



## **Academic Adjustment Amongst First Year Undergraduate Students at Anambra State University, Uli, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A successful academic adjustment of first year students to the university will enable them complete their studies. The work examines the academic adjustment amongst first year students in Anambra State University, Uli (ANSU). Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided to study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 498 first year students. Mean and t-test were used in analyzing the data obtained through questionnaire. Results showed that majority of first year students have high level of academic adjustment. It was also found that students who receive academic advising are more academically adjusted than those who do not. Further, the study revealed that there is significant difference in academic adjustment between males and females. The study also showed that there is significant difference between those who received academic advising and those who do not. It was therefore recommended that counselors should increase the level of publicity of guidance and counseling programmes in the universities and should emphasized the need of academic advising during orientation. Further, the university administrators should plan academic intervention programme for students who have low academic adjustment.

Keywords: academic adjustment, undergraduate, students.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Attending university is supposed to be a very appealing experience that could give satisfaction to students. Unfortunately, not all students make the transition from secondary schools to university smoothly. A study conducted by Tinto (1996) showed that 40% of all students in America who started out

in a four year college failed to earn a degree, and nearly 57% of all dropouts left before the start of their second year.

In Nigeria, there is lack of statistics on students drop out rate. However, this does not preclude the existence of similar situation. Adegoroye, Ayodele and Babatunde (n.d) description of the social life in the university such as violence, cultism, decline in ethical and moral values questions the student's ability to adjust. Moreover, the change from teaching to lecturing and the self regulatory form of learning in the university setting may be an added factor to these students inability to adjust academically.

Academic adjustment is the student's positive attitudes towards their academic work and goals and positive valuations of their academic environment (Baker & Siryke cited in Cohorn & Giuliano, 1999; Al-Qaisy, 2010). Academic adjustment includes student motivation to complete academic work, success in meeting academic requirements, academic efforts and satisfaction with academic environment (Baker & Siryke cited in Kyalo & Chumba 2011). Academic demands increase when student join higher level of institution. Students are often uncertain of their abilities to meet up these demands. They need to be assisted to develop coping skills, that will enable them overcome the challenges they encounter at the university. These challenges which include the need to develop learning habits for new academic environment, struggling with examination and assignments, coping with demands and challenging professors can be an overwhelming experience of many students (Perry, Hladky, Pekrun, Pelletier, 2001; Baker, 2003; Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan & Majeski, 2004; Yazedjian & Toews, 2006; Smith & Rank, 2007).

A number of scholars have examined the academic adjustment of undergraduate students. In a study on adjustment amongst first year students in a Malaysian university, Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin and Uli (2009), found that students adjustment was at moderate level and male students were found to be better adjusted compared to female students. In another study on selected factors influencing social and academic adjustment of undergraduate students, Kyalo and Chumba (2011) found that majority of the students have high academic adjustment. In a study to examine first-year student's adjustment to university life Wintre and Yaffe, (2002) found that male students are more adjusted academically than the female students.

Research has shown that academic advising is very relevant to student's adjustment. Academic advising help students to pursue educational goals and reduce maladjustment found among students (Holcomb –Macoy & Chem-Hayes cited in Nwokolo, Anyamene, Oraegbunam, Anyachebelu, Okoye & Obineli (2010). "Academic advising is the only structured activity in campus in which all students have the opportunity for on – going, one –to – interaction with a concerned representative of the institution (Habley, 2003 cited in Yarbrough 2010. p,1). It's goal is for education and development of students (Creamer, 2000).Academic advising that focused on development of the student adopts a systemic process based on a close student- adviser relationship intended to aid students in achieving educational, career and

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personal goals through using full range of institutional services (Ender, Winston, & Muler cited in Yarbrough, 2010).

Although research in academic adjustment amongst first year undergraduate students has been extensively carried out in other countries, the area has received little empirical attention in Nigeria. Considering the relevance of academic adjustment at early stages in the universities, and the need for empirical evaluation of the adjustment, this work sets out to examine the academic adjustment amongst first year students. More specifically, this work is guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the level of academic adjustment of male and female year one students?
2. What is the level of academic adjustment of year one students who have received academic advising and those who have not?

### **Hypothesis**

1. Male and female first year students will not differ significantly on academic adjustment.
2. There is no significant difference in academic adjustment of students who have received academic advising and those who have not.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey design was adopted to determine the level of academic adjustment of first year students. The study was carried out in Anambra State University, Uli (ANSU). The sample used for the study was 498 first year students of the school year 2011/2012, selected through stratified random sampling technique. There were 252 male and 246 female respondents. The researcher adapted the University Students' Questionnaire (USQ) developed by Kyalo and Chumba (2011). The reliability coefficient for the study was 0.70. The USQ was a multidimensional scale that elicited information on various dimensions of students adjustment including academic adjustment. Eleven items used to elicit information on academic adjustment was modified by the addition of eight items from literature on students' academic adjustment. Students were expected to respond to the nineteen items on a five-point likert scale of SA = 5., Agree = 4 points, Undecided = points, Disagree = 2 points, Strongly Disagree = 1 point.

The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Guidance and Counselling. This was to confirm the face and content validity. Feedback was given regarding questions clarity, comprehensiveness and acceptability. Their corrections were effected in the final version of the instrument. With the scores from a pilot test using forty first year students' from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, the internal

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consistency was established using Cronbach Alpha. It yielded Alpha Coefficient of 0.92. Some sample items from the questions are, “I find it difficult to manage time at university”, “I have adjusted to the teaching methods”, I balance extracurricular activities with academic work”.

