

**INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS ON ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT
OF STUDENTS IN DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION, KWARA STATE
UNIVERSITY, MALETE NIGERIA**

Adedayo ADESOKAN

Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education

Kwara State University Malete

adedayo.adesokan@kwasu.edu.ng or duduskydayo1@yahoo.com

Tel: 08077034767 and 08167515243

Abstract

The transition to University is considered to be a challenging and stressful life event which requires students to adjust academically to new environment; therefore this study investigated the influence of psychological factors on academic adjustments of students in Special Education in Kwara State University. Descriptive survey research design was used. Eighty (80) students studying Special Education in the University were purposively selected as study sample. Three research instruments were used; they were motivation questionnaire ($r = 0.77$), self esteem questionnaire ($r = 0.81$) and academic adjustment questionnaire ($r = 0.70$). Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significant levels. Data were analysed using linear regression. The finding of the study showed that motivational has significant influenced on academic adjustment of students studying Special education at Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State ($P < 0.05$) but self-esteem has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State ($P > 0.05$). The finding of the study revealed that motivation has significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete. Self-esteem has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying special Education at Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State. Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that motivation had significant positive influence on academic adjustment of students studying special Education while self-esteem had no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State. It was therefore recommended that lecturers and managements should find a way of encouraging students so that they will believe in themselves.

Keywords: Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Academic Adjustment, Special Education

Introduction

Students mobility from secondary school to higher education has become an increasingly significant and indispensable framework. Students have their own choice of courses to study in the university but many are faced with different fate, that is the institution do give them different courses. Students are left in a dilemma to either forfeit the admission or accept and adjust to the new course given. Children with good emotional well-being are more likely to feel secure, relaxed and comfortable in

the new environment and have more positive attitudes about school and learning; and adjust to new courses given to them. For example, students are likely to be separated from their friends and family members for the first time and have to interact with new individuals to form new social relationships, friendships and academic adjustment.

Many fresh students in the tertiary institutions are not ready for the psychological realities despite their interest in university education. Fresh students are usually faced with adjustment challenges such as living apart from home, family, and close friends, adjusting to the academic environment, developing a new array of social relationship with lecturers and course mates, assuming responsibility for the task of daily living. However, adjustment is a continuous process by which a person varies his/her behaviour to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself/herself and his/her environment (Salami, 2011). Adjustment to school is influenced by a combination of the child's personal characteristics, their experiences, and the interconnections between home, preschool and school (Criss, Lee, Morris, Cui, Bosler, Shreffler and Silk 2015).

Motivation is a state that energizes, directs and sustains behaviour; which also involves goals and requires activity. Goals provide the impetus for and the direction of action. Action entails effort, persistence in order to sustain activity for a long period of time. Motivation actually affects what and how information is processed because motivated students are more likely to pay attention and try to understand the material instead of simply going through a superficial process. Motivation determines what consequences are reinforcing and punishing (Wolters and Hussain, 2015). Motivation determines the specific goals toward which students strive and adjust academically. Motivation has several effects on learning; such as leading to behavior and that helps in assisting particular goal in life. It also affects the choices we make in life.

Motivation level has a substantial impact on student levels of engagement and achievement behaviour. This translates into persistence when completing tasks and the achievement of desired performance (Palos, Munteanu, Costea, and Macsinga, 2011). The specific motivational constructs are attribution beliefs, self-efficacy, self-regulation, motivation internalize and the execution of one's own learning strategies (Schwinger, Steinmayr, & Spinath, 2009).

Teachers play an important role in enhancing the classroom environment and motivate the students to adjust academically to new environment.

Previous researches show that, from year to year, there are changes in teachers, classrooms, school, class rules, school rules, and procedures, performance expectations, the difficulty of the work and peers, all these changes necessitate students to adjust and do predict their academic adjustment. It is believed that if a student is well adjusted to his environment, then he or she will be motivated to excel in the activities assigned during school, but maladjustment in academics leads to a devastating lifelong impact on a student or individual. An individual is not born adjusted; it is his or her capability that makes his or her adjusted in any environment. Academic adjustment plays a vital role in a child's life, and it is like a pillar on which child's entire life is based. It is not only related to a child's progress and achievement, but also their attitudes towards school, anxieties, loneliness, social support and academic motivation. Interpersonal relationship affects student's academic motivation (Newman, 2000). Jonas, Tine, Peter, Liesje and Vincent (2021) found out that learning strategies and motivational variables at the end of secondary education have more predictive power in the prediction of first year of higher education (FYHE) academic adjustment in the academic programmes than in professional programmes. Relationship with peers and teachers is a powerful motivator which help students to adjust academically. Females are highly motivated compared to their male counterparts in school (Sikwari 2014).

