



## Psychological Predictors of Inclination to Sexual-Orientation among Undergraduate Students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

### Abstract

Sexual orientation development among young adults has increasingly attracted scholarly attention due to its implications for students' psychological wellbeing and identity formation. This study examined how three psychological variables - self-acceptance, interest, and assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation among undergraduate students in public tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. By that, multistage sample of 1,317 level-200 students from three purposively selected institutions completed the researcher-developed Psychological Variables and Inclination to Sexual Orientation of Students Questionnaire (PVITSOOSQ;  $\alpha = .93$ ). Simple linear regression was used to test each predictor separately. Results showed that self-acceptance significantly predicted inclination to sexual orientation ( $R = .598$ ,  $R^2 = .357$ ,  $p < .005$ ), accounting for 35.7% of variance. Interest was the strongest predictor ( $R = .866$ ,  $R^2 = .750$ ,  $p < .005$ ), accounting for 75.0% of variance. Assertiveness also strongly predicted inclination ( $R = .844$ ,  $R^2 = .712$ ,  $p < .005$ ), accounting for 71.2% of variance. Findings suggested that intrapersonal psychological characteristics, particularly students interest and assertiveness are closely associated with how students form and express sexual-orientation inclinations. Implications for campus counselling, staff training, and family engagement are discussed. The study recommended among other things that counsellors should stimulate genuine interest in identity exploration by curating relevant books, documentaries, and guest lectures on human sexuality and diversity for students.

**Keywords:** Sexual Orientation, Psychological, Self-acceptance, Interest, Assertiveness

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### Introduction

Sexual orientation is a person's enduring pattern of emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people. The sexual orientation is a pressing concern that has received inadequate attention.

It includes sexual attraction, behaviour, and self-identification, and common examples include heterosexual (attraction to the opposite gender). Homosexual (attraction to the same gender), and bisexual (attraction to

more than one gender). Sexual orientation can be a mix of biological, environmental, and psychological factors and can evolve over time (Levy, 2025). Among every other group of human beings, sexual orientation could be mostly observed within students.

As students transition from adolescence to early adulthood, tertiary environments challenge young individuals to explore complex dimensions of who they are and how they relate to the world around them. The period spent in higher institutions coincides with one of the most sensitive phases of psychological and emotional development, marked by identity questioning, social exploration, and personal decision-making. In this transitional phase, many students begin to consolidate aspects of their sexual orientation, often influenced by factors such as psychological, environmental, and socio-cultural variables (Edem, 2021).

In recent times, the inclination to orientation among students in tertiary institutions has become more pronounced and openly discussed. This is due, in part, to greater access to information, increased societal advocacy for sexual rights, and a more liberal campus culture that encourages individual expression. However, not all students develop or express their sexual orientation in the same way, and their psychological makeup plays a crucial role in this regard. The inclination to sexual orientation is often not a spontaneous or isolated process; it is deeply embedded in an individual's psychological variables.

Psychological variables refer to the internal factors that influence an

individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. These include motivation, perception, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, personality traits, and cognitive processes. They shape how people interpret experiences, respond to challenges, and make decisions (Musa, 2021). Understanding these psychological variables helps explain variations in behaviour and mental health among individuals. The present study considered three psychological variables namely self-acceptance, interest and assertiveness.

Self-acceptance is the ability to embrace aspects of oneself, including personal strengths or weaknesses, without self-criticism. In the context of sexual orientation, self-acceptance enables students to come to terms with their identity without guilt or shame. Tertiary institutions, often being more liberal and diverse, may offer students a space where self-acceptance can be nurtured. A student who accepts himself fully, including their sexual identity, is more likely to express that identity openly and confidently. However, in societies or institutional cultures where non-heterosexual orientations are not widely accepted, students may struggle with self-acceptance, leading to internal conflict and psychological distress. The journey toward accepting one's sexual orientation can be significantly hindered if students internalize societal rejection, religious condemnation, or familial disapproval (Eshiet, 2021). Therefore, fostering self-acceptance through psychological support and inclusive education is vital for helping students navigate their sexual orientation

healthily and honestly. Interest is another psychological variable.

Interest is a psychological variable that reflects a person's level of curiosity, attention, and engagement toward a particular subject, activity, or idea. In tertiary institutions, students' interest in topics like sexual orientation can be influenced by personal experiences, academic exposure, or peer discussions. For example, a student with high interest in human rights may actively seek knowledge about sexual diversity, leading to increased empathy and understanding (James, 2020). On the other hand, lack of interest may result in ignorance, indifference, or resistance to learning about issues outside one's comfort zone. As students become more intellectually stimulated and socially aware, their interests can evolve, promoting broader perspectives and acceptance of diverse sexual identities. The state of emotions is another critical psychological factor.

