

EFFECT OF ADJUSTMENT BEHAVIOUR ON FRESH UNDERGRADUATES IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF CALABAR

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Abstract

This study examined effect of adjustment behaviour on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. To achieve the purpose of this study, three research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 325 fresh undergraduates in the Vocational Education, University of Calabar. Total sample of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents were selected for the study using the simple random sampling technique. The main instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 19 items. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from Business Education Unit and one from Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Education Foundation, Guidance and Counseling. Data collected were analysed using different statistical techniques. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All the hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The study found that social adjustment, academic adjustment and psychological adjustment had no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The study recommended among others that business educators in Vocational Education should be more practical in academic adjustment to illicit fresh undergraduates' understanding.

Key Words: Adjustment Behaviour, Fresh Undergraduates, Social Adjustment, Academic Adjustment, Psychological Adjustment.

Introduction

Successful universities have a fundamental philosophy of valuing and investing in their undergraduates (Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin & Uli, 2009). Training promising undergraduates is considered a fundamental means of achieving competitive advantage (Wang, Chen, Zhao & Xu, 2006). However, to achieve this aim, universities often have put in place some mechanisms that enable lecturers monitor and assess the continued ability of fresh undergraduates to effectively and efficiently cope with the demands or requirements of their respective studies. Such a system not only helps detect gaps in undergraduates' skills and ability, but facilitate judgement of what is actually being accomplished by each student, and therefore what his/her value is to the group of

institution by way of contributing this important institutional need consists of a number of instruments including a student adjustment behaviour.

Adjustment behaviour is the behavioural process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium between their needs and the obstacles of their environments (Augustina, 2017). It is the ability of an individual to get along in a new situation, environment and tasks (James, 2019). The undergraduate in the university meets new students, new lecturers with different teaching styles, academic orientation among others. The university life is both an opportunity and a challenge for freshmen. If the freshmen cannot adapt to the new environment quickly, they may have difficulties in their studying and psychological developments (Mutambara & Bhebe, 2012). The transition to the university environment is an important turning point of any university and therefore the undergraduate is always considered as the greatest asset of any institution including University of Calabar. Today's society can be considered a manufacturing one in that high value is placed upon a person's ability to work and highly specialized tasks and as such, spend an extended period of time in technical institutes, universities and postgraduate centres in order to acquire specialized skills, educational experiences and professional training (Boyd & Bee, 2016).

The transition of a first year undergraduate after being a final year student at school replays the top-dog phenomenon of transferring from the oldest and most powerful group of undergraduates to the youngest and least powerful group of undergraduates that occurred earlier as adolescence began (Kasayira, Kapandambira & Ilungwe, 2007). Also, entering into university involves movement to a larger, more impersonal school structure; interaction with peers from more diverse geographical and sometimes more diverse ethnic backgrounds; and increased focus on achievement and its assessment (Santrock, 2014). It requires the making of new friends, modifying existing relationships with family members, and adjusting to the new academic environment (Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan & Majeski, 2013).

A successful adaptation to university has typically been defined by such criteria as remaining in University, enjoying psychological well-being, and performing well academically. Well adjusted graduates who are believed to drive a strong internationally competitive economy compared with their poorly adjusted counterparts (Mutambara & Bhebe, 2012). The transition of the university demands more responsibility and many undergraduates may doubt their ability to be successful at the university level which may lower their academic success and increase their stress level (Dwyer & Cummings, 2011). James (2019) suggested that some undergraduates adjust well to the university environment whereas others struggle with the transition, some leaving school entirely. However, the factors influencing first-year undergraduates' adaptation to university are complex (Wang et al., 2006). While there are many challenges associated with the transition to university, it is also characterized by many positive features. It is suggested that undergraduates are more likely to feel grown-up, have more modules from which to select, have more time to spend with peers, have more opportunities to explore different lifestyles and values, enjoy greater independence from parental monitoring, and be challenged intellectually by academic work (Mutambara & Bhebe, 2012).

Consequent upon the above, adjustment behaviour is measured based on social adjustment, academic adjustment and psychological adjustment. This is because there are variables that related to practice of good governance which must be performed by each undergraduate to provide good service delivery in the Vocational Education, University of Calabar.

