private self-esteem. Behavioural and self-reported self-handicapping strategies differ in their consequences. Behavioural self-handicapping is more costly and riskier type; it is really decreasing the probability for success and results in poor adjustment over time (Zuckerman, Kieffer & Knee, 1998).

2.2.1.5 Consequences of self-handicapping

Some researchers proposed that self-handicapping can protect or enhance an individual's self-worth and self-esteem. Hirt and McCrea (2009) suggested that self-handicapping effectively maintain positive self-esteem and positive beliefs about their own ability. However, majority of research proposed that self-handicapping has negative long-time consequences. Zuckerman, Kieffer and Knee (1998) conducted a longitudinal research to examine the influence of self-handicapping strategies on coping, academic performance and adjustment. They found that high level of self-handicapping is strongly associated with low academic performance, poor adjustment and negative self-focus. People with high score of self-handicapping used more dysfunctional, emotion-focused coping strategies, such as self-blame, behavioural and mental disengagement. Students, who were highly engage in self-handicapping, reported worst study habits, such as shorter and less efficient exam preparations, that lead to lower GPA. High self-handicapping was positively related with low self-esteem, but as mentioned earlier, these two constructs reinforce each other. According to Zuckerman, Kieffer and Knee (1998), higher score in Self-handicapping Scale was also related to a higher number of visits to the university health service; this fact supports the notions of negative correlation between self-handicapping and well-being.

Sahranc (2011) reported that students with high self-handicapping are more likely to have negative emotional outcomes such as depression, anxiety and stress.

Some of self-handicapping strategies, such as using drugs or alcohol can create a serious social and health problems. Self-handicapping, especially behavioural, has negative interpersonal consequences, Hirt, McCrea and Boris (2003) reported that others evaluate self-handicappers as irresponsible, lazy and will not like to work with them on future tasks. All these facts provide evidence that the practice of self-handicapping puts the person at risk (Zuckerman, Kieffer and Knee 1998).

2.2.2 The Concept of Personality

Personality is unique set of individual's differences, it is a set of components that describe each of us as individuality, how we differ from others and what types of behaviour and emotional reactions are typical for us. The most accepted definition of personality describe it as an individual's unique pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviour that is relatively stable over the life (Davis & Palladino, 1996).

Personality has two basic characteristics - uniqueness and stability. Each personality is unique; you can't find two identical personalities, even between identical twins. The second important characteristic is stability or consistency of personality from one situation to another. Conditions or situations in which we find ourselves are not constant, so also our behaviour changes with situation. However, the overall pattern of response to different conditions has some degree of consistency that is unique to each individual (Davis & Palladino, 1996). This consistency or stability does not mean that personality is not

changing over time, it is a dynamic structure that develops and undergo some degree of modification.

The other important issue in personality is its organization. Personality contains many different constructs - various traits, characteristics, behaviour, that are integrated into whole. This integration is unique for each person. The same traits can be combined or organized in a different way to make us different from others. Another important aspect of personality is its degree of organization. The greater the degree of integration, the more healthy the personality.

Different psychological schools have different understanding of personality and its structure, based on their theoretical approaches. The trait approach in study of personality emphasizes importance of different dimensions or variables of personality. For trait theorists - Allport, Cattell, Eysenck, personality consists of relatively stable and consistent characteristics (traits) that are unique for each individual. Traits are mental set or readiness of individuals to respond to different variety of situations in a consistent and stable way. According to trait theories, personality can be described by person's unique profile, made from different positions of each of the traits dimensions.

According to psychoanalytic school, personality is composed of three mental structures - the id, ego and superego. These three mental hypothetical constructs account for a different aspect of personality, according to Freud (Huffman, 2004). Brief description of these construct is given below:

- Id - is the source of mental energy and consists of impulsive and irrational drives and instincts. The id is functioning according to pleasure principle - immediate

seeking of pleasure and avoidance of discomfort.

- Ego is a rational part of personality structure, which can plan, reason and control Id. This structure works according to reality principle - tries to meet demands of Id, Superego and realities of environment.
- Superego - is the highest structure that consists of set of ethical standards and rules for behaviour. It is operating on morality principle.

According to Freud, each of these mental structures operates on different levels of consciousness and he proposed three levels of awareness or consciousness:

- Conscious - part of mind, which consists of thoughts and motives that a person is aware of at any time.
- Preconscious - mental activities that is not part of a person's awareness, but can easily be brought to his own awareness.
- Unconscious - part of mind, which contains instincts, primitive motives, memories and emotions, that person cannot be aware of in normal state.

The id is totally unconscious, ego occupies preconscious and conscious, while superego operates in conscious level only. The id, ego and superego are hypothetical constructs that often come into conflict with one another. According to Freud, the primary aim for personality is to reduce the tension between id, ego and superego and to live according to pleasure principle (Wolitzky, 2006). Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach to personality is very controversial and not fully accepted, many scientists criticize this theory for putting too much emphasis on sexual drives and primary instincts, but all

psychologist acknowledged the fact of the importance of unconscious in structure of personality.

Other psychological schools look at personality as adjustment of individual to his own environment. According to Allport (McAdams, 2009), personality is the dynamic organization within the individual that determine his unique adjustment to his environment. This is a unique set of characteristics, which help individual to function successfully in environment around him. According to this approach, from the beginning of their life individuals try to adjust to environment and everybody has his own unique way for it.

2.2.3 Socio-demographic factors

Socio-Demographic factors are the group of variables within family and society that have significant influence on cognitive, moral, emotional and behavioural development of child. It includes a large number of factors, such as religion, ethnicity, gender, family size, family structure, parental education, parenting style and so on. For the purpose of this study, the five variables that will be measured and analyzed - gender, birth order, parental education, family structure and family size.

2.2.3.1 Gender

Gender is the first characteristic that we use to divide people. Many people use the words sex and gender, without differentiating them. Sex is biological characteristics that distinguish male and female, while gender is a social. Gender is a sum of behaviours and attitudes that a society considers proper for its males and females (Henslin, 2008).

Generally, there are two main approaches toward gender: conservative and progressive (Forsthuber, Horvath & Motiejunaite, 2010). Conservative view looks at social and cultural difference between men and women as biological, natural and therefore unchanging. While progressive approach, perceives men and women's social roles as outcome of historical, cultural and social effects, and thus constantly in the process of change as society itself changes. Social approach views gender differences as an accommodation to the differing roles occupied by men and women in society. Men's dominant role in society associated with power and status and indicate controlling, assertive, autocratic, independent and competent behaviour, while women adapt roles with less power and status that subsequently produce pattern of subordinate, less aggressive and more cooperative behaviour (Eagly, 2000).

For successful accommodation to typical gender role, men and women acquire different skills and pattern of social behavior. Process of development of gender identity (fundamental sense of being male or female) and gender role behaviour (how male or female suppose to behave, according to social and cultural norms) starts early in the life. By the age of 3 years, most of the children have formed gender identity and acquired gender role behaviour (Poole, Warren & Nunez, 2007). Each society has its own gender stereotypes - beliefs about man's and woman's typical social roles, specific skills, emotional dispositions and physical characteristics. These expectations about appropriate male and female behaviour depend on society, culture and religion. Usually society has negative reaction to any deviation from gender role. Behaviour that is inconsistent with socially-accepted norms is often penalized by others directly, such as losing a job or indirectly - being ignored (Eagly, 2000).

Gender role has powerful effect on personality. Together with other social roles (family roles, occupational roles) it influences attitudes, values, motivation and behaviour of person. Even self-concept of people is influenced by gender stereotypes, which are incorporated into people's self-concept and then are used by people as their own standards. According to Eagly (2000), people tend to evaluate themselves favorably or unfavorably depending on the extent of conformation or deviation from these personal standards. This link between self-concept and gender role can explain many differences in behaviour between men and women.

2.2.3.2 Birth order

Birth order can be define as the ordinal position of the child among other siblings in the family. This is one of the psychological constructs that can influence development of personality, research linked birth order with temperament and social behaviour, also a number of studies found a correlation between birth order and academic achievement (Rodgers, 2009).

Alfred Adler was the first psychologist who study relationship between personality and birth order and gave description for different personality types according to birth order. Firstborn, according to Adler (Huffman, 2004), received great parental attention and have better intellectual environment, as result of this, firstborns tend to have higher score on intelligence test then other siblings. Also first born children are generally more responsible, assertive, and task-oriented, but on the other hand, these children tend to develop feelings of inferiority and vulnerable to stress (Strickland, 2001).

Adler (Huffman, 2004) describes lastborns as are most successful socially, have strong sense of security and highest level of self-esteem and flexibility, compare to other birth

positions. Position of lastborns as an always youngest child (baby) in a family, make them to be more dependent on others.

It is important to notice, that Adler stressed that birth order it is not just numerical position of the child in the family, it is psychological construct that includes large set of factors that going together with child's position. Amount of parental attention, parental expectations, parental affection, availability of household resources, including money, time and space, sibling competition - all these factors contribute to the birth order phenomenon. Usually, researchers divide birth order into three groups - first born children, middle born (second, third and so on) and last born (Rodgers, 2009).

2.2.3.3 Family background

Family background plays a significant role in person's life. The home environment is a primary socialization agent that influences child future life, his or her interests, attitudes and behaviour. Academic success of children largely depends on the family motivation and attitudes toward education. The term family background includes such factors as socio-economic status (SES) of family, family structure, family size and parents' characteristics, such as parenting style, parental education, parental attitude toward children, parental involvement. This study is going to investigate three family background characteristics - family structure, size and parental education.

I. Family structure

There are many definitions of family, one of the most prominent definition was made by anthropologist Murdock (Georgas, 2002): "The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both

sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted". From this definition the functions of the family can be seen as sexual regulation, economic cooperation, socialization of children, and provision of support, care, affection, and companionship (Georgas, 2002).

Every family has its own structure - the type of marital relationship between partners. Several studies show that family structure has important influence on development and further behavioural, emotional and academic adjustment of children. Most of these researchers put their focus on monogamous family, single-parent family, divorce family or adopted family. The single parent family is the family where one parent raising one or more children on his own. Often, a single parent family is a mother with her children, although there are single fathers as well. All this types of family structures can be fitted in monogamous family structure. However, in many cultures around the world, children live in non monogamous families with more than two parents (Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Caridine & Abu-Saad, 2002). The most common form of non monogamous marriage is polygamous marriage (Al-Krenawi & Lightman, 2000 in Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Caridine & Abu-Saad, 2002), that involves a husband with 2 or more wives. According to Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Caridine and Abu-Saad, (2002) polygamy is legally and widely practiced in 850 societies across the globe (especially in Africa, Asia and Middle East). There are some reasons for polygamous marital structure (such as religion, demography (more women than men of marriageable age), desire to increase the number of children (for emotional and economical support for parents in old age), economical reasons (the higher the number of children, the more economically productive a family can be).

II. Family size

Family size has also implications for distribution of parental time and economic resources (Cornwell, Eggebeen & Meschke, 1996). The family can be described as a structure that combines three types of capitals or resources - financial capital (material resources), human capital (nonmaterial resources - education) and social capital (social connection and relationships) (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). The more children are in the family, the less of each of these resources every child will get. How it was stated above, socialization of children is one of the important missions of family. It is obvious, that this goal - socialization can be met through daily interaction between parents and child. The quality of this interaction has important influence on child development and socialization (Lerner and Castellino, 2009). Family size is one of the factors that can affect the quality of the relationship between parents and child. In family with many children the time for daily interaction with each child will be less than in the small family.