Assertiveness is the ability to express one's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a direct, honest, and respectful manner. Assertiveness allows students to stand up for themselves, advocate for their rights, and set boundaries without being aggressive or passive. In matters of sexual orientation, assertiveness is crucial for students who wish to express their identity openly, resist peer pressure, and counteract discrimination or stereotyping. A student who is assertive is more likely to communicate their orientation with clarity and dignity, whether it aligns with or deviates from societal expectations. They are also more likely to seek out supportive communities and resources within the institution that affirm their identity. On

the other hand, a lack of assertiveness may result in silence, self-censorship, or even participation in relationships or behaviours that do not align with one's authentic sexual orientation. Tertiary institutions that foster assertive communication through leadership training, counselling, and student activism contribute positively to the development of students' capacity to express their sexual identity without fear or shame (Akpan, 2021).

Many researchers have written about how psychological factors like self-concept and self-efficacy can affect sexual orientation. However, most of these studies were done in Western countries or looked at only one factor at a time. There is little research that focuses on students in Nigerian tertiary institutions, especially in Akwa Ibom State. Therefore, this gap in knowledge motivated the researcher to conduct this study to determine to what extent does psychological variables predicts inclination to sexual orientation of students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

### Literature Review

The present study is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives that illuminate individual and contextual processes shaping sexual-orientation development. Carl Rogers's (1954) Self-Concept Theory foregrounds how congruence between the real and ideal self and the presence of unconditional positive regard facilitate authentic self-acceptance and identity integration, mechanisms plausibly linking self-acceptance, assertiveness, and orientation expression among students. Ilan

Meyer's (2003) Sexual Minority Stress Theory complements this by locating identity outcomes within stress processes generated by stigma, prejudice, and institutional constraints, and by highlighting coping and resilience factors that can buffer minority stress. Hancock's (2016) Intersectionality and Identity Complexity framework further qualifies both approaches by showing that sexuality is co-constituted with other social identities (e.g., religion, ethnicity, class), such that psychological processes operate differently across intersectional positions. Together these theories provide a conceptual scaffold for examining how intrapersonal traits (self-acceptance, interest, assertiveness) interact with social stressors and intersecting identities to shape students' inclination to sexual orientation.

Empirical work reviewed shows consistent associations between self-acceptance and clearer, more openly expressed sexual identities. Studies across Nigerian universities (e.g., Ayodele, 2020; Okon, 2021; Nwankwo, 2022; Musa & Adebajo, 2022; Ezeama, 2023) report that higher self-acceptance correlates with greater willingness to disclose or integrate one's orientation and with reduced internalized stigma and distress. These investigations commonly used validated self-report instruments and regression/correlation techniques, but they vary in sampling frames (different states and institutions), research designs (descriptive, ex post facto, cross-sectional), and operational definitions, limiting direct comparability and local generalizability to Akwa Ibom.

Research on interest and assertiveness similarly suggests

meaningful relationships with sexual-orientation processes but with methodological and contextual gaps. Studies of intellectual or academic interest (Adeyemi, 2019; Ibrahim, 2021; Onwuka, 2021; Umeh, 2021) indicate that curiosity about gender/sexuality topics and broader intellectual engagement associate with greater awareness, exploration, and lower internalized homonegativity. Assertiveness research (Etim, 2020; Adewale, 2020; Eze, 2021; Yakubu, 2022; Nwosu, 2023) finds that higher assertiveness predicts clearer identity expression and resistance to external pressure; experimental work (e.g., Nwosu, 2023) also suggests that training can improve identity clarity. Yet most studies are regionally dispersed, employ differing designs (many descriptive or ex-post facto), and rarely test the three predictors simultaneously within a single, culturally specific sample.

The theoretical and empirical literature establishes plausible links between self-acceptance, interest, assertiveness and sexual-orientation inclination but leaves important gaps: few studies use a focused correlational model to assess the unique and combined predictive power of these psychological variables in the Akwa Ibom context; intersectional dynamics and minority-stress processes are seldom integrated into empirical tests; and measures and sampling strategies vary widely across studies. These lacunae justify the present correlational study, which tests whether self-acceptance, interest, and assertiveness together predict students' inclination to sexual orientation within tertiary institutions in selected public tertiary

institution in Akwa Ibom State, thereby providing locally grounded evidence to inform culturally sensitive counselling and campus support interventions.