Social adjustment is the mode of responses built up by the individual with respect to his social environment. Social adjustment is the ability of the various rules and regulations of the society (James, 2019). Social adjustment is an effort made by an individual to cope with standards, values and needs of a society in order to be accepted (Robinson, 2009). Augustina (2017) noted that individuals who are emotionally healthy are the ones who have learned to cope effectively with himself and his environment. It implies that such as individual must be able to maintain healthy social interrelationship, achieve peer acceptance, lecturer-student relationship and child-peer relationship. Curtona (2007) noted that social adjustment can be categorized into different version as peer acceptance, social relationship among others. Augustina (2017) found out the general peer acceptance predicted adjustment outcomes. The peer group has significant effect on new students, because they have a need to replace family and community support systems with peer support systems (Law, 2007). Fresh undergraduates therefore have a strong need to be liked and accepted by one another. The social climate, rules and regulations, patterns of interactions in the university might sharply be different from that of the home. The undergraduates therefore, must be conditioned or helped to adjust to the university setting in order to achieve his /or her goal. This implies that social adjustment is inevitable in teaching/learning process. Of equal importance, first-year students may develop a number of social relationships, this does not necessarily prevent loneliness and homesickness (Rice, 2019). It is the quality of the relationship that impacts upon loneliness. In order to have a healthy social adjustment, undergraduates have to embark on a period of gradual detachment from home. Augustina (2017) noted that friendship status and general peer acceptance affect social adjustment. Individuals especially, the fresh undergraduates seem to be better adjusted overall, when they are accepted by their peers and have one or more supportive friendship. Essentially, today's society can be considered a manufacturing one in that high value is placed upon a person's ability to learn. Most undergraduates possess the physical, personal and interpersonal endowments, and developed learning habits needed to meet the demands of our competitive University. However, the handicapped person for instance, has often been prevented from acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to meet these personal and social demands through ordinary means. Because of this, special vocationally oriented educational programmes provided by the Universities are needed to determine the nature and extent of inadequacy of adjustment to learn and to bring the handicapped child or household to his maximum performance when he reaches adulthood. Obviously, each handicapped child must be analyzed individually and the programme for his adjustment must be specially tailored to his needs (Iyam, Ekaette, Essien & Akpan, 2017).

There appear to be at least three broad fields of social adjustment: Physical adjustment to learn, learning habits, and personal and inter-personal adjustment to learn (Mutambara & Bhebe, 2012). The physical adjustment to learn pertains to sensory impairments, and coordination and dexterity deficiencies. Learning habits deal with the minimal abilities to act in the appropriate manner demanded by learning. Personal and interpersonal adjustment to learn includes behaviour demanded by other individuals with whom, and for whom, he learns (Monroe, 2009).

Academic adjustment: students with academic problem are usually found dropping out of university and this state of affair have kept on disturbing the hearts of parents, lecturers and administrators. Academic adjustment pertained to the way students deal with the demands associated with their academic work. The transition to the university classroom requires an adjustment of academic habits and expectations. They often must study

harder to improve their study habits. Classes may be larger, instructors have different teaching styles, assignments are lengthier, standards are higher. Students need to learn to set and balance priorities. Academic adjustment is a legally mandated modification or service that gives a student with a disability an equal opportunity to benefit from the educational process (Rice, 2009).

Psychological adjustment refers to the personal emotional distress and somatic symptoms associated with the adjustment process. Psychological adjustment includes behaviour demanded by other individuals with whom, and for whom, he learns. Mutambara and Bhebe (2012) reported that, fresh undergraduates are concerned with being part of the university. They also want to prove themselves to their peers. Proving oneself to peers often results in use of drugs and alcohol, sexual activity, and fear leading to non-assertiveness and the compromising of values (Kasayira et al., 2007). Psychological adjustment affects freshmen in an indirect way. Unstable and maladjusted undergraduates have been found to do less well in their studies in proportion to their intelligence than undergraduates who were well-balanced. Failure to achieve proper adjustment at university may be a precursor to psychological problems. Kitzrow (2003) noted that, the number of university undergraduates struggling with mental health issues is increasing with universities being labeled as “perfect” incubators of mental health problems. Kasayira et al. (2007) in their study on challenges faced by university undergraduates found that, lack of finance to meet basic needs is a major stressor for university undergraduates in developing countries with other stressors including adjusting to university life peer pressure, time management and task management. Undergraduates who stay out of campus face additional stressors that included inefficient transport networks and accessing other university services. No exhaustive explanations have been reached surrounding adjustment behaviour on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. Hence, the need to understand the variables that affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar being the main focus of the current study.

The main purpose of this study was to find out the effect of adjustment behaviour on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. Specifically, this study is designed to:

- i. Examine the effect of social adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.
- ii. Determine the effect of academic adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.
- iii. Examine the effect of psychological adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.

As a guide to this research work, the following research questions were derived from

Objectives of the study:

- i. To what extent does social adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar?
- ii. To what extent does academic adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar?
- iii. To what extent does psychological adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar?

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: Social adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.

Ho2: Academic adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.