The instrument was administered to the respondents with the help of three trained research assistants. The purpose of the study and the survey procedure were clearly explained to the respondents who were assured of confidentiality to encourage honest responses. Out of 550 copies questionnaire distributed, 498 were collected back duly filled, representing 90.5% return rate. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The following were the basis for decision, mean values 0.50 – 1.55 = very low, 1.55 – 2.54 = low, 2.55 – 3.54 = average, 3.55 – 4.54 = high, 4.55 – 5.50 = very high.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1:** Mean responses on the level of academic adjustment by Gender

Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Academic Adjustment	Male	3.85	252	.49
	Female	3.73	246	.56

Table 1 above shows that the mean adjustment scores for male and female students was 3.85 and 3.73 respectively. Although there was a mean difference of .12 in favour of male students, both had high academic adjustment.

**Table 2:** Mean responses on academic adjustment by Reception of Academic Advising .

Dependent Variable	Academic Advising	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
Academic Adjustment	Received	3.87	378	.43
	Have not Received	3.54	120	.71

Table 2 above shows that academic adjustment mean score for those who have received academic advising while in the university was 3.87 and 3.54 for those who have not received academic advising. There is mean difference of .33 in favour of those that have received academic advising.

**Table 3:** T-test Analysis on first Year students' Academic Adjustment by Gender.

Dependent Variable	Gender	Mean	N	Std. Dev.	Df	t-cal	t-crit	P-value
Academic Adjustment	Male	3.85	252	.49	496	2.55	1.96	.01
	Female	3.73	246	.56				

The t-test in the above shows that there was a significant difference in academic adjustment between male and female first year students as the calculated t-value (2.55) was greater than the critical t-value (1.96) and the P-value (.01) was less than the 0.05 level of significance. It was concluded that male first year students are more academically adjusted than the female students.

**Table 4:** T-test Analysis on first year Students' Academic Adjustment by Reception of Academic Advising.

Dependent Variable	Academic Advising	Mean	N	Std. Dev.	df	t-cal	t-crit	P-value
Academic Adjustment	Received	3.87	378	.43	496	6.15	1.96	.00
	Have not Received	3.54	120	.71				

Using independent samples t-test, there was a significant difference in academic adjustment between those students that have received academic advising and those who have not. This is confirmed by the large calculated t-test value (6.15) which is higher than the critical t-value (1.96) and the small P-value (.00) which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no difference was therefore not supported. It was concluded that those who received academic advising are more academically adjusted than those that have not received academic advising.

## DISCUSSION

The pursuit of academic goals is the primary purpose of being admitted to university. The study was interested in examining the level of academic adjustment of first year students. The result of the study revealed that majority of the students have high academic adjustment. This seems to give

credence to the finding by Kayalo and Chumba (2011) that majority of the first year students have high level of academic adjustment. The result is not surprising because first year students seem to benefit from orientation programme organized in the institution. The programme helps students to develop positive attitude towards academic pursuit in the new environment. However, this finding contradicts the finding of Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddin and Uli, (2009) that students adjustment was at a moderate level.

Further, the study found that those students who receive academic advising are more academically adjusted than those who do not. The result is not surprising because research has shown that academic advising helps students to pursue academic goals and reduce maladjustment (Holcomb-macoy & Chem Hayes cited in Nwokolo, Anyamene, Oraegbunam, Anyachebelu, Okoye & Obineli, 2010). The study also revealed that, there is significant difference in academic adjustment between males and females. Males are more academically adjusted than female students. This finding is significant because it gained empirical support from previous study in which Wintre and Yaffe (2000), Abdullah, et al, (2001); Enochs and Roland, (2006); found that there is a significant difference between academic adjustment of male and female students with males having higher scores than females.

The study also showed that there is a significant difference between those that have received academic advising and those who have not. Those who received academic advising are more academically adjusted than those that have not received academic advising. The result is not surprising because academic advising makes students to be more focused either in their career aspiration, academic achievement and personal; ambition. (Ender, Winston & Muler cited in Yarbrough, 2010).

### **Limitations**

The author acknowledges inherent limitations in the study. Given the homogeneity of the sample, the results cannot be widely generalize beyond the demographic characteristics of those the author studied. It is important in future to repeat the study on a larger, nationally representative sample to reduce sampling error. This research used quantitative approach to collect its research data. Hence, the data and information are limited to research instrument such as structured questionnaire. Therefore, the future research is suggested to perhaps use qualitative approach to examine deeply into the academic adjustment of first year students in the university.

### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

A successful academic adjustment of students to university environment enables them to complete their studies. The study examines the academic adjustment of first year students in Anambra State University, Uli (ANSU).

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The study revealed that majority of the students have high academic adjustment. Those students who received academic advising are more academically adjusted than those who do not. It was also found that there is significant difference in academic adjustment between male and female. Further, the study revealed that those students who received academic advising are more academically adjusted.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that:

1. Counsellor should increase the level of publicity of guidance and counseling programmes and its services in the universities. The programmes will help to address the needs of the students so as to enhance their academic adjustment to the immediate environmental challenges that affect their academic performance.
2. Counsellor should actively involve all university staff especially academic advisors during orientation programme organized for fresh students. During this programme, the counselor should emphasized need of academic advising to the new students.
3. University administrators should plan academic intervention programmes especially for those students who have low academic adjustment intervention programme such as “Learning Centres” should be introduced to help students who fail to meet the academic demand in their courses. Intervention programmes should be designed with sex of the recipients taken into consideration.

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