### Statement of the Problem

In an ideal tertiary environment, students would be able to explore and express their sexual identities without fear of judgment, discrimination, or emotional distress; such openness supports personal development, mental health, and inclusive campus communities. However, in many conservative and culturally rigid contexts exemplified in Nigeria by legal and public debates around measures like the Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act and related public demonstrations, the reality is markedly different. Globalization and social change have introduced more diverse patterns of identity and behaviour into university settings, and some students report experiencing solicitation or pressure around non-heterosexual relationships, raising questions about how these dynamics play out in campus life.

Efforts by counsellors and mental-health practitioners to support students have sometimes been constrained by systemic barriers and prevailing cultural prejudices, and practices intended to “correct” sexual orientation (e.g., conversion approaches) have been shown to cause harm. Many interventions lack a culturally sensitive, research-based framework that recognizes the complexity of sexual identity development in specific socio-cultural contexts. As a result, students’ academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being may be negatively affected. This

gap motivates the present study to examine whether psychological variables predict inclination to sexual orientation among students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State.

### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the extent to which psychological variables predict inclination to sexual orientation of students in tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. examine the extent which self-acceptance predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.
- ii. determine the extent which interest predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.
- iii. assess the extent assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.

### Research Questions

In line with the stated objectives, the following research questions were raised for this study:

- i. What is the extent to which self-acceptance predict inclination to sexual orientation of students?
- ii. What is the extent to which interest predict inclination to sexual orientation of students?
- iii. What is the extent to which assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation of students?

### Research Hypotheses

The following null-hypotheses were tested for the study

- i. Self-acceptance does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.

- ii. Interest does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.
- iii. Assertiveness does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.

### Research Method

The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study made up of 23,886 level 200 students in the six public tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria as at 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic sessions. The sample size for the study comprised of 1,606 level 200 students from the three purposively selected public tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State, namely the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State Polytechnic, and Akwa Ibom State College of Education. These institutions were purposively selected because they have actively existed for over 15 years. However, the final analytic sample comprised 1,317 Level-200 students as these were the consenting respondents with fully completed measures. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select the respondents in a systematic and unbiased manner.

A researcher developed instrument entitled "Psychological Variables and Inclination to Sexual Orientation of Students Questionnaire" (PVITSOOSQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validity by three experts. Two from the Department of Guidance and Counselling and one expert in the Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Psychological Foundations, University of Uyo. To determine the internal consistency of the

instrument, the researcher randomly selected 35 level 200 students in the public tertiary institutions in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria who were not part of the study sample to respond to the instrument. Data generated were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Reliability Statistics for determination of the reliability coefficients. The reliability coefficient of PVITSOOSQ was .93.

Data collected was analyzed using Simple Linear Regression Statistics. The R- Value (coefficient) of Simple Regression Statistics was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using significance value at 0.05 alpha level of significance. In this study, strict ethical protocols were observed throughout the duration of the research to guarantee that the rights of all participating students were fully respected and protected. Firstly, the principle of informed consent was rigorously upheld. Secondly, the researcher ensured that all potential respondents were clearly informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and not compulsory in any way. Thirdly, the issue of privacy and confidentiality was treated with the utmost seriousness. In addition to these core ethical principles, the researcher demonstrated cultural sensitivity and respect for the diverse backgrounds of the respondents.

### Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the extent to which self-acceptance predict inclination to sexual orientation of students?

**Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of self-acceptance and Inclination to sexual orientation of students (n=1317)**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Extent of Prediction	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Self-acceptance	0.598	0.357	35.7%	0.357
Inclination to sexual orientation				

**Source: Researcher's survey (2026)**

In Table 1, the R-value of 0.598 indicates positive and moderate extent of prediction, while R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.357 which is the coefficient of determination show the extent self-acceptance predict inclination to sexual orientation of students. In addition, 35.7% variance in inclination to sexual orientation of students is accounted for by self-acceptance. This means that the extent self-acceptance predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is moderate.

**Research Question 2:** What is the extent to which interest predict inclination to sexual orientation of students?

**Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of interest and Inclination to sexual orientation of students (n=1317)**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Extent of Prediction	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Interest	0.866	0.750	75.0%	0.75
Inclination to sexual orientation				

**Source: Researcher's survey (2026)**

In Table 2, the R-value of 0.866 indicates positive and very high extent of prediction, while R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.750

which is the coefficient of determination show the extent interest predict inclination to sexual orientation of students. In addition, 75.0% variance in inclination to sexual orientation of students is accounted for by interest. This means that the extent interest predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is very high.

**Research Question 3:** What is the extent to which assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation of students?

**Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of assertiveness and Inclination to sexual orientation of students (n=1317)**

Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Extent of Prediction	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Assertiveness	0.844	0.712	71.2%	0.712
Inclination to sexual orientation				

**Source: Researcher's survey (2026)**

In Table 3, the R-value of 0.844 indicates positive and moderate extent of prediction, while R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.712 which is the coefficient of determination show the extent assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation of students. In addition, 71.2% variance in inclination to sexual orientation of students is accounted for by assertiveness. This means that the extent assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is moderate.

**Hypothesis 1:** Self-acceptance does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.

**Table 4: Simple regression analysis of the prediction of inclination to sexual orientation of students from Self-acceptance (n=1317)**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	490.086	1	490.086	730.656	.000
Residual	882.034	1315	.671		
Total	1372.120	1316			

  

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)	7.122	.270		26.358	.000
Self-acceptance	.558	.021	.598	27.031	.000

**\*= Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.**

**Source: Researcher’s survey (2026)**

The information in Table 4 shows that self-acceptance is a significant independent predictor of inclination to sexual orientation of students (F= 730.656; p=0.000). Hence, the null hypothesis that self-acceptance does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The table also shows that the prediction of inclination to sexual orientation of students could be done using the following equation:

$$Y = .589 + .844X$$

Where Y= inclination to sexual orientation of students

X= assertiveness.

**Hypothesis 2:** Interest does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.

**Table 5: Simple regression analysis of the prediction of inclination to sexual orientation of students from Interest (n=1317)**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	1029.701	1	1029.701	3954.394	.000
Residual	342.418	1315	.260		

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)	-.141	.232		-.608	.000
Interest	1.105	.018	.866	62.884	.000

**\*= Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.**

**Source: Researcher’s survey (2026)**

The information in Table 5 shows that interest is a significant independent predictor of inclination to sexual orientation of students (F= 3954.394; p=0.000). Hence, the null hypothesis that interest does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The table also shows that the prediction of inclination to sexual orientation of students could be done using the equation below:

**Hypothesis 3:** Assertiveness does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students.

**Table 6: Simple regression analysis of the prediction of inclination to sexual orientation of students from Assertiveness (n=1317)**

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	MS	F-ratio	p-value
Regression	977.546	1	977.546	3257.873	.000
Residual	394.574	1315	.300		
Total	1372.120	1316			

  

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)	.589	.242		2.429	.000
Assertiveness	1.050	.018	.844	57.078	.000

**\*= Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.**

**Source: Researcher’s survey (2026)**

The information in Table 6 shows that interest is a significant independent predictor of inclination to sexual orientation of students (F= 3257.873; p=0.000). Hence, the null hypothesis

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that assertiveness does not significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The table also shows that the prediction of inclination to sexual orientation of students could be done using the following equation:

$$Y = -.141 + .866X$$

Where Y= inclination to sexual orientation of students

X= interest.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings from research question one indicates that the extent self-acceptance predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is moderate. Also, the result of the hypothesis one shows that self-acceptance significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students. The findings of this study are in line with the study by Ayodele (2020), which reported that there is a significant positive correlation between self-acceptance and willingness to express one's sexual orientation. This finding also concurs with that of Okon (2021), who reported that students who accepted themselves regardless of societal expectations were more open to discussing or disclosing their sexual orientation. The result may be attributed to the fact that students hide their thoughts, their feelings, their attractions, and even their curiosity. They learn to monitor their own eyes, careful not to look too long at someone they find attractive. They monitor their words, careful not to say anything that might raise suspicion. This hiding is exhausting, and it is built on a foundation of self-rejection, the belief that who they are is fundamentally

unacceptable. Self-acceptance does not usually happen all at once. Once a student begins to accept themselves, their entire relationship with their orientation shifts. It is no longer an enemy to be defeated or a secret to be buried. It becomes simply a fact about who they are, no different from their height or their eye colour. This does not mean they are ready to announce it to the world. It means they are no longer at war with themselves.