III. Parental education

Parental education is usually used as a measure of family SES. It is considered as a aspects of SES that is stable and tends to remain the same over time (Puklek Levpušček, Zupančič & Socan, 2013). Parental education, especially father's own, also relates to other SES components such as family income, social prestige and economic status. Research on influence of parents on child achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005) showed that parents' education is related to a warm, social climate in the home and not only father's education is important for this, but the mother's education was a one of the main predictors in parental warmth. Parents with higher level of education usually have more financial resources that

allow them to use learning opportunities for their children's education and pay more attention to their child's intellectual growth than parents with lower educational level and lower SES (Puklek Levpušček, Zupančič & Socan, 2013). Parental education is contributing to child's achievement motivation and general well-being in several ways, it is not only financial and material resources, it includes human and social resources too. Parents who are better educated have more social connections and can enroll their children in more educational activities not only in school (Schunk & Pajares, 2009). Good level of parental education helps parents to support and stimulate their children's intellectual development by providing cognitively stimulating learning environment and literacy activities at home (Davis-Kean, 2005). Parents also are important role models that provide examples of behaviour and motivation. Educated parents are more likely to have achievement motivation and demonstrate strong positive attitude toward education. Parents with good level of education are more likely to demonstrate model ways to cope with difficulties and encourage their children to use positive strategies and be more capable in front of challenges (Schunk & Pajares, 2009).

2.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study

2.3.1 Theoretical framework of self-handicapping

Concept of academic self-handicapping can be linked with numbers of theories such as Attribution Theory, Achievement Goal Theory and Self-Worth Theory.

2.3.1.1 Attribution Theory

Process of self-handicapping is very similar to process of causal attribution, although they have important distinctions. Consider this, researcher decided to look at Attribution theory

more closely. Attribution theory is one of the most influential theories in area of academic motivation and achievement. This theory originated from works of Fritz Heider, according to him people try to analyze and make attribution because of their inherent needs to understand, predict and control social world around them (Weary & Reich, 2009). According to Heider (Sweeton & Deerrose, 2010), in making attribution, people pass through three steps, the observation of event, then determination the intention of the event and the last step is making an attribution about the event. This attribution can be internal (people believe that the cause of the event is from them), external (the cause of the event is from situation) or combination of both (external and internal).

Many other theorists (such as Jones, Davis and Kelley) made their own impact in development of attribution theory. Jones and Davis in 1965 (Weary & Reich, 2009) established their Correspondence Inference Theory, Kelly proposed Model of Attribution Processes. Most widely used in educational psychology framework of attribution theory was made by Bernard Weiner. Every action that a person makes has its outcome and this outcome can be interpreted as success or failure. After this outcome person use to look for answer "Why it happened?", take a "causal search" to determine why that outcome occurred (Graham & Williams, 2009).

Different answers can be given for these questions, different set of causes can be brought to explain success or failure, Weiner (1984) differentiate them and classified into three dimensions. According to Attribution theory, people make explanation of success or failure in terms of three sets of characteristics:

- Locus (internal - external) - whether a cause is internal or external to the individual.

- Stability (stable - unstable) - is the cause constant over time or not.
- Controllability (controllable - uncontrollable) - can individual change (or control) cause or not.

The first dimension is the locus of causality, it refers to whether the cause is internal (located within the person - his abilities and personality) or external (outside of the person - situational factors). The second dimension was labeled by Weiner (1984) as causal stability. This dimension differentiates attributions or causes on the basis of their consistency. Attribution can have temporal consistency or be unstable and vary within time or situations; or attribution can be stable and have cross-situational consistency (globality). The third dimension is controllability, it describes causes in terms of intentionality and responsibility, how people perceive the cause - either within their control or out of their control and how they feel responsible for it or not.

There are four main factors that influence attribution in academic settings - ability, task difficulty, effort and luck. According to three sets of characteristics, these four main factors can be classified as:

- stable, uncontrollable and internal (ability)
- unstable, controllable and internal (effort)
- stable, uncontrollable and external (task difficulty)
- unstable, uncontrollable and external (luck).

Self-serving attributional bias or "hedonic bias" - is the situation when person makes internal attribution for success and external attribution for failure (Graham & Williams, 2009). In other words, people tend to take credit in case of success and deny their own

responsibility in situation of failure. People use this bias as important mechanism for protecting positive self-image and positive self-esteem from negative effect of failure (Weary & Reich, 2009). Self-serving bias and self-handicapping are very similar. Both of them can be seen in achievement situations, where person is expected to demonstrate his own ability, both of them are looking for excuses for outcomes and motivated by protecting of self-esteem or maintaining positive public image. However the main difference between them is the time of preparing these excuses - self-serving attributions make after performance, while self-handicappers prepare these excuses before event of performance.

2.3.1.2 Achievement Goal Theory

The theory of achievement goals - is a social cognitive perspective of motivation, it explains how people interpret their achievement. Achievement goal theory is less concerned with what individuals are trying to achieve and instead focuses more on understanding why. Different psychologists have different models of achievement goals. Some, such as Ames, Dweck and Maehr supported two goal model, where goals divided into mastery (ability) goals and performance (task) goal, while others - Elliot and Midgley introduced four goal model: mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach and performance-avoidance (Maehr & Zusho, 2009). According to Elliot (2009) each goals and especially achievement goals are focused on approach or avoidance of a particular type of competence:

- mastery-approach goals represent tendency to achieve absolute or intrapersonal competence (to perform better than one has done before).

- mastery-avoidance goals represent tendency to avoid absolute or intrapersonal incompetence (to avoid performing worse than one has done before).
- performance-approach goals represent tendency to achieve interpersonal competence (to perform better than other students).
- performance-avoidance goals represent tendency to avoid interpersonal incompetence (to avoid performing worse than other students).

According to Achievement Goal Theory, individual's goal orientation influences academic achievement, effort, cognitive strategies and learning approaches used by learner, it has important effect on the way how students perceive and perform in achievement situation (Elliot, 2009). Students with mastery-approach goal focus on learning new things and mastering new skills, they tend to be more intrinsically motivated and more engage in the learning process, more creative, while students with performance orientation focus on external outcomes such as grades and have lack of intrinsic motivation to learn (Grolnick, Friendly & Bellas, 2009). Elliot and Church (2003) indicate differences within performance goals, performance-approach involve orientation to be competent in front of peers and performance-avoidance goal involve avoiding any failure and situations of incompetence. According to number of research (Elliot, 2009), approach goals (mastery-approach and performance-approach) are considered to be adaptive goals that lead to positive outcomes, while avoidance goals (mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance) are considered to be maladaptive and lead to negative outcomes.

A number of studies (Chang, 2010; Elliot & Church, 2003; Rastegar, Afshari, Seif & Jahromi, 2012; Urda & Midgley, 2001; Valle, Núñez, Cabanach, Rodríguez, González-Pienda & Rosario, 2007) examined a relationship between self-handicapping and person's

achievement goal orientation. Most researchers found that self-handicapping positively correlates with performance-avoidance goals and have negative correlation with mastery and performance-approach goals. Urdan and Midgley (2001) conducted four longitudinal studies to examine the predictors of self-handicapping behaviour in students and suggest that this behaviour is related to avoidance motives - the avoidance dimension of performance goal is most strongly predicting self-handicapping. Students who have performance-avoidance orientation and try to avoid any situation where they can be judged as incompetent or looking unable, more likely will be engaged in self-handicapping behaviour to hide incompetence or lack of abilities from others. These similar findings were reported by Rastegar, Afshari, Seif & Jahromi (2012), who found that students who usually set mastery goals instead of avoidance-performance goals are less likely to adopt academic self-handicapping strategies. Thus, from positions of Achievement Goal Theory, self-handicapping can be conceptualized as a highly avoidance-based strategy, with strong negative relation to mastery goals (Elliot & Church, 2003).

2.3.1.3 Self-Worth Theory

Self-worth Theory suggests that individuals strive to give their lives meaning by seeking the approval of others. One of people's highest priorities is protecting their general belief that they are good, capable individuals, such achievements depend on one being competent (Covington, 2009). Human beings have a basic need for competence — a need to believe that they can deal effectively with their environment. People have a self-worth motive - desire to establish and maintain a positive self-image (Covington, 1984). This cannot always be possible, sometimes people prefer using not approaching strategies, but strategies for avoiding failure, because failure gives negative implications - the impression of low

ability and incompetence (Urduan & Midgley, 2001). Individuals can use different failure avoiding strategies to deal with threats to their self-worth. An ability is a very important in academic environment, it is important ingredient in academic success (Covington, 1984), society value ability more than personal effort. This emphasis on ability forces students in any way try to protect a sense of ability.

Covington (1984) lists a number of strategies for avoiding the implications of failure that is available in academic environment:

- not participation (unwillingness to do work or doing as little as possible, absenteeism, chronic inattention)
- false effort (participation in assignment without any real commitment)
- setting of unattainable personal performance goals
- procrastination (studying only at the last minute)
- underachieving (providing no information about actual ability or downgrading the importance of the work)
- ensuring of success (preference of very easy assignments that guarantee success).

According to him, by using these strategies individuals take personal responsibility for their successes and attribute their failure to external factors that this will protect a sense of their competence and not reflect on their personal worth. These tactics may reduce the anxiety and protect personal worth, but this is temporary, in long-term use they have negative consequences.

2.3.2 Theories of personality

Theories of personality are trying to describe individual differences, classify them into types, find out why and how these differences develop and use these facts for explaining

and predicting individual's behaviour. Theories of personality can be divided into psychoanalytic and psychosocial theories, temperaments and trait models, theories emphasizing needs and motives, humanistic theories and social-learning theories (McAdams, 2009b).

Different psychological schools introduced their own different approaches in explaining personality. The father of Psychoanalytic school Sigmund Freud developed theory of personality, where he proposed three levels of consciousness (conscious, preconscious and unconscious) and three mental structures of personality (id, ego and superego). Neo-Freudians (Adler, Jung, Horney) revised Freud's ideas and proposed theories of their own - Alfred Adler in his individual psychology emphasized complex of inferiority, Carl Jung in analytical psychology introduced two types of unconscious - personal and collective, while Karen Horney stressed the importance of basic anxiety (Huffman, 2004).

According to the social-cognitive approach (A. Bandura and J. Rotter), the major factors in development of personality are learning and social environment. The other group of theories of personality has humanistic approach (C. Rogers and A. Maslow); they emphasized individual's self-concept and self-actualizations.

In this study the researcher is going to look at personality from position of trait theories, that describe personality as a summary of traits - consistent and relatively stable patterns of behaviour, feelings and thoughts. The trait approach to personality is focused on differences between individuals and on identifying and measuring these individual personality differences.

Trait approach in describing and understanding personality has a long and rich history. Ancient Greek and Roman philosophers were trying to describe personality and organize it into types. Greek physician Hippocrates and later Roman physician Galen proposed four

personality types, viz., sanguine (cheerful, enthusiastic), melancholic (sad, depressive), choleric (angry, hostile) and phlegmatic (stolid, apathetic) that are corresponding with four kind of fluids (called humors) in human body (blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm) (Boeree, 2006).

2.3.2.1 Early traits theories (G. Allport and R. Cattell)

Gordon Allport, one of the first trait theorists, proposed that personality can be describe by the combination of traits. In his research, in 1936, he analyzed around 18 000 English words that describe differences in personality and by using factor analysis developed a list of 4 500 personality traits, he classified them as stable traits (Goldberg, 1990). Allport divided all personality traits into three major categories: cardinal, central and secondary. Cardinal traits are the traits that some people have (not all, relatively few people developed these traits) and which practically define their life. Central traits are a prominent traits of personality and secondary traits - these are traits that exhibited in some situations.

Raymond Cattell is a trait theorist who divided traits into surface and source traits. Surface traits - these are traits that can be recognized by behaviour, while source traits - are the source that determine behaviour. He used list of 4 500 traits, proposed by Allport. By applying a variety of analytic methods, most especially factor analysis, Cattell reduced this list and developed set of 35 bipolar clusters of traits. Later this set of 35 traits was reduced to 16 and it became a 16 Factors Model, measured by Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factors Questionnaire (16PF). This questionnaire is a widely used instrument for assessing adult personality. According to Cattell, these 16 dimensions of traits, such as dull - bright, relaxed - tense, humble - assertive, reserved - outgoing, shy - venturesome, affected by feelings - emotionally stable, conservative-experimenting, can be used to describe each of us (Davis & Palladino, 1996).

2.3.2.2 *Eysenck trait theory*

Hans Eysenck offered the other model of trait structure of personality. He described personality by two, later expanded to three basic traits: neuroticism, extraversion and psychoticism. These major aspects of personality, according to Eysenck, are largely genetically determined and can be explained by differences in functions of autonomic nervous system.