Self-esteem is seen as the individual's positive or negative attitude towards the self as a totality. Lee (2013) explained that self-esteem is commonly characterized as a positive or negative overall evaluation of the self, that is, self-esteem is how much value people place on themselves. It is an evaluative part about self-knowledge. Self-esteem represents the perception and evaluation of the self rather than reflecting on some objective reality. Self-esteem is related to a number of variables that may lead to better adjustment and academic performance of students. For example: happiness, life-satisfaction, self efficacy, deep learning approach and low levels of stress (Phan, 2010).

Crocker & Luhtanen (2003) found more complicated interactions aside the general empirical support that indicates a positive and linear relationship between self esteem and academic adjustment. There is also evidence that the relationship that exists between self-esteem and academic achievement is not based on the level of self-worth. These researchers found low self-esteem of college fresh students to be predictive of social problems, whereas academic problems were predicted by academic competence contingency. It was also revealed that self-esteem and impostor phenomenon were direct and significant predictors of all adjustment in the university (except personal-emotional

adjustment for self-esteem). Self-esteem was found to be mediated through social support seeking and avoidant coping, while problem-solving coping was unrelated to any type of university adjustment (Lefkowitz, 2003). In a study conducted by Preeti, Kumar, Raj; Behmani, Rakesh; Singh, and Kuldeep (2016), it was revealed that there was a significant positive inter-correlation existed between self-esteem, adjustment and academic performance. A significant difference found on adjustment and academic performance of male and female adolescents. Female adolescent scored lower than male adolescent on adjustment scale indicating female adolescents have good adjustment than male adolescents. Female students scored higher than male adolescents on academic performance. There was no significant difference was found on self-esteem based on adolescents gender. The findings shows that high or average level of self-esteem and good adjustment affects the academic performance in a positive way. There is a suggestion for the school teachers to facilitate effective interpersonal relationships among students to encourage self-esteem and to increase the level of publicity of guidance and counselling services in schools. Hadia and Seema (2013) study revealed that the self-esteem variables of competence, lovability, personal power, moral self-approval and body functioning were found to be significantly related to all the areas of adjustment. Likability, body appearance and defensive self-enhancement were significantly related to some but not all adjustment areas. Self-control and identity integration were not significantly related to any of the areas of adjustment. Based on the above, this study examined the influence of motivation and self-esteem on academic adjustment of students studying special education at Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that the transition from secondary school to university can be a stressful experience. Transition period from secondary school to tertiary institution requires ability to cope with new environment that is students experience adjustment phase when entering higher institution of learning. This adjustment mechanics help students to cope with numerous challenges that could happen to them during their course of study. Despite the importance of adjustment, many students find it difficult to cope with the university challenges especially when they are given course of study they do not choose during their entrance examination. This makes some students not to adjust academically to their course of study. Literature has shown that many students experience low academic adjustment in school as a result of different courses given.

Literatures reviewed by the researcher show that many studies have been carried out on the influence of psychological factors on academic adjustment of students in University, none to the best of researcher has considered students studying Special Education. This shows the gap the study intends to fill.

Hypotheses

Ho₁: Motivation has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete Kwara State.

Ho₂: Self-esteem has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete Kwara State.

Methodology

The research design used for this study is a descriptive survey research design. Eighty (80) students from 300 level to 400 level studying Special Education at Kwara State University were the respondents; they were purposively selected for the study because they have the attribute the study is intend to find. Three instruments were used, they were Motivation questionnaire, self- esteem questionnaire and academic adjustment questionnaire. Motivation questionnaire was constructed by the researcher and it contains ten (10) items with response choices of 4-point likert scale. Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), it was validated using test re-test to establish reliability coefficient of 0.77. Self-esteem questionnaire contains 10 items with 4 point likert scale, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), with reliability coefficient of 0.81 and academic adjustment questionnaire also contains 10 items with 4 point likert scale, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD), with reliability coefficient of 0.70. The three instruments were administered to respondents and collected back on the spot. Data collected were analyzed using linear regression.

Results

Ho₁: Motivation has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete Kwara State.

Table 1: Summary of Regression Analysis showing the significant influence of motivation on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University Malete Kwara State.

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R	Sig
1 Regression	237.402	1	237.402	7.731	.300	.090	.079		.007
Residual	2395.348	78	30.710						
Total	2632.750	79							

Table 1 shows the regression analysis of the influence of motivation on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete Kwara State. The result indicated that there was significant influence of motivation on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education ($F_{(1,78)} = 7.731$, $R = .300$ while the R-Square is .090, $P < 0.05$). Motivation explained 9% of the change in academic adjustment of students studying Special Education ($R^2 = 0.09$). This implies that motivation has positive influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State. The hypothesis stated that there is no significant influence of motivation on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University; Malete Kwara State is therefore rejected since the significant value is less than 0.05.