The findings from research question two indicates that the extent interest predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is very high. Also, the result of the hypothesis two shows that interest significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students. The findings of this study are in line with the study by Adeyemi (2019), which reported that there is a significant positive relationship between students' academic interest and their willingness to explore and accept their sexual orientation. This finding also concurs with that of Onwuka (2021), who reported that intellectual interest significantly predicted positive sexual identity formation. The result may be attributed to the fact that a student who feels a faint, unexamined attraction toward the same gender may never explore that feeling if their interest is consistently directed elsewhere. They may be deeply engaged in their studies, their sports, their religious activities, or their career ambitions. These are not distractions, they are genuine passions, but they fill the mind so completely that there is little space left for introspection. The question of orientation simply does not rise to the surface because other things feel more urgent or more

rewarding. This is not denial, it is simply the architecture of attention. Conversely, a student whose interest is drawn to questions of identity, human relationships, or social justice may find themselves repeatedly encountering stories and ideas about sexual diversity. They may enrol in a literature course that includes queer authors. They may attend a campus talks on human rights and follow activists on social media who speak openly about their lives. Each exposure builds on the last, gradually transforming a vague curiosity into sustained intellectual and personal engagement.

The findings from research question three indicates that the extent assertiveness predict inclination to sexual orientation of students is very high. Also, the result of the hypothesis three shows that assertiveness significantly predict inclination to sexual orientation of students. The findings of this study agree with the study by Etim (2020), which reported that students with low levels of assertiveness were more susceptible to peer suggestion and societal trends, thereby increasing the likelihood of sexual orientation exploration or ambiguity. This finding also concurs with that of Adewale (2020), who reported that significant inverse relationship between assertiveness and susceptibility to sexual orientation experimentation. The result may be attributed to the fact that students with strong assertiveness are better equipped to navigate the countless moments when their orientation brushes against the expectations of others. A roommate asks why they never seem interested in dating. A classmate makes a joke about

someone being too feminine or too masculine. A family member calls during the weekend and casually asks if there is a boyfriend or girlfriend yet. The passive student deflects, laughs along, or changes the subject. The aggressive student lashes out in defense, which only draws more attention and suspicion. But the assertive student finds the narrow path between silence and attack. They might say, I am not really interested in talking about my dating life right now, or actually, I do not find that kind of joke funny. They do not owe anyone their story but they also do not pretend to be someone they are not.

### Conclusion

It was concluded based on the findings that when students possess self-acceptance, interest and assertiveness, their journey toward understanding and embracing their sexual orientation becomes clearer and less burdensome. These psychological variables do not create identity but they empower students to accept it with courage, honesty, and peace. The inner self determines how freely the outer self can live.

### Counselling Implications of Findings

The results of this study have counselling implications that extend to students, school administrators, guidance counsellors, parents, and prospective researchers. Interventions that enhance self-acceptance, foster positive intellectual engagement (interest), and develop assertive communication should be given top priority in clinical and psychoeducational practice on campus.

Counsellors should conduct structured group workshops and short skills programs that combine values-clarification, identity exploration (guided reflection, readings, facilitated discussion), and assertiveness training (role plays, boundary setting, communication rehearsal) in light of the significant percentages of variance explained by interest and assertiveness. In order to improve identity clarity and lessen distress without subjecting students to stigma, these programs ought to be strengths-based, non-pathologizing, and customized to the cultural realities of Akwa Ibom students.

Counselling services must move from reactive, one-to-one crisis work to proactive campus outreach and accessible group formats. Services should (a) embed psychoeducation about identity development into orientation and student-development curricula, (b) collaborate with student associations to host safe, confidential forums, and (c) create low-threshold resources (self-help modules, reading lists, referral pathways) that promote healthy curiosity and self-reflection. Training for counsellors and frontline staff is essential so they can recognise their own biases, deliver affirmative care, and apply evidence-based techniques (e.g., assertiveness training, acceptance-focused interventions) shown here to relate to students' orientation-related adjustment.

Parallel prevention strategies should involve family and institutional stakeholders. Counsellors can create quick parent education materials and community talks that highlight emotion coaching, unconditional support, and the importance of family messages in

fostering self-acceptance while honouring regional cultural norms. Systemic barriers to seeking help will be lessened at the institutional level by policies that safeguard confidentiality, increase mental health staffing, and indicate inclusive support (e.g., clear non-discrimination statements and obvious, private counselling access points). Lastly, interventions should be assessed locally using process and outcome measures to make sure they genuinely enhance students' academic performance, psychological health, and sense of self.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. School management should mandate the establishment of counselling centres where students can process identity related concerns without fear of exposure or punishment in order to boost self-acceptance.
- ii. Counsellors should stimulate genuine interest in identity exploration by curating relevant books, documentaries, and guest lectures on human sexuality and diversity for students.
- iii. University administrators should organize quarterly talk show that teach students how to express their identity boundaries respectfully and confidently.
- iv. Counsellors should adopt an approach that addresses psychological variables simultaneously rather than in isolation since they predict inclination to sexual orientation.

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*Psychological Predictors of Inclination to Sexual-Orientation among Undergraduate Students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria*

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