Neuroticism includes traits such as anxiety, emotional instability, guilt feelings, shyness, low self-esteem. Eysenck gave physiological explanation for differences in emotional stability among people, he hypothesized that some people have a more responsive sympathetic nervous system than others; these people have high score in Neuroticism (Boeree, 2006).

Extraversion - introversion this is dimension that describes person's orientation to the social interaction and includes traits such as sociability, activity, optimism and sensation seeking. Extraverts are more oriented to the external social world, are more sociable, outgoing, spontaneous, talkative and energetic, while by contrast, introverts are more withdrawn, quiet, deliberate and more oriented to the internal private world (McAdams, 2009a). Eysenck provided physiological explanation for this dimension, he hypothesized that extraversion-introversion is a matter of the balance of two processes in the brain - inhibition (when the brain is calming itself down) and excitation (when the brain is getting into alert). Extraverted, according to Eysenck (Boeree, 2006), has strong inhibition, while the introvert, on the other hand, has poor or weak inhibition.

Psychoticism consists of traits typically related to delinquency, such as aggression, lack of empathy, impulsivity, antisocial behavior (Davis & Palladino, 1996). People with low level of psychoticism are cooperative, empathic and conventional, while high psychoticism

individuals are aggressive, nonconforming, inhumane and having disregard for the law and the feelings of others (Corr, 2009). These three major traits - neuroticism, extraversion and psychoticism can be measured by Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Eysenck Personality Trait Theory has followers and critics, some psychologist criticized him for using too much physiology and mathematics in explanation of personality, but most of them agreed that his explanation of differences in personality, by using three basic traits, provided a basis for future theories in area of personality.

2.3.2.3 Five Factor Theory

Analyzing all previous research findings and list of possible traits of personality, researchers concluded that some traits are repeated from study to study. Despite the various traits name, they were similar factors. Psychologists reached the agreement that personality can be described by these fundamental traits. These include five basic traits - openness to experience, neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness. These five dimensions of personality (often called Big Five) gave basis for Five Factor Model, theory that describes and explains personality in terms of Big Five traits. The Big Five, was introduced in 1963 by Warren Norman, in 1990 R. R. McCrae and P. T. Costa, Jr., presented their version, called The Five Factor Theory (Boeree, 2006).

Traits, according to the Five Factor Theory (FFT), are stable structures of personality that are not changing with time and circumstances (Costa & McCrea, 2006). According to FFT, traits must be distinguished from other personality attributes such as attitudes, habits, beliefs, values. All these attributes (Characteristic Adaptations) can and do changed over the time or circumstances, while personality traits (Basic Tendencies) stay relatively stable throughout the life. Basic Tendencies, or basic personality traits, shape the development of

Characteristic Adaptations and it is important to know individual's trait profile for understanding and predicting his or her behaviour (Costa & McCrea, 2006).

The five major personality dimensions can be described as these (Huffman, 2004; John & Gosling, 2000):

- *Openness to experience vs. Closed mindedness*

(original, imaginative, curious, open to new ideas) vs. (uncreative, uncurious, conventional)

- *Conscientiousness vs. Lack of direction*

(responsible, self-disciplined, organized and achieving) vs. (irresponsible, careless, impulsive, lazy, disorganized)

- *Extraversion vs. Introversion*

(sociable, outgoing, talkative, active) vs. (quite, passive, reserved, inhibited and withdrawn)

- *Agreeableness vs. Antagonism*

(good-natured, warm, cooperative, helpful, trusting) vs. (irritable, argumentative, ruthless, suspicious and uncooperative)

- *Neuroticism - Emotional stability*

(emotionally unstable, prone to anxiety, guilt, worry and moodiness) vs. (emotionally stable, calm, easygoing and relaxed).

According to Brislin and Lo (2006), people with each of the five construct can be described as follow:

Openness to experience

People with this trait are usually creative, aesthetic sensitive, have high level of imagination

and wide range of interests. They are curious, demonstrate a need for variety and new unfamiliar experiences and highly introspective.

Conscientiousness

People, who scored high in this dimension, are self-disciplined, responsible, organized and have higher need for achievement and greater persistence. They exhibit highly ethical behaviour.

Extraversion

People are more sociable, because social behaviour is satisfying their need for reward. They are more impulsive, spontaneous, talkative, energetic and enthusiastic, like excitement and experience positive emotions more often. Extraverts are more oriented to external social world, rather than internal private world (like introverts).

Agreeableness

Individuals with this personality trait tend to demonstrate sympathy, emotional support, altruism and cooperation with others and seek for harmony. They are trusting and tolerant people, who easily liked by others.

Neuroticism

This construct describes people who are more likely to experience mood fluctuations, negative emotions and negative affects, such as anxiety, anger, depression, guilt, disgust and hostility. They are not always able to control impulses and cope with stress (Davis & Palladino, 1996).

2.4 Review of Related Studies

The relationship between self-handicapping and personality traits and also with socio-demographic variables is not a new topic in research. A number of studies were conducted in this area.

2.4.1 Self-handicapping and personality traits

Personality traits and their influence on the individuals' behaviour and motivation in the achievement situations, especially in educational settings are the well researched area in psychology. A great number of studies were conducted on relationship between personality characteristics and strategies that individuals used in process of learning - causal attribution, coping, learning and self-protective strategies, among them self-handicapping.

Ross, Canada and Rausch (2002) investigated relationship between self-handicapping and five basic personality traits measured by Five Factor Model - neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. They measured self-handicapping (Self-handicapping Scale) and five personality traits (NEO Personality Inventory) of undergraduate students and found the correlation between these variables. Each trait was measure by six subscales (facet), i.e. subscale Openness to experience has Fantasy, Aesthetics, Feelings, Actions, Ideas and Values Facets. Self-handicapping was positively related to Neuroticism and negatively related to Conscientiousness. All facets of Neuroticism (Anxiety, Angry hostility, Depression, Self-consciousness, Impulsiveness and Vulnerability) were correlated with self-handicapping, most significant positive correlation was with Depression facet. While in Conscientiousness domain (Competence, Order, Dutifulness, Achievement-striving, Self-discipline and Deliberation) most significant negative correlation was with Self-discipline. Other traits (extraversion, openness and agreeableness) did not show significant correlation with self-handicapping, only some selective facets such as Fantasy facet in Openness was positively related and in Agreeableness facet of Trust was negatively correlated with self-handicapping. The

authors suggested that Neuroticism and Conscientiousness play the dominant role in predicting self-handicapping.

The other research that tried to establish what is the correlation between personality traits and self-handicapping behaviour was conducted by Kinon, M. and Murray, C. in University of California, USA in 2007. They tried to clarify the profile of the average college self-handicapper. Together with other psychological characteristics such as psychological well-being, optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, satisfaction with life and presence of meaning in life, researchers measured the five basic personality traits (by using the Big Five Inventory). The results of this study showed that self-handicapping was negatively related to openness to new experiences, conscientiousness, agreeableness and positively related to neuroticism. From the results of their own study Kinon and Murray (2007) found that the average college self-handicapper tends to have lower self-esteem, self-efficacy and satisfaction with life, to be less open to new experiences, less agreeable, also tends to fear negative evaluation and have higher neuroticism and lower conscientiousness.

Nosenko, Arshava and Nosenko (2014) in the research of self-handicapping as a coping strategy, that was conducted in Dnipropetrovsk National University, Ukraine, suggested that personality factors are fundamental in understanding self-handicapping as a coping strategy. Along with Proactive Strategy Inventory, Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale, General Self-Efficacy Scale, Self-Handicapping Scale, they used NEO Five Factor Inventory for measuring Big Five personality traits. From the results of the study they reported that the high level of neuroticism, uncertainty in self-efficacy and low level of subjective well-being were predictors of self-handicapping behaviour as non-constructive proactive coping. The findings of this research give evidence that personality traits are fundamental in understanding coping ability and in predicting self-handicapping as specific proactive coping style.

2.4.2 Self-handicapping and socio-demographic factors

Gender differences are one of the most consistent and researchable area in self-handicapping literature. A great number of research confirmed that men and women differ in using self-handicapping strategies (Hirt & McCrea, 2009; Hirt, McCrea & Kimble, 2000; Lucas & Lovaglia, 2005; McCrea & Hirt, 2001; Midgley & Urda, 1995; Rhodewalt & Davison, 1986; Rhodewalt & Hill, 1995; Shepperd & Arkin, 1989a). Although, some researchers didn't find significant differences in self-handicapping between male and female (Shepperd & Arkin, 1989b).

There are two main differences between men and women in self-handicapping - firstly extend or degree of using self-handicapping strategies by men and women and secondary the different types of self-handicapping behaviour that men and women demonstrate. Men have been shown to demonstrate self-handicapping behaviour more often and in greater degree than women (Hirt & McCrea, 2009). Research (Hirt, McCrea & Kimble, 2000; Rhodewalt & Davison, 1986) has repeatedly found that men use behavioral self-handicapping, while women do not engage in this type of self-handicapping, they prefer to use claimed self-handicapping strategies. The results from using Self-handicapping Scale (SHS, Jones & Rhodewalt,1982) showed that men tend to score higher on the behavioral subscale of the SHS, while women tend to have higher score on the claimed subscale of the SHS (McCrea, Hirt, Hendrix, Milner & Steele, 2008).

Researchers has made a number of attempts to explain the reason for gender differences in self-handicapping. Some researchers (Hirt, McCrea & Kimble, 2000) believe that the source of gender differences in self-handicapping is different level of concern about public

impressions by men and women. The results obtained from their own study supported the previous findings that women (unlike the men) are not involved in behavioural self-handicapping under either self-focus or public-focus conditions. These results provided evidence that men perceive greater evaluative threat in performance situation than do women, it may reflect more general competitive orientation of men in performance settings and to be more driven by external standards, while women are more focused on intrinsic standards and less threatened by failure. As results of experiencing greater performance pressure and expectation of success, men may be more engaged in self-protective behaviour such as self-handicapping (Hirt, McCrea & Kimble, 2000).

Others (Lucas & Lovaglia, 2005) see roots of gender differences in self-handicapping in person's status (person's rank in a social hierarchy based on public and self-esteem). Lucas and Lovaglia (2005) proposed that person's social status plays a significant role in the decision to use self-handicapping strategies. Performance has significant status implications, if an individual with the high social or group status fails, then his high status or position may be challenged. Gender is a status characteristic; men usually (in many society) have higher status position than woman and more involved in self-handicapping to protect their high position and competence in group or society.

The other possible explanation for gender differences in self-handicapping can be in different beliefs about ability and effort between men and women. According to Hirt, McCrea and Kimble, (2000) men and women differ in their beliefs about roles that ability and effort play in success. McCrea, Hirt, Hendrix, Milner and Steele (2008) proposed that gender differences result from the fact that women placing more importance on displaying effort than do men. Researchers (McCrea, Hirt, Hendrix, Milner & Steele, 2008) attributed

this differences to process of socialization and sex role stereotyping. These social stereotypes look at performance of boys and girls differently, provide masculine or feminine pattern of behaviour.

The differences in self-handicapping between men and women concern not only level of self-handicapping and different type of self-handicapping used by men and women. Men and women are differing in their reactions to self-handicapping. According to Hirt, McCrea and Boris (2003), women tend to dislike self-handicappers more than men, view them as lazy and unmotivated. Women are less willing than men to excuse self-handicapping behaviour and viewed self-handicapping (particularly behavioural type) as irresponsible and self-destructive. The researchers (Hirt, McCrea and Boris, 2003) explained this differences that women value effort and expect it from others more that do men. Women also perceive the cost of behavioural self-handicapping to be greater that do men.