Ho3: Psychological adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The survey research design enabled the researcher to generate data based on the opinion of respondents using questionnaire instrument. The choice of survey enabled the researcher administer questionnaire from a large population by using a simple size obtained through sampling. Etuk (2010) noted that survey research typically employs questionnaires and interviews to determine the opinions, attitudes, preferences, and perceptions of interest to the researcher. The study was carried out in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The choice of Vocational Education, University of Calabar was a personal decision of the researcher aimed at training undergraduates in the Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The population of the study was over 325 drawn from three units in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The sample size was 150. The sample size represents the accessible population as some undergraduates were not readily available which made the researcher to resort to only accessible population. The researcher made questionnaire with 19 items. The structured questionnaire is tagged, "Effect of Adjustment Behaviour on Fresh Undergraduates Questionnaire" (EABFUQ). The questionnaire was designed with the opinion of fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education on their preference to three major variables under investigation, namely: social adjustment, academic adjustment and psychological adjustment. The questionnaire was validated and the reliability index of .05 determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability technique. Copies of the questionnaire were administered using research assistants, who were staff of each of the units in Vocational Education visited. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse data generated.

Results

Data collected for this study were analyzed and the results presented as follows:

Research question 1

To what extent does social adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education? To answer research question 1, the mean and the standard deviation were computed from the frequency distribution of the responses. The result of the computation is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Respondents' mean rating of the effect of social adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education

S/N	Social adjustment	Mean	Std. dev.	Remarks
1	Effect of social adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education	3.19	.540	HE
2	Effect of educational level on their social life.	3.19	.595	HE
3	Importance of social life style to the development on fresh undergraduates.	3.21	.563	HE
4	Effect of social behaviour on fresh undergraduates.	3.25	.570	HE
5	The social environment of Vocational Education requires adjustment on the part of new undergraduates.	3.19	.576	HE
	Cluster mean	3.21	.567	HE

The data in Table 2 showed respondents' mean ratings on the extent social adjustment affect fresh undergraduates. The cluster used five items to collect information from the respondents on social adjustment. All the five items have mean values in the range of high extent. The cluster mean value for the cluster is 3.21. This is also in the range of high extent.

Research question 2

To what extent does academic adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education? To answer research question 2, the mean and the standard deviation were computed from the frequency distribution of the responses. The result of the computation is shown in Table 2

Table 2: Respondents' mean rating of the effect of academic adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education

S/N	Academic adjustment	Mean	Std. dev.	Remarks
6	Effect of academic adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education.	3.42	.495	HE
7	For most undergraduates, the transition of the university classroom requires an adjustment of academic habits and expectations.	3.39	.515	HE
8	Studies of fresh undergraduates can be confusing and mysterious.	3.41	.494	HE
9	Thinking independently might be a new experience for some fresh undergraduates.	3.43	.511	HE
10	Effect of environment affects fresh undergraduates.	3.36	.571	HE
11	Improved classroom lectures boost undergraduate moral.	3.22	.578	HE
12	Cordial relations exist between undergraduates and lecturers.	3.09	.659	HE
	Cluster mean	3.33	.546	HE

The result in Table 2 showed the respondents mean rating on the effect of academic adjustment on fresh graduate undergraduates. The result revealed that all the items were rated at factors affecting the fresh graduate undergraduates to a high extent. The cluster mean value was also within the range of high extent.

Research question 3

To what extent does psychological adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education? To answer research question 3, the mean and the standard deviation were computed from the frequency distribution of the responses. The result of the computation is shown in Table 3

Table 3: Respondents' mean rating of the effect of psychological adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education

S/N	Psychological adjustment	Mean	Std. dev.	Remarks
13	Effect of psychological adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education.	2.95	.763	HE
14	Lecturers teach students with the influence of drugs and alcohol.	2.92	.691	HE
15	Do undergraduates attend lectures with the influence of drugs and alcohol?	3.07	.631	HE
16	Lack of finance to meet basic needs is a major stressor for university undergraduates in Vocational Education.	3.23	.573	HE
17	Fresh undergraduates study under stress.	3.07	.631	HE
18	Improved personal behaviour boost fresh undergraduate moral.	3.19	.610	
19	Lecturers communicate freely with fresh undergraduates.	3.35	.555	
	Cluster mean	3.11	.636	HE

The data in Table 3 showed respondents' mean ratings on the extent psychological adjustment affects on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education. Of the seven items used to collect information from the respondents on research question 3, all the items have mean values in the range of high extent. The cluster mean value for the cluster is 3.11. This is also in the range of high extent.