H_{o2} : Self-esteem has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete Kwara State.

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis showing the significant influence of self-esteem on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State.

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R	Sig
1 Regression	43.650	1	53.650	1.623	.143	.020	.080		.207
Residual	2579.100	78	33.065						
Total	2632.750	79							

Table 2 shows the regression Analysis of the influence of self-esteem on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University Malete Kwara State. The result indicated that there was significant influence of motivation on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education ($F_{(1,78)} = 1.623$, $R = 0.143$ while the R-Square is .020, $P > 0.05$). This implies that self-esteem has no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying

Special Education at Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State. The hypothesis stated that there is no significant influence of self-esteem on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete Kwara State is therefore not rejected since the significant value is greater than 0.05.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that motivation has significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University Malete, Kwara State. The reason for this could be that students studying Special Education have been counseled and encouraged by their lecturers in the Department and Faculty. This finding is in accordance with the finding of Jonas, Tine, Peter, Liesje and Vincent (2021) who found out that learning strategies and motivational variables at the end of secondary education have more predictive power in the prediction of FYHE academic adjustment in the academic programmes than in professional programmes.

The second finding of the study showed that self-esteem has no significant influence on the academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State. The reason for this could be that students do not have believe in themselves and the course given to them. This finding is not in line with the finding of Hadia and Seema (2013) who found out that the self-esteem variables of competence, lovability, personal power, moral self-approval and body functioning were found to be significantly related to all the areas of adjustment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that motivation had significant positive influence on academic adjustment of students studying special Education and self-esteem had no significant influence on academic adjustment of students studying Special Education at Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommended the following:

1. Lecturers and managements should find a way of encouraging students so that they will believe in themselves.
2. Students' advisers should prompt counseling to students.

References

- Criss, M.M., Lee, T.K., Morris, A.S., Cui, L., Bosler, C.D., Shreffler, K.M. and Silk, J.S., (2015) "Link between monitoring behaviour and adolescent adjustment: An analysis of direct and indirect effects," *Journal of child and family studies*, 24(3),668-678.
- Crocker, J. & Luhtanen R. (2003). Level of self-esteem and contingencies of self-worth: Unique effects on academic, social, and financial problems in College Students. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29, 701-712.
- Ganai, M. Y., & Mir, M. A. (2013). A comparative study of adjustment and academic achievement of college student. *Journal of Educational Research and Essays*, 1(1), 5-8.
- Lefkowitz, E. (2003). Predicting adjustment to college: a model of personality, coping strategies and college adjustment. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University.
- Hadia S. P, & Seema M. (2013). Relationship of self-esteem and adjustment in traditional University students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences* 84, 999 – 1004 1877-0428
- Jonas W, Tine V.D , Peter van P , Liesje C & Vincent D. (2021). Predicting freshmen's academic adjustment and subsequent achievement: differences between academic and professional higher education contexts. *Frontline Learning Research Special Issue .9 (2)*, 28 - 49.
- Newman, R. S. (2000). Social influences on the development of children's adaptive help seeking: The role of parents, teachers, and peers. *Developmental Review*, 20, 350-404. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/drev.1999.0502>.
- Palos, R., Munteanu, A., Costea, I. & Macinga, I. (2011). Motivational and cognitive variables with an impact on academic performance Preliminary study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 138-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.03.063>.
- Preeti, Kumar, Raj; Behmani, Rakesh; Singh, Kuldeep (2016). Impact of self-esteem and adjustment on academic performance of adolescents. *Journal of Health & Wellbeing*. 7 (1), 133-139.
- Phan, H. P. (2010). Student's academic performance and various cognitive processes of learning: An integrative framework and empirical analysis. *Educational Psychology*, 30(3), 297-322.
- Salami, S.O. (2011). Psychosocial predictors of adjustment among first year college of Education students. US – China.
- Schwinger, M., Steinmayr, R., & Spinath, B. (2009). How do motivational regulation strategies affect achievement: Mediated by effort management and moderated by intelligence. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 19, 621-637. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2009.08.006>
- Sikhwari T. D. (2014): A study of the Relationship between Motivation Self- Concept and Academic Achievement of Students at a University of Limpopo Province, South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Science*, 6(1) 19-25.
- Wolters, C.A. and Hussain, M. (2015) "Investigating grit and its relations with college students self-regulated learning and academic achievement," *Metacognition and Learning*, 10(3), 293-311.