The other factor that has a great influence on the development of personality and can contribute to process of self-handicapping is family environment. A number of studies were examining the relationship between family variables and failure-avoidant strategies. Dinnel, Hopkins and Thompson (2002) investigated the role of family variables in the development of failure-avoidant behaviour (self-handicapping and self-worth protection). They found that children with uncertain self-esteem and fear of evaluative situation have family environment with family conflict, lack of family cohesion and their parents were used authoritative parenting style. These characteristics such as uncertain self-esteem and self-confidence, in turn, result in greater probability for the children to use failure avoidant strategies such as academic self-handicapping.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher tried to analyze the basic concepts of three major variables of this study - self-handicapping, personality and socio-demographic factors. The theoretical framework underlining the background for this research was also discussed in this part of the work. The review of previous studies in the related areas of this research showed, that a great number of research were carried out in the last 30 years for the purpose of finding the possible explanations and antecedents of self-handicapping.

Gender differences in self-handicapping, as well as relationship between personality traits and self-handicapping have been well investigated and stable and consistent finding were reported. On the other hand, question about relationship between self-handicapping and family variables such as birth order, parental education, family structure and size are still open. The researcher extensively reviewed previous studies on the topic of this work. However, all the literature reviewed was on research carried out outside Nigeria. To the best of our knowledge, no work on the relationship between self-handicapping and above mentioned variables was previously conducted in Zaria. Summarizing all aforementioned facts, researcher intends to conduct this study to bring his own possible contribution to the area of self-handicapping in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter methodological aspects of the study, such as type of research design, population, sample and sampling technique is discussed. The instrumentation of the study (Self-handicapping Scale, Big Five Inventory and Personal Information Inventory) is explained. Results of validity and reliability of instruments (SHC and BFI), obtained from pilot-study is given. In the end of this chapter procedure for data collection and method of data analysis is presented.

3.2 Research Design

This research was design to be descriptive, correlation study design was used by researcher to find out the relationship between dependent (academic self-handicapping) and independent (socio-demographic factors and personality traits) variables. The correlation design allowed the researcher to examine not just relationships among these variables, but also find the degree of this relationship and investigate the extent of influence of each independent variable on academic self-handicapping.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target area of the study is all undergraduate students from the twelve faculties of ABU, Zaria. The total number of undergraduate students in Ahmadu Bello University in 2013/2014 academic session is 30215 (according to Management Information System Unit,

ICT Directorate, ABU, Zaria, 2014). The table below represents the distribution of undergraduate students according to faculties.

Table 3.1 Distribution of undergraduate students of ABU, Zaria according to faculties, 2013/2014 session.

No	Faculty	Population of students	Percentage (%)
1	Administration	3227	10.7
2	Agriculture	435	1.4
3	Arts	2526	8.4
4	Education	4519	15
5	Engineering	3720	12.3
6	Environmental Design	2217	7.3
7	Law	1386	4.6
8	Medicine	1568	5.1
9	Pharmaceutical Science	829	2.7
10	Science	6197	20.5
11	Social science	3062	10.1
12	Veterinary Medicine	529	1.8
	Total	30215	100

Source: Management Information System Unit, Information Communication Technology Directorate, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2014.

Table 3.2 Students Statistics by Faculty, Department and Gender.

	Female	Male	Total
Arts			
African Languages and Cultures	61	271	332
History	59	199	258
French	77	55	132
Theatre and Performing Arts	147	120	267
Education			
Library and Information Science	350	538	888
Science Education	504	843	1347
Educational Psychology and Counselling	137	250	387
Engineering			
Chemical Engineering	117	778	895
Civil Engineering	30	647	677
Electrical Engineering	43	787	830
Mechanical Engineering	26	551	577
Medicine			
Human physiology			
Total			

Source: Management Information System Unit, Information Communication Technology Directorate, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 2014.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size of the study is four hundred and forty students from four faculties - Arts, Education, Engineering and Medicine. Recommended sample size, according to Krecjie and Morgan (as cited in Cohen, Minion & Marrison, 2000) is 379 (with margin of error 5% and confidence level 95%). However, the sample size was increased to 440 as correction factor.

A multistage cluster sampling approach was applied (Figure 1). Four out of the twelve faculties of ABU, Zaria were purposively selected to represent (conditionally for the purpose of this study) the four main directions of study in the University (Arts, Humanitarian science, Technical science and Science). The next stage of the sampling (secondary cluster) is the level of undergraduate students in each faculty. The final stage of sampling is the selection of individuals that will constitute the desired sample size number.

Two hundred level students were selected in this study for reasons earlier mentioned (under Chapter 1). Students from four departments in each faculty were randomly selected.

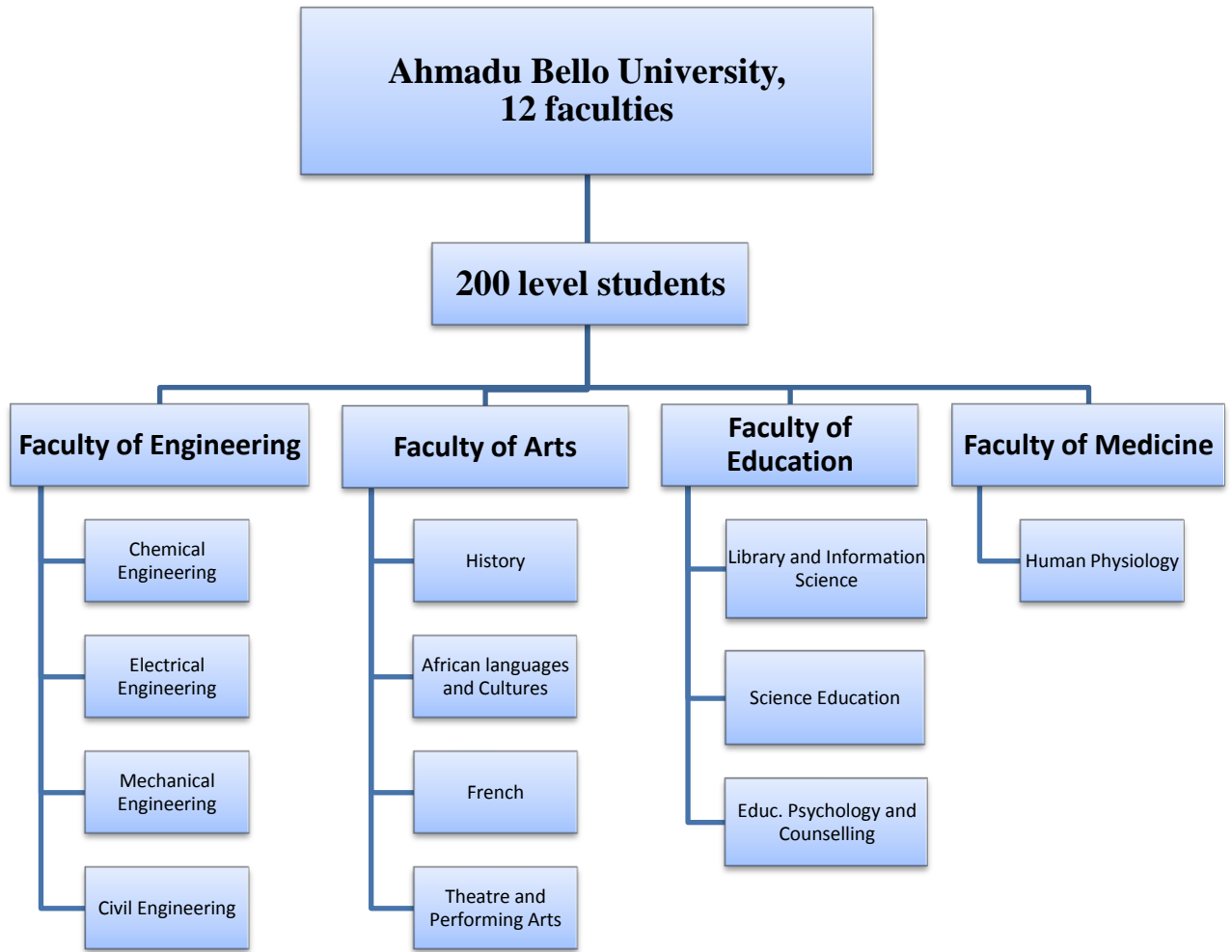


Figure 1. Flow chart of multistage sampling procedure.

3.5 Instrumentation

Three types of instruments were used in this research for collecting data - Personal Information Inventory (for socio-demographic data), Self-handicapping Scale and Big Five Inventory (for personal data).

3.5.1 Personal Information Inventory

The self-constructed short inventory was used to collect demographic data about students. It contained questions about gender, age, course of study, number of siblings, birth order, family structure (monogamous, polygamous or single parent), parental education (father's and mother's education separately).

3.5.2 Big Five Inventory (BFI)

This 44 item inventory was developed by John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) to assess personality from positions of five basic traits (Big Five): Extraversion (8 items), Agreeableness (9 items), Conscientiousness (9 items), Neuroticism (8 items) and Openness to experience (10 items). It is 5 point Likert scale, consists of Agree strongly (AS), Agree a little (A), Neither agree nor disagree (NS), Disagree a little (D), and Disagree strongly (DS). Each degree of agreement has numerical score (from 1 to 5) and the total score will be computed by summing up scores from all statements.

John, Donahue and Kentle (1991) reported high reliability with Cronbach alpha coefficient .80 and clear factor structure of BFI. This inventory, according to Nwoke and Chukwuorji (2011), was adapted for the use of professionals in Nigeria and has good reliability and validity coefficient for Nigerian sample. The researcher conducted a pilot study for establishing internal consistency and test-retest reliability for BFI.

3.5.3 Self-Handicapping Scale (SHS)

The SHS was developed by Jones and Rhodewalt in 1982. It is a 25-item self-report measure that uses a 6 point Likert format scale for answers from 0 (disagree very much) to 5 (agree very much). This scale has been used in many studies, predominantly in an academic environment, for measuring the individual tendency to use self-handicapping strategies. The SHS contains 2 subscales for behavioural - items 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 20, 22 (e.g., "I tend to put things to the last moment") and claimed - items 1, 4, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25 (e.g., "Sometimes I get so depressed that even easy tasks become difficult") self-handicapping. This scale is summative scale, with items 3, 5, 6, 10, 13, 20, 22 and 23 being reversed scored. The researcher made some adaptation of this scale by changing some words with more simple and suitable for environment. The original 6 point Likert scale was replaced with 5 point scale (from 0 to 4), this made maximum theoretical total score that can be obtained is 100. SHS (original version) has good internal consistency - alpha coefficient $r = .78$ and 1-month test-retest reliability $r = .74$ (Strube, 1986). Researcher conducted pilot-study to test adapted instrument for internal consistency and test-retest reliability.

3.5.4 Pilot testing for BFI and SHS

The pilot study was carried out with the purpose of establishing internal and test-retest reliability of BFI and SHS after adaptation of these instruments to Nigeria settings. SHS and BFI, 60 copies of each were distributed among 300 level students of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (they are not going to participate in the main study, but have similar characteristics with the general population of study). This

procedure was repeated after 3 weeks for finding test-retest reliability coefficient of SHS and BFI. Data collected from pilot study was analyzed and the internal consistency and test-retest reliability coefficients were obtained.

3.5.4.1 Reliability of BFI

Table 3.3 Results of Internal consistency and Test-retest reliability

Scale	Items	Internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha	Three weeks test- retest reliability
Extraversion	8	.603	.884
Agreeableness	9	.655	.768
Conscientiousness	9	.643	.820
Neuroticism	8	.574	.884
Openness	10	.626	.831

3.5.4.2 Reliability of SHS

Internal consistency coefficient for 25 items of SHS with 49 (81.7%) number of valid cases was establish as . 521. After deleting items 3, 10, 14, 24 that give negative item-total correlation, internal consistency of scale was improved to .649. The total number of items after adaptation became 21, with items 4, 5, 11, 17, 19, 20 being reversed. The minimum possible total score - 0 and maximum possible total score - 84.

Three-week test-retest reliability coefficient with number of cases 50 was establish as . 832.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

Before going to the field, researcher collected the introduction letters from the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, ABU, Zaria to the four faculties where research is going to be carried. After having permission by the HOD of each selected department, researcher started collecting the data. The instruments (Personal Information Inventory, Big Five Inventory and Self-handicapping Scale) were administered to the students in each selected department from the four faculties. Before to administration of instruments all participants were instructed and told about purpose of the study. Students were instructed that there is no right or wrong answers and they must just select answer that is most closely describes their personality or typical behaviour. Completion of the inventories was with the guarantee of confidentiality.