Result of the hypotheses tested

Hypothesis 1

Social adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. To test hypothesis 1, One Way Analysis of Variance was computed using the mean of the two independent groups computed from the frequency distribution of their responses. The computation is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) result of social adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar

Source of variance	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	f-cal	f-crit	Remarks
Between groups	5.880	2	2.940	1.034	3.06	Not significant
Within groups	417.880	147	2.843			
Total	423.760	149				

The result displayed in Table 4 showed that the F-value is 1.034 while F-critical is 3.06 at 2 and 149 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance. Since the calculated F-value is less than the F-critical value, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 2

Academic adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. To test hypothesis 2, One Way Analysis of Variance was computed using the mean of the two independent groups computed from the frequency distribution of their responses. The computation is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) result of academic adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar

Source of variance	Sum of square	df	Mean square	f-cal	f-crit	Remarks
Between groups	9.053	2	4.527	.545	3.06	Not significant
Within groups	1221.940	147	8.313			
Total	1230.993	149				

The result displayed in Table 5 showed ANOVA statistical result on the extent of academic adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The result showed F-calculated as .545 while F-critical is 3.06 at 2 and 149 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance. Since the calculated F-value is less than the F-critical value, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Psychological adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. To test hypothesis 3, One Way Analysis of Variance was computed using the mean of the two independent groups computed from the frequency distribution of their responses. The computation is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) result of Psychological adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar

Source of variance	Sum of square	df	Mean square	f-cal	f-crit	Remarks
Between groups	8.320	2	4.160	1.063	3.06	Not significant
Within groups	575.420	147	3.914			
Total	583.740	149				

The analysis displayed in Table 6 revealed F-value is 1.063, this is less than the F-critical value of 3.06 at 2 and 149 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance. Since the calculated F-value is less than the F-critical value, the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are discussed in line with the specific purpose of the study and research questions as follows:

The extent of social adjustment affects fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar.

The first research question and hypothesis were used to rate respondents' views on the extent social adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education. The result revealed that, all the five items used for the cluster and the cluster mean have values in the range of high extent. The implication is that the respondents used for the study are of the opinion that, social adjustment affects fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education. The result of the first hypothesis showed F-calculated value as 1.034, and F-critical value as 3.06. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

This clearly showed that, the respondents used for the study, irrespective of the type of fresh undergraduates do not vary in their opinion that social adjustment on the development of fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education to a high extent. This result is in line with Curtona (2007) and Rice (2009) that first year undergraduates may develop a number of social relationships, this does not necessarily prevent loneliness; that, in order to have a healthy adjustment, undergraduates have to embark on a period of gradual separation or detachment from home.

The extent of academic adjustment affects fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The second research question and the first hypothesis were used to rate respondents' views on the extent of academic adjustment effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The result revealed that all the items except two were rated as factors affecting fresh undergraduates to a high extent. The cluster mean value is also within the range of high extent. The implication is that academic adjustment affects fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education to high extent.

The result of the second hypothesis showed F-calculated value as .772 and F-critical as 3.06 at 2 and 149 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This clearly showed that, the respondents used for the study, irrespective of the type of fresh undergraduates do not vary in their opinion on the extent academic adjustment on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education. This result is in line with the submission of Robinson (2009) academic demands increase and new social relations are established when undergraduates join higher level institutions; that most university undergraduates, the transition to the university classroom require an adjustment of academic habits and expectations.

The psychological adjustment affects fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education. Regarding the extent personal-emotional adjustment effect on fresh undergraduates, the result of the third research question showed that, the respondents used for this study are of the opinion that psychological adjustment affects fresh undergraduates to a high extent. The tested hypothesis showed that, psychological adjustment has no significant effect on fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar. The implication is that, the respondents used for this study are of the opinion that

personal-emotional adjustment affects the development of fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education to a high extent.

The result of this finding is in line with the views of Mutambara and Bhebeh (2012) stated that, freshmen are concerned with being part of the university. They also want to prove themselves to their peers. Providing oneself to peers often results in use of drugs and alcohol, sexual activity, and fear leading to non-assertiveness and the compromising of values.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that, the following adjustment behaviour variables: Social adjustment, academic adjustment and psychological adjustment affect fresh undergraduates in Vocational Education, University of Calabar to a high extent.

Recommendations

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

- i. That, educators in Vocational Education should do more practical in social adjustment to illicit fresh undergraduates" understand.
- ii. That, fresh undergraduates should adjust academically to University of Calabar demands.
- iii. That, fresh undergraduates should adjust psychologically and constantly scan the environment in order to understand the major trends of events and make proactive decisions that would neither jeopardize nor mortgaged the future of their Department.

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