3.7 Procedure for Data Analysis

Appropriate statistical techniques were used for analyzing data for establishing relationship between variables. The inferential statistical tools - independent samples t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis were used for testing research hypotheses.

PPMC was used to test the relationship between students' personality traits and academic self-handicapping (Hypothesis H₀₁). Independent samples t-test statistics was used to find differences between male and female in academic self-handicapping (Hypothesis H₀₂). Hypotheses H₀₃, H₀₄, H₀₅, H₀₆ and H₀₇ were tested by using one-way ANOVA due to fact that researcher had attempt to find differences in dependant variable (self-handicapping) based on independent factors (family structure, family size, birth order, mothers and fathers

level of education) that have number of possible values more than two. Also Post Hoc Tests were used for finding specific relationships between variables that showed significant correlation in ANOVA statistics (these tests were done for mother's level of education, family structure, birth order, course of study and students age). For analyzing data researcher used program IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains results of data analysis of the study by using different statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Independent samples t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance). Also results of hypotheses testing, summary of findings and discussion of the results are presented in this chapter.

4.2 Demographic Distributions of Students

Respondents of this study were drawn from four faculties of Ahmadu Bello University, 110 students, that represents 25 percents were from Faculty of Engineering, 114 students, that represents 25.9 percents were from Faculty of Arts, 95 students, that represents 21.6 percent were from Faculty of Education, while 121 respondents, that represents 27.5 percent were students from Faculty of Medicine (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Distribution of Students by Faculties

Faculties	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Arts	114	25.9
Faculty of Engineering	110	25
Faculty of Education	95	21.6
Faculty of Medicine	121	27.5
Total	440	100

Table 4.2 Distribution of Students by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	319	72.5
Female	121	27.5
Total	440	100

Table 4.2 indicated that out of 440 respondents 319 respondents were male, that represents 72.5 percent, while 121 respondents were female, that represents 27.5 percent.

Table 4.3 Distribution of Students by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
Less than 20	94	21.4
20-25	275	62.5
26-30	59	13.4
More than 30	12	2.7
Total	440	100

Analysis of data for distribution of students by age were done and results are shown in Table 4.3. The majority of students - 275 were age between 20-25 years, that represents 62.5 percent, while the minimum number of respondents - 12 (2.7 percent) were from group age more than 30 years. 94 respondents, which represent 21.4 percent, were age less than 20 and 59 students were between 26-30, that represents 13.4 percent out of total number of sample.

Analysis of demographic data was done for parental level of education of respondents, separately for father's educational level (Table 4.4) and mother's educational level (Table 4.5). The results indicated that 216 fathers of respondents have acquired university degree and above, that represents 49.1 percent, while number of mothers that have university degree and above was 79 that represents 18 percent. Post secondary school certificate had 83 fathers and 105 mothers of respondents, that is represents 18.9 and 23.9 percent respectively; 50 fathers, that represents 11.4 percent and 113 mothers of students, that represents 25.7 percent have acquired secondary school education. Primary school certificate or adult literacy certificate had 32 fathers, that represents 7.3 percent and 72 mothers, that represents 16.4 percent of respondents. 59 fathers and 71 mothers of respondents, that corresponds to 13.4 and 16.1 percent respectively had no formal education.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Students by Their Father's Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
University Degree and Above	216	49.1
Post Secondary Education	83	18.9
Secondary School Certificate	50	11.4
Primary School Certificate/ Adult Literacy	32	7.3
No Formal Education	59	13.4
Total	440	100

Table 4.5 Distribution of Students by Their Mother's Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
University Degree and Above	79	18.0
Post Secondary Education	105	23.9
Secondary School Certificate	113	25.7
Primary School Certificate/ Adult Literacy	72	16.4
No Formal Education	71	16.1
Total	440	100

Table 4.6 Distribution of Students by Family Structure

Type of Family	Frequency	Percent
Monogamous	210	47.7
Polygamous	179	40.7
Single parent	51	11.6
Total	440	100

Analysis of distribution of students by family structure or type (Table 4.6) established that 47.7 percent of respondents (210 students) were from monogamous type of family, 40.7 percent (179 students) from polygamous families, while 11.6 percent (51 students) were from family with single parent.

Table 4.7 Distribution of Students by Family Size

Number of children	Frequency	Percent
1-5 children	133	30.2
6-10 children	196	44.5
11 children and above	111	25.2
Total	440	100

Analysis of data about family size (Table 4.7) indicates that 133 respondents out of 440, that represents 30.2 percent were from family with number of children from 1 to 5, 196 respondents, that represents 44.5 percent were from family with number of children from 6 to 10. While 111 respondents (25.2 percent) were from large families with number of children 11 and more.

Table 4.8 Distribution of Students by Birth Order

Birth order	Frequency	Percent
1st child in the family	114	25.9
Middle child in the family	278	63.2
Last child in the family	48	10.9
Total	440	100

Results of distribution of students by birth order (Table 4.8) show that majority of students are the middle children in the family - 278 respondents out of 440, it is 63.2 percent, 114 students that represents 25.9 percent are the first children in the family, while 48 students (10.9 percent) are the last children in the family.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

In this part of work seven null hypotheses that were formulated in chapter one were tested by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, independent samples t-test analysis and Analysis of Variables (ANOVA).

Ho₁ - There is no significant relationship between academic self-handicapping and personality traits of undergraduate students of ABU, Zaria:

- a) extraversion
- b) agreeableness
- c) conscientiousness
- d) neuroticism and
- e) openness to new experience.

This null hypothesis was tested by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic. For each of personality trait - extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness to new experience PPMC was conducted. Mean, Standard deviation, maximum and minimum obtained scores for each variable are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Results of Descriptive Statistics for Self-handicapping and Big Five Personality Traits (N=440).

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
Self-handicapping	14	61	40.4091	7.58916	57.595
Extraversion	14	35	24.4932	3.52795	12.446
Agreeableness	21	45	36.2500	4.31623	18.630
Conscientiousness	22	44	34.3318	4.47966	20.067
Neuroticism	10	38	21.4432	4.19039	17.559
Openness	24	50	35.2977	3.73495	13.950

Table 4.10 Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation analyses on relationship between academic self-handicapping and personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness).

		Extraversion	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness	Neuroticism	Openness
Academic self-handicapping	Pearson Correlation	-.027	-.322*	-.317*	.439*	-.161*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.572	.000	.000	.000	.001
	N	440	440	440	440	440

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The outcome of Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics (Table 4.10) shows that there is negative but not significant relationship between academic self-handicapping and extraversion. The calculated p value of .572 is greater than the 0.01 level of significance. Significant correlation exists between academic self-handicapping and other four personality traits - agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to new experience. This is because the calculated p values (.000, .000, 000 and .001 for each trait respectively) are less than 0.01 level of significance used in this analysis. Analysis shows that strong negative correlation exists between academic self-handicapping and agreeableness, academic self-handicapping and conscientiousness with calculated correlation index $r = -.322$ and $r = -.317$ respectively, while calculated correlation index for openness is negative too ($r = -.161$). Results of PPMC analysis (Table 4.10) indicated strong positive correlation between academic self-handicapping and neuroticism with $r = .439$. Therefore, null hypothesis H_{01} a) is retained, while H_{01} b), c), d), e) are rejected.

H₀₂ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping due to gender of undergraduate students in ABU, Zaria.

Independent sample t-test statistics was used for testing this hypothesis, results of this analysis represent in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Results of independent samples t-test analysis for gender differences in academic self-handicapping.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Academic self-handicapping	Male	319	40.5611	7.48091	.682	438	.496
	Female	121	40.0083	7.88511			

Based on outcome of independent samples t-test analysis (Table 4.11), it was established that there are no significant gender differences in academic self-handicapping among undergraduate students of ABU. The calculated significant value (2-tailed) of .496 is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Male and female students do not differ in the use of self-handicapping strategies. The null hypothesis is retained.

The next five hypotheses were tested by using one-way Analysis of variables (ANOVA).

H₀₃ - There are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education.

Basic descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for academic self-handicapping by fathers level of education are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Fathers Educational level.

Level of education	N	Mean	SD
No formal education	59	42.2712	7.57908
Primary school	32	40.3750	6.45456
Secondary school	50	41.2800	6.45246
Post secondary	83	39.4578	8.17686
University and above	216	40.0694	7.71467
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.13 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and father's educational level.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	342.562	4	85.640	1.494	.203
Within groups	24941.802	435	57.337		
Total	25284.364	439			

The results of Analysis of Variance statistics (Table 4.13) show that there are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education. The calculated significant value of .203 is greater than 0.05 level of significance for this study. Based on this findings hypothesis H_{03} which states that there are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education is accepted.

H₀₄ - There are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on mother's level of education.

Descriptive statistics for academic self-handicapping according to level of mothers education is presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Mothers Educational level.

Level of education	N	Mean	SD
No formal education	71	42.3099	7.38646
Primary school	72	41.0278	6.81335
Secondary school	113	40.8053	7.72156
Post secondary	105	39.7143	8.07264
University and above	79	38.4937	7.22509
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.15 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and mother's educational level.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	642.344	4	160.586	2.835	.024
Within groups	24642.020	435	56.648		
Total	25284.364	439			

Table 4.15 above with the results of ANOVA statistics for academic self-handicapping and mother's educational level shows strong differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on mothers educational level. This is because the calculated significant value (.024) is greater than 0.05 level of significance used in this study. These findings indicate that the Hypothesis H_{04} is rejected.

Table 4.16 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Mothers' Education (Tukey HSD), equal variances assumed. Dependent Variable: Self-handicapping.

Mothers' education	Mothers' education	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
No formal education	Primary school	1.28208	1.25883	.847
	Secondary school	1.50455	1.13981	.679
	Post secondary	2.59557	1.15645	.165
	University and above	3.81619	1.23083	.017

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of Post Hoc Test (Table 4.16) indicated that strong differences exist in academic self-handicapping between students whose mothers has no formal education and university degree and above, calculated level of significance is .017 that is higher than 0.05 level of significance used in this study. This study revealed that students whose mothers have no formal education tend to have higher level of academic self-handicapping.

H₀₅ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family structure.

Mean and standard deviation for academic self-handicapping according to students family type are presented in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Family structure.

Family type	N	Mean	SD
Monogamous	210	39.6857	8.16670
Polygamous	179	40.4022	6.87081
Single parent	51	43.4118	6.88818
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.18 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and students' family structure.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	569.714	2	284.857	5.037	.007
Within groups	24714.649	437	56.555		
Total	25284.364	439			

The results of one-way ANOVA statistics presented in Table 4.18 indicate that students from different family type differ in academic self-handicapping. The calculated significance level is .007 that is less than 0.05 level of significance. Based on these findings hypothesis H_{05} that stated that there are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family structure is rejected.

Table 4.19 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Family Type (Tukey HSD), equal variances assumed. Dependent Variable: Self-handicapping.

Family type	Family type	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Monogamous	Polygamous	-.71652	.76502	.617
	Single parents	-3.72605	1.17398	.005
Polygamous	Single parents	-3.00953	1.19368	.032

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Post Hoc Test conducted for family type and academic self-handicapping (Table 4.19) revealed that significant differences in academic self-handicapping exist between students from monogamous and students from single parent family types (.005) and students from polygamous and students from single parent families (.032). These findings show that students from single parent family type tend to have higher level of academic self-handicapping than students from polygamous or monogamous families.

H₀₆ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' family size.

Table 4.20 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Family size.

Family size	N	Mean	SD
1-5 children	133	39.6015	8.07159
6-10 children	196	40.3163	7.19344
11 and more children	111	41.5405	7.60596
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.21 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and students' family size.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	230.529	2	115.264	2.010	.135
Within groups	25053.835	437	57.331		
Total	25284.364	439			

The Analysis of Variance statistics (Table 4.21) shows that there students from different family size do not differ in academic self-handicapping. The calculated significant value (.135) is higher than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore these findings make hypothesis H_{06} accepted.

H₀₇ - There are no significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' birth order.

Mean and standard deviation for academic self-handicapping according to students birth order are presented in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Birth order.

Birth order	N	Mean	SD
First child	114	39.8158	8.99121
Middle child	278	40.2086	6.95833
Last child	48	42.9792	7.09956
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.23 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and students' birth order.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	368.354	2	184.177	3.230	.040
Within groups	24916.010	437	57.016		
Total	25284.364	439			

Based on results of one-way ANOVA statistics (Table 4.23) significant differences in academic self-handicapping exist between students with different birth order, due to the fact that calculated significant level (.040) is less than assumed in this study 0.05 level of significance. Therefore these results make hypothesis H_{07} rejected.

Table 4.24 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Birth Order (Tukey HSD), equal variances assumed. Dependent Variable: Self-handicapping.

Birth order	Birth order	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
First child	Middle child	-.39284	.83978	.886
	Last child	-3.16338	1.29922	.040
Middle child	Last child	-2.77053	1.18022	.051

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The results of Post Hoc test (table 4.24) show that most significant difference in academic self-handicapping exist between first and last child in the family, with the .040 level of significance. Students who are last born in the family tend to demonstrate higher level of

academic self-handicapping, while first born children have lower level of self-handicapping.

Alongside with main finding of the study, accidental findings were established. Significant differences in academic self-handicapping were established among students from different age groups and from different course of study.

Table 4.25 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Students Age.

Students Age	N	Mean	SD
< 20	94	39.2340	7.05040
20-25	275	40.3709	7.67263
26-30	59	42.9661	6.83794
> 30	12	37.9167	10.56975
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.26 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and students' age.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	590.496	3	196.832	3.475	.016
Within groups	24693.867	436	56.637		
Total	25284.364	439			

Calculated significant value for correlation between academic self-handicapping and students' age is .016 (Table 4.26), it is less than 0.05 level of significance used in this study.

It is indicated that there is strong difference in academic self-handicapping based on students age.

Table 4.27 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons Test by Age (Tukey HSD), equal variances assumed. Dependent Variable: Self-handicapping.

Age	Age	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	20-25	-1.13687	.89915	.586
< 20	26-30	-3.73206	1.24999	.016
	> 30	1.31738	2.30701	.941
20-25	26-30	-2.59519	1.07977	.078
	> 30	2.45424	2.21940	.686
26-30	> 30	5.04944	2.38322	.149

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Post Hoc analysis of differences in academic self-handicapping by students' age (Table 4.27) shows that significant difference exist between students from age group less than 20 year and 26-30 year (.016).

Descriptive statistics with mean and standard deviation for academic self-handicapping according to students course of study are presented in Table 4.28.

Table 4.28 Descriptive statistics for Academic Self-handicapping by Course of study.

Faculties	N	Mean	SD
Faculty of Arts	114	42.6316	6.86309
Faculty of Engineering	110	40.0818	7.59784
Faculty of Education	95	42.7684	6.46998
Faculty of Medicine	121	36.7603	7.64856
Total	440	40.4091	7.58916

Table 4.29 Analysis of Variance (one-way ANOVA) statistics of academic self-handicapping and students' course of study.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	2714.619	3	904.873	17.480	.000
Within groups	22569.745	436	51.765		
Total	25284.364	439			

The results of Analysis of Variance statistics (Table 4.29) indicate strong significant differences in academic self-handicapping based on student's course of study. The significant level (.000) calculated for these variables is less than 0.05 level of significance accepted in this research.

Table 4.30 Results of Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons by Course of Study (Tukey HSD), equal variances assumed. Dependent Variable: Self-handicapping.

Course study	Course study	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
	Faculty of Engineering	2.54976	.96160	.041
Faculty of Arts	Faculty of Education	-.13684	.99949	.999
	Faculty of Medicine	5.87125	.93909	.000
Faculty of Engineering	Faculty of Education	-2.68660	1.00772	.040
	Faculty of Medicine	3.32149	.94784	.003
Faculty of Education	Faculty of Medicine	6.00809	.98626	.000

The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The Post Hoc Test of level of academic self-handicapping and course of study (Table 4.30) indicated that significant differences exist among all faculties, except faculties of Education and Arts. The lowest level of academic self-handicapping was demonstrated by students from faculty of Medicine (Table 4.28), follow by students from faculty of Engineering, while the students from faculty of Education show the highest level of academic self-handicapping among four faculties used in research.

4.4 Summary of Findings

This study established:

1. There is negative but not significant correlation between academic self-handicapping and extroversion, as one of the personality traits among undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
2. Significant correlations exist between academic self-handicapping and other four personality traits of students - agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness. Academic self-handicapping has strong positive correlation with neuroticism ($r = .439$), while this correlation is negative with agreeableness ($r = -.322$), conscientiousness ($r = -.317$) and openness ($r = -.161$).
3. There are no significant gender differences in uses of academic self-handicapping strategies among undergraduates in ABU.
4. There are no significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping based on father's level of education, while the opposite is the case with mothers level of education where the results show significant difference ($P = .024$) among students in academic self-handicapping based on mothers' educational level. Mothers educational level with university degree and above corresponds with lowest tendency for academic self-handicapping of students.
5. Significant difference exists in academic self-handicapping among students from different family type (structure), the calculated level of significance is $P = .007$. Students from single parent family type tend to have higher level of academic self-handicapping than their colleagues from monogamous and polygamous families.
6. Undergraduate students from different size of family do not differ in their academic self-handicapping (calculated level of significance $P = .135$).

7. There are significant differences (with calculated significant level $P = .040$) in academic self-handicapping among undergraduate students with different birth order. Students who are first born in the family demonstrated lower level of academic self-handicapping than last born children.

8. Academic self-handicapping shows significant difference ($P = .016$) based on student's age. The mean scores of level of academic self-handicapping are increasing from age group of less than 20 to 20-25 and picked in age group 26-30 (mean scores 39.2340, 40.3709, 42.9661 respectively), while in age group more than 30 level of self-handicapping is the lowest among all age groups (mean score 37.9167).

9. Strong significant differences in academic self-handicapping exist among students from different courses of study; the calculated significant level is .000. Students from Science oriented faculties (Faculties of Medicine, and Engineering) tend to have lower level of academic self-handicapping (mean scores 36.7603 and 40.0818 respectively) than students from Arts oriented (Faculties of Arts, and Education) with mean scores 42.6316 and 42.7684 respectively.

4.5 Discussion

The present research was designed to find out what is the relationship between academic self-handicapping and following variables: personality traits, gender, fathers and mothers educational level, family size, family structure and birth order. Some findings were predictable, while others were not expected.

The findings of this research indicated that majority of personality traits (agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness) have significant correlation with academic

self-handicapping. There is strong positive correlation between academic self-handicapping and students' neuroticism. Higher level of anxiety, emotional instability, feeling of tense, vulnerability, impulsiveness are in strong positive relationship with uses of self-handicapping strategies. This result is in agreement with the reports by Ross, Canada and Rausch (2002), who found strong positive correlation between self-handicapping and neuroticism. Similarly, Nosenko, Arshava and Nosenko (2014) in their research on self-handicapping as a coping strategies reported that individuals with high level of neuroticism have high level of self-handicapping. Kinon (2007) in his profile of college self-handicapper also found that self-handicapping was positively related to neuroticism.

On the other hand strong negative correlation exists between academic self-handicapping and agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to new experience. These findings are also in agreement with results of other researchers. Ross, Canada and Rausch (2002) in their research found strong negative correlation with conscientiousness.

In the research carried out in Iran by Rastegar, Afshari, Seif and Jahromi (2012) investigating personality traits, achievement goals and educational self-handicapping among university students, the negative indirect influence of openness to experiences and agreeableness on educational self-handicapping through achievement goals was also reported. Similarly Kinon (2007) by using Big Five Inventory revealed negative correlation of self-handicapping and openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. These results suggested that personality traits are a very important factor in phenomenon of self-handicapping and can be seen as strong predictors of uses unproductive coping strategies as academic self-handicapping.

No any gender differences in academic self-handicapping among undergraduates were found in this study. These results are not in agreement with majority of research findings in this area (Hirt & McCrea, 2009; Hirt, McCrea & Kimble, 2000; Lucas & Lovaglia, 2005; McCrea & Hirt, 2001; Midgley & Urdan, 1995; Rhodewalt & Davison, 1986; Rhodewalt & Hill, 1995; Shepperd & Arkin, 1989a). Although, some researchers didn't find significant differences between male and female in scores on Self-handicapping Scale (SHS) thus, Strube (1986) reported no significant gender differences in mean scores on SHS, with mean score for male 67.58 and mean score for female 67.44, these results are similar to results of present research.

One of the possible explanations for these findings can be the fact that present research did not distinguish between claimed and behavioural self-handicapping. The researcher measured general tendency for academic self-handicapping, while the main differences between male and female exist in uses of different types of self-handicapping - men engage in behavioural type, while women have higher scores in claimed type of self-handicapping. The other explanation can be the fact that gender differences in self-handicapping vary under different situation and conditions. Thus, Shepperd and Arkin (1989b) did not find any gender differences in self-handicapping in situation of preexisting handicap, while in other conditions (in public settings and without preexisting handicap) gender differences were established by the same authors (Shepperd & Arkin,1989b).

The study indicated that there is no significant difference in students' academic self-handicapping based on fathers' level of education, while strong differences in academic self-handicapping exists on the base of mothers' educational level. These findings are in the line with the findings of other researchers. According to Bradley and Corwyn (2002),

parents' education is one of the strongest predictors of cognitive performance and academic attainment of children among other aspects of socioeconomic status. In their article about relationship between socioeconomic status and child development they found that mothers education to be a stronger predictor of intellectual attainment of children than parental education. Similarly, Davis-Kean (2005) reported that mothers' education is the strong predictor of children's academic achievement and attainment. These results can be explained by the different roles that fathers and mothers play in the child's development. Parental warmth and consequently emotional climate in family has strong correlation with particularly mothers education, educated mothers more likely create a home environment where children will have positive self-esteem. Parental educational expectations also are very important factor in child's future achievement. Mothers can promote achievement attitude toward education through a cognitively stimulating home environment (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002), the more educated mothers will provide better stimulating environment for their children, understanding importance of it for child's development.

Fahey, Keilthy and Polek (2012) in their study of family relationships and family well-being also mention a strong link between mother's educational level and child's cognitive development and social-emotional adjustment. The children of less educated mothers have lower scores in cognitive development and well-being than children whose mothers obtained medium or high education.

The results of this study showed that no significant differences in academic self-handicapping exist among students from different size of family, while strong differences were revealed in students' academic self-handicapping based on family structure. Among three types of family studied in this research, single parent family demonstrated higher

positive correlation with level of academic self-handicapping. The differences between monogamous and polygamous families were not so significant. This findings are in the line with other researchers Fahey, Keilthy and Polek (2012) who reported that family type has strong effect on social-emotional adjustment of children, children from two-parent family demonstrate lower risk of poor social-emotional adjustment than children from single parent family who are more likely to have emotional and behavioural problems.

Number of parents is a very important characteristic of the family, especially in the context of social capital (parent-child relationship and parents support of child's development). Social capital of the family of single parent is much less than in the two parents family. Family with the single parent is more likely to have higher level of conflicts, lack of control and lower socio-economic status. These disadvantages of single parent families have their own impact in developing sense of emotional insecurity, fear of evaluative situation and uncertain self-esteem. According to Dinnel, Hopkins and Thompson (2002), children with these characteristics have greater risk to be engaged in unproductive coping behaviour as self-handicapping. All these findings lead to conclusion that the best family environment for child's development is the full family (monogamous or polygamous), rather than single parent family.

On the other hand, results from study of Fahey, Keilthy and Polek (2012) established that family size is the complex factor; it can have negative effect on some aspects of children development and positively influence others. Children in larger families showed lower scores on test of cognitive development than children from smaller family, while compare with children from small family or only child in the family they have better social-emotional adjustment.

Similarly the strong differences were established in academic self-handicapping among students with different birth order. Results of the study showed that first-born children have lower level of self-handicapping compare to students who are last-born in the family. These findings are in consonance with Adler's descriptions of personalities for first-born and last-born children. According to Adler (Strickland, 2001), first-born children tend to be more responsible and task-oriented, these quality can make them be less involved in self-handicapping behaviour than last-born children who are more dependent on others and can use self-handicapping strategies for reducing their responsibility for failure in front of public.

Significant difference was established in academic self-handicapping among undergraduate students based on their age. The lowest level of self-handicapping among students in age group more than 30 can be simply explained by their maturity. Student in this age group know the reason why are they are in University and not looking for excuses, unlike the younger age groups who are less focused in their life goal and with perhaps lesser responsibilities.

The results of the research showed strong differences in academic self-handicapping among students from different courses of study. Among the four faculties used in this study, the highest level of self-handicapping was demonstrated by students from faculty of Education, followed by students from faculty of Arts, while students from Science faculties (Medicine and Engineering) showed lowest level of academic self-handicapping. The researcher didn't come across any report about relationship between academic self-handicapping and course of study; however Balarabe (2008) reported significant differences between Arts and Science secondary school students in causal attribution. In his research of differences in

causal attribution among secondary school students he found that Science students have significantly higher level of achievement motivation, higher internal locus of control perception and as result of this Science students tend to take more responsibility for their achievement outcomes including failure. This could explain lower level of academic self-handicapping among students from Science oriented faculties (Medicine and Engineering) compare to those from Arts oriented faculties (Arts and Education).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presented summary and conclusion of this research work, as well as educational implications of the findings along with suitable recommendations for students, teachers, parents and counsellors are discussed. Recommendations for further research are discussed in the end of this chapter.

5.2 Summary

This study investigated differences in academic self-handicapping based on students' socio-demographic factors (gender, birth order, fathers education, mothers education, family structure and size). Also relationship between academic self-handicapping and personality traits of undergraduates of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria was in focus of this research. A total number of 440 students from four faculties of ABU were used for sample completion. Seven objectives, research questions and hypotheses were set for this research. Background, significance and limitations of the study were also presented in Chapter one.

Chapter two contained conceptual and theoretical framework for the dependent and independent variables - academic self-handicapping, socio-demographic factors and personality traits. Attribution theory, Achievement Goal theory and Self-Worth theory were discuss as theoretical framework for self-handicapping and Trait theories as theoretical framework for personality. The review of other research conducted in this area was also done.

Methodological aspects of the study - research design, instrumentation, population, sample and sampling technique, procedures for data collection and analysis were presented in the Chapter three of this study. Four out of the twelve faculties of ABU, Zaria were purposively selected (Faculties of Arts, Education, Engineering and Medicine). Three instruments (Personality Information Inventory, Big Five Inventory and Self-handicapping Scale) were used for collecting data from 440 students from the four faculties of Ahmadu Bello University. Before main study, pilot study was done for establishing internal consistency and test-retest reliability of instruments after their adaptation (Big Five Inventory and Self-handicapping Scale).

In Chapter four, demographic distribution of students was discussed and presented in tabular form. Also collected data was analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics, independent samples t-test and Analysis of Variance. Seven hypotheses were tested, null hypotheses 1a, 2, 3 and 6 were accepted, while null hypotheses 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 4, 5 and 7 were rejected after testing. In other words the study established the following major findings: there is negative but not significant correlation between students academic self-handicapping and their extroversion; no any significant differences in students' academic self-handicapping exist on the base of fathers level of education and family size. Also male and female undergraduate students of ABU do not differ in academic self-handicapping. On the other hand, significant relationship exists between academic self-handicapping of undergraduates and their next personality traits - agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, openness to new experience. Also significant differences were established in students' academic self-handicapping based on mothers level of education, family structure, students' birth order, students' age and course of study. These findings were summarized and discussed in the end of chapter four.

5.3 Educational Implications

Considering the negative impact of academic self-handicapping in educational process generally and particularly in academic performance and emotional well-being of students, findings of this study have important educational implications.

Phenomenon of academic self-handicapping should be considered by teachers, counsellors and parents as one of the important reasons for poor achievement among students. The findings about personality and socio-demographic correlates for academic self-handicapping can be very useful and important in reducing this unproductive coping strategy among students.

5.4 Conclusion

After the analysis of data and discussion of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

- Some students personality traits affect level of academic self-handicapping, high level of students neuroticism leads to higher use of academic self-handicapping strategies. On the other hand high level of agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to new experience make students to reduce using of self-handicapping strategies.
- There are no differences in academic self-handicapping between male and female students, in other words, gender has no influence on the level of academic self-handicapping among undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Socio-demographic variables have their own impact in uses of academic self-handicapping. Fathers level of education has no significant influence on students

academic self-handicapping, while mothers level of education significantly predict level of academic self-handicapping. Students, whose mothers has no formal education tend to demonstrate higher level of academic self-handicapping than that whose mothers has university degree and above.

- Family structure is also factor that affect students level of self-handicapping, single parent family background has negative impact on students coping strategies, make them use unproductive coping strategies (such as self-handicapping) in higher degree than students from monogamous or polygamous families. The other family factor - family size has no significant correlation with students self-handicapping.
- Results of this study showed that academic self-handicapping depends on students' birth order, first born students tend to demonstrate academic self-handicapping in less degree than students who are last born in the family.
- Students' age and course of study also influence students level of academic self-handicapping. Finding of this study revealed that most affected by self-handicapping is the age group between 26 and 30 years, while students after 30 years have lowest level of self-handicapping among four age groups. Division on Art and Science students has its own impact on self-handicapping, Art students (Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education) demonstrated significantly higher level of academic self-handicapping than their colleagues from Science oriented faculties (Faculty of Engineering and Faculty of Medicine).

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are given on the basis of findings of this research.

1. Considering the significant relationship between academic self-handicapping and personality traits, teachers need to pay more attention to students personality as one of the important factors affecting motivation and achievement.
2. Counsellors should give counselling to students with high level of neuroticism, considering the fact that these students in higher risk for choosing unproductive coping strategies, including self-handicapping.
3. Due to the negative impact of single parent family on students use of self-handicapping strategies, parents should be aware that full family is the best environment for harmonic development of child. Adults who are raising children as a single parent should try to give more attention to their own children due to the fact that they at risk group to develop unproductive coping strategies such as self-handicapping.
4. Similarly, counsellors should considering the family structure as one of the important factors in development of unproductive coping strategies and give special attention to students from single parent family.
5. The significant differences in level of academic self-handicapping among students from different faculties should stimulate management and lecturers from some faculties, where students have higher level of self-handicapping to take necessary measures for changing situation for better. They should organize periodic seminars and workshops for students, parents, teachers and school administrators.

6. Parents, teachers, psychologists and counsellors should teach students, especially with high tendency for self-handicapping, value effort more highly.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

Although the area of academic self-handicapping is well researched in many parts of the world, however, to the best of our knowledge, only a few works have been done in this area of psychology in the Nigerian Universities. Based on the conclusions and recommendations of previous research the present researcher has the same opinion that there is need for more research about self-handicapping and its correlates (especially socio-demographic factors, such as family background) in Nigerian Education system, especially in Ahmadu Bello University as the largest university in the Sub-Saharan continent.

REFERENCES

- Acka, F. (2012). An investigation into the Self-handicapping Behaviours of Undergraduates in Terms of academic Procrastination, the Locus of control and Academic Success. *Journal of Education and Learning*, Vol. 1 (2), 288-297.
- Akinsanya, O.A. & Omotayo K. F. (2013). Falling Standard of Engineering Education in Nigeria Causes and Suggestions. *International Journal of Advancements in Research & Technology*, Volume 2 (10), 93-96.
- Balarabe, M. (2008). Differences in Causal Attributions and Feelings for Success and Failure among Secondary School Students, *Journal of Research and Development*, 1(3), 6-10.
- Baumgardner, A. H. (1991). Claiming Depressive Symptoms as a Self-Handicap: A Protective Self-Presentation Strategy, *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 12:1, 97-113.
- Baumgardner, A. H., Lake, E. & Arkin, R. M. (1985). Claiming mood as a self-handicap: The influence of spoiled and unspoiled public identities. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, II, 349-357.
- Boeree, C. G. (2006). *Personality Theories: Hans Eysenck and others*. Retrieved on 25/05/2014 from <http://www.ship.edu/%7Ecgboree/perscontents.html>
- Bradley, R. H. & Corwyn, R. F. (2002). Socioeconomic status and child development. *Annu. Rev. Psychol.*, 53, 371–399.
- Brislin, R. W. & Lo, K. D. (2006). Culture, Personality, and People's Uses of Time: Key Interrelationships. *Comprehensive Handbook of Personality and Psychopathology. Vol. 1*. Edited by Hersen, M. & Thomas, J. C.. Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, USA.
- Cohen, L., Manion, A. L. & Marrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in Education*, 5th Edition, London: Routledge Falmer.
- Cornwell, T. G., Eggebeen, D. J. & Meschke, L. L. (1996). The Changing Family Context of Early Adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 16, 141-156.
- Corr, P. J. (2009). Psychoticism. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.

- Costa, P. T. & McCrae, R. R. (2006) Trait and Factor Theories. *Comprehensive handbook of personality and psychopathology. Vol. 1.* Edited by Hersen, M. & Thomas, J. C.. Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey, USA.
- Covington, M. (1984). The motive for self-worth. In *Research on Motivation in Education*, Edited by Ames, R. E. & Ames, C.. Academic Press, Inc., London.
- Covington, M. (2009). Self-Worth Theory. Retrospection and Prospects. *In Handbook of Motivation at School*, Edited by Wentzel, K. R. & Wigfield, A., Taylor and Francis, New-York.
- Davis, S. F. & Palladino, J. J. (1996). *Psychology*, 2nd Edition. Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Davis-Kean, P. E. (2005) The Influence of Parent Education and Family Income on Child Achievement: The Indirect Role of Parental Expectations and the Home Environment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19(2), 294-304.
- Dinnel, D. L., Hopkins, J. & Thompson, T. (2002). *The role of family environment variables in the development of failure-avoidant behaviour*. Retrieved on 20/02/2014 from <http://www.readbag.com/self-ox-ac-uk-conferences-2002-cd-dinnel-hopkins-thompson>.
- Duze, C. O. (2011) Falling standard in Nigeria education: traceable to proper skills-acquisition in schools? *Educational Research*, Vol. 2(1) pp. 803-808.
- Eagly, A. H. (2000). Sex Differences and Gender Differences. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E., Oxford University Press.
- Elbedour, S., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Caridine, C. & Abu-Saad, H. (2002). The effect of Polygamous Marital Structure on Behavioural, Emotional and Academic Adjustment in Children: A Comprehensive Review of the Literature. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, Vol. 5 (4).
- Elliot, A. J. (2009). Goals. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- Elliot, A. J. & Church, M. A. (2003). A motivational analysis of defensive pessimism and self-handicapping. *Journal of Personality*, 71 (3), 369-396.
- Fahey, T., Keilthy, P. & Polek, E. (2012). *Family Relationships and Family Well-Being: A Study of the Families of Nine Year-Olds in Ireland*. University College Dublin and Family support Agency.

- Forsthuber, B., Horvath, A. & Motiejunaite, A. (2010). *Gender Differences in Educational Outcomes: Study on the Measures Taken and the Current Situation in Europe*. Retrieved on 02/05/2014 from http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/120EN_HI.pdf
- Georgas, J. (2002). Family and Culture, in *Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Spielberger, C. D., Elsevier Academic Press.
- Goldberg, L. R., (1990). An Alternative "Description of Personality": The Big-Five Factor Structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 59 (6), 1216-1229.
- Graham, S. & Williams, C. (2009). An Attribution Approach to motivation in School. In *Handbook of Motivation at School*, Edited by Wentzel, K. R. & Wigfield, A., New-York, Taylor and Francis.
- Grolnick, W. S., Friendly, R. W. & Bellas, V. M. (2009). Parenting and children's motivation at School. In *Handbook of Motivation at School*, Edited by Wentzel, K. R. & Wigfield, A., New-York, Taylor and Francis.
- Hendrix, K. S. & Hirt, E. R. (2009). Stressed out over possible failure: The role of regulatory fit on claimed self-handicapping. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 45, 51–59
- Henslin, J. M. (2008). *Sociology, a down-to-earth approach*. 9th Edition, New-York, Allyn and Bacon.
- Hirt, E. R. & McCrea, S. M., (2009). Man smart, woman smarter? Getting to the root of gender differences in self-handicapping. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 3.
- Hirt, E. R., McCrea, S. M. & Kimble, C. E. (2000). Public self-focus and sex differences in behavioral self-handicapping: Does increasing self-threat still make it "just a man's game?". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 1131–1141.
- Hirt, E. R., McCrea, S. M. & Boris, H. (2003). "I know you self-handicapped last exam": Gender differences in reaction to self-handicapping. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1, 177-193.
- Huffman, K. (2004). *Psychology in Action*, 7th Edition. John Willey & Sons, Inc. USA.
- John, O. P. & Gosling, S. D. (2009). Personality traits. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.

- John, O. P., Donahue, E. M. & Kentle, R.L (1991). *The Big-Five Inventory-Version 4a and 54*. Berkeley: University of California, Berkeley Institute of Personality and Social Research.
- Jones, E.E. & Berglas, S. (1978). Control of attributions about the self through self-handicapping strategies: The appeal of alcohol and the role of under achievement. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 4, 200-206.
- Kinon, M., & Murray, C. (2007). A profile of the college self-handicapper. University of California, Riverside: *Undergraduate Research Journal*, 1, pp. 13-17. Retrieved on 10/02/2014 from <http://ugrj.ucr.edu/journal/volume1/MarcKinon.pdf>
- Leary, M. R. & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression Management: A Literature Review and Two-Component Model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(1), 34-47.
- Lerner, J. V. & Castellino, D. R. (2009). Parent-Child Relationship. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- Lucas, J. W. & Lovaglia, M.J. (2005). Self-handicapping: Gender, race, and status. *Current research in social psychology*, 7.
- Maehr, M. L. & Zusho, A. (2009). Achievement Goal Theory. The past, present, and future. In *Handbook of Motivation at School*, Edited by Wentzel, K. R. & Wigfield, A., New-York, Taylor and Francis.
- McAdam, D. P. (2009a). Extraversion and Introversion. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- McAdam, D. P. (2009b). Personality Psychology. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- McCrea, S. M. & Hirt, E. R. (2001). The role of ability judgments in self-handicapping. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 1378–1389.
- McCrea, S. M., Hirt, E. R., Hendrix, K. L., Milner, B. J. & Steele, N. L. (2008). The Worker Scale: Developing a Measure to Explain Gender Differences in Behavioral Self-handicapping. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 42(4), 949-970.
- Midgley, C. & Urdan, T. (1995). Predictors of middle school students' use of self-handicapping strategies. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 15(4), 389-411.
- Nosenko, D., Arshava, I. & Nosenko. E. (2014). Self-handicapping as a coping strategy: Approaches to conceptualization. *Advance in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 1(3), 157-166.

- Nwoke, M. B. & Chukwuorji, J. B. (2011). Social Change and Personality Development in a Nigerian Sample. *International Journal of Psychological Studies* Vol. 3 (2), 164-170.
- Poole, D. A., Warren, A. & Nunez, N. (2007). *The Story of Human Development*. Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey, USA.
- Popoola, F. R. & Olarewaju, R. R. (2010). Factors responsible for poor performance of students in mathematics in Nigeria secondary schools. *Journal of Research in Education and Society* Vol.1 (2 & 3), 55-65.
- Puklek Levpušček, M. , Zupančič, M. & Socan, G. (2013). Predicting Achievement in Mathematics in Adolescent Students: The Role of Individual and Social Factors. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 33, 523-552.
- Pulford, B. D., Johnson, A. & Awaida, M. (2005). A cross-cultural study of predictors of self-handicapping in university students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 39, 727–737.
- Rastegar, A., Afshari, M., Seif, M. H. & Jahromi, R. G. (2012). Investigating the Intermediate role of Achievement Goals among Personality traits and Educational self-handicapping among Payam-E-Noor University students. *Journal of American Science*, 8(9), 353-356.
- Rhodewalt, F. & Davison, J. (1986). Self-handicapping and subsequent performance: Role of outcome valence and attributional certainty. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 7, 307–322.
- Rhodewalt, F. & Hill, K. (1995). Self-handicapping in the classroom: The effects of claimed self-handicaps on responses to academic failure. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 16(4), 397–416.
- Rodgers, J. L. (2009). Birth order. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- Ross, S.R., Canada, K.E. & Rausch, M.K. (2002). Self-handicapping and the five factor model of personality: Mediation between neuroticism and conscientiousness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 32, 1173 - 1184.
- Sahranc, U. (2011). An Investigation of the Relationships between Self-Handicapping and Depression, Anxiety, and Stress. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 3(2), 526-540.

- Schunk, D. H. & Pajares, F. (2009). Self-efficacy theory. *In Handbook of Motivation at School*, Edited by Wentzel, K. R. & Wigfield, A., New-York, Taylor and Francis.
- Shepperd, J. A. & Arkin, R. M. (1989a). Self-handicapping: The moderating roles of public self-consciousness and task importance. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 15: 252–265.
- Shepperd, J. A. & Arkin, R. M. (1989b). Determinants of self-handicapping: Task importance and the effects of preexisting handicaps on self-generated handicaps. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 15: 101–112.
- Strickland, B. R. (2001) Executive editor. Birth order. In *The Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2nd Edition. Gale Group, USA.
- Strube, M. J. (1986). An Analysis of the Self-handicapping Scale. *Basic and Applied Psychology*, 7(3), 211-224.
- Sweeton, J. & Deerrose, B. (2010). Causal Attributions: A Review of the Past and Directions for the Future. *The New School Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 7(1), 31-39.
- Tesser, A. (2009). Self-esteem. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- Urduan, T. & Midgley, C. (2001). Academic Self-Handicapping: What we now, what more there is to learn. *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol.13, No. 2.
- Valle, A , Núñez, J. C., Cabanach, R. G., Rodríguez, S., González-Pienda, J. A. & Rosario, P. (2007). Academic Goals and Self-Protection Motivational Strategies. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*, N. 13, 5 (3), 617-632.
- Weary, G. & Reich, D. A. (2009). Attribution Theories. *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, Editor-in-Chief Kazdin, A. E. Oxford University Press.
- Weiner, B. (1984). Principles for a Theory of Student Motivation and Their Application within an Attributional Framework. In *Research on Motivation in Education*, Edited by Ames, R. E. & Ames, C.. Academic Press, Inc., London.
- Wolitzky, D. L. (2006). Psychodynamic theories. *Comprehensive handbook of personality and psychopathology*. Edited by Hersen, M. & Thomas, J. C.. Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.
- Zuckerman, M., Kieffer, S. C. & Knee, C. R. (1998). Consequences of self-handicapping: Effects on coping, academic performance and adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 1619–1628.

Appendix A



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY AND COUNSELLING
FACULTY OF EDUCATION,
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

Our Ref: _____

Date: 07/08/2014

The Assistant Dean
Faculty of Medicine,
ABU, Zaria

Dear Sir,

STUDENTS' FIELD RESEARCH

The Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria requires each student working for a Degree to complete a research project/Thesis/Dissertation. They are therefore required to collect data for the research studies.


Most of them will need to be allowed access to certain relevant documents and some valuable information which you may have.

Please accord them all the necessary assistance.

TOPIC OF RESEARCH:

Academic Self-handicapping and its
Relationship with Socio-Demographic Factors and
Personality Traits Among Undergraduate Students
of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

HEAD
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
AND COUNSELLING
A.B.U. ZARIA

Prof. M. Balarabe

Research Adviser

Appendix B

Personal Information Inventory

INSTRUCTION: Please fill the information about yourself.

1. Gender Male Female
2. Age less than 20 20-25 26-30 more than 30
3. Faculty of study 4. Reg. number
5. Birth order 1st child in family
 middle child in family (2nd, 3rd and so on)
 last child in family
6. Family background:
- a). Parents education
- Father's education - University Degree and Above
 - Post Secondary Education
 - Secondary School Certificate
 - Primary School Certificate/
 Adult Literacy
 - No Formal Education
- Mother's education - University Degree and Above
 - Post Secondary Education
 - Secondary School Certificate
 - Primary School Certificate/
 Adult Literacy
 - No Formal Education
- b). Family structure monogamous
 polygamous
 single parent
- c). Number of siblings

Appendix C

Self-handicapping Scale

INSTRUCTION: Please indicate (by ticking for each item) the degree to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements as a description of the kind of person you think you are most of the time.

SA - Strongly Agree

NS - Not Sure

DA - Disagree

A - Agree

SDA - Strongly Disagree

№		SA (4)	A (3)	NS (2)	DA (1)	SDA (0)
1	When I do something wrong, my first impulse is to blame circumstances.					
2	I tend to put things off until the last moment.					
3	I suppose I am not feeling fine more often than most people.					
4	I always try to do my best, no matter what.					
5	Before I engage in any important activity, I make sure I prepare for it.					
6	I tend to get very anxious before an exam or test.					
7	I am easily distracted by noises or my own thoughts when I try to read.					
8	I try not to get too intensely involved in competitive activities so it won't hurt too much if I lose or do poorly.					
9	I would do a lot better if I tried harder.					
10	I prefer small pleasures in the present to larger pleasures in the uncertain future.					
11	I generally hate to be in any condition other than "at my best."					
12	I sometimes enjoy being mildly ill for a day or two because it takes off the pressure.					
13	I would do much better if I did not let my emotions get in the way.					
14	When I do poorly at one kind of thing, I often console myself by remembering I am good at other things.					
15	I admit that I am tempted to find excuse when I don't live up to other's expectations.					
16	I often think I have more than my share of bad luck in sports, card games, and other measures of talent.					
17	I would rather not take any drug that interfered with my ability to think clearly and do the right thing.					
18	I overindulge in food and drink more often than I should.					
19	When something important is coming up, like an exam or a job interview, I try to get as much sleep as possible the night before.					
20	I never let emotional problems in one part of my life interfere with other things in my life.					
21	Sometimes I get so depressed that even easy tasks become difficult.					

Please indicate where would you put yourself on the following scale.

_____ / _____ / _____
 Underachiever Normal Achiever Overachiever

Appendix D

Big Five Inventory

INSTRUCTION: Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. Please, by ticking for each statement, indicate the extent to which **you agree or disagree with that statement.**

SA - Strongly Agree

NS - Not Sure

DA - Disagree

A - Agree

SDA - Strongly Disagree

I am someone who...

N		SA (5)	A (4)	NS (3)	DA (2)	SDA (1)			SA (5)	A (4)	NS (3)	DA (2)	SDA (1)
1	Is talkative						23	Tends to be lazy					
2	Tends to find fault with others						24	Is emotionally stable, not easily upset					
3	Does a thorough job						25	Is inventive					
4	Is depressed, blue						26	Has an assertive personality					
5	Is original, comes up with new ideas						27	Can be cold and aloof					
6	Is reserved						28	Perseveres until the task is finished					
7	Is helpful and unselfish with others						29	Can be moody					
8	Can be somewhat careless						30	Values artistic, aesthetic experiences					
9	Is relaxed, handles stress well.						31	Is sometimes shy, inhibited					
10	Is curious about many different things						32	Is considerate and kind to almost everyone					
11	Is full of energy						33	Does things efficiently					
12	Starts quarrels with others						34	Remains calm in tense situations					
13	Is a reliable worker						35	Prefers work that is routine					
14	Can be tense						36	Is outgoing, sociable					
15	Is ingenious, a deep thinker						37	Is sometimes rude to others					
16	Generates a lot of enthusiasm						38	Makes plans and follows through with them					
17	Has a forgiving nature						39	Gets nervous easily					
18	Tends to be disorganized						40	Likes to reflect, play with ideas					
19	Worries a lot						41	Has few artistic interests					
20	Has an active imagination						42	Likes to cooperate with others					
21	Tends to be quiet						43	Is easily distracted					
22	Is generally trusting						44	Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature					