RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL SUPPORT, PEER LEARNING AND ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF MOSES ORSHIO ADASU UNIVERSITY MAKURDI, BENUE STATE

Gabriel Terzungwe Akume Phd[1], Ameh James Akor Phd[2] & Kyausu Cynthia Shidoo[3]

[1]*Department of Educational Foundations, Moses OrshioAdasu University, Makurdi.*
gabakume@gmail.com/+2347067982488
[2]*Department of Educational Foundations, Moses OrshioAdasu University, Makurdi.*
akorjamesameh@gmail.com/+2348038735323
[3]*Department of Educational Foundations, Moses OrshioAdasu University, Makurdi.*
shidookyausu@gmail.com/+2347067796291

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between parental support, peer learning, and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study, and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at $r = 0.01$ level of significance. The population of the study comprised 30,000 undergraduates across eight faculties and 47 departments at Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi using Glenn (2012) formula for sample size determination, through multi-staged sampling. Data were collected using a combination of three instruments: a self-developed Parental Support Questionnaire (SEQ), Peer Learning Questionnaire (AQ), and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (AAQ). The instruments were validated by two experts. Data were analyzed using the Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC). The results revealed that both parental support and peer learning have a positive relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of the university. It was concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between parental support and peer learning and academic adjustment. It was recommended that university administrators and teachers should foster a positive environment and atmosphere that discourages bullying and discrimination, encourages peer support, and promote mutual respect among students and staff and researchers should conduct longitudinal and intervention-based studies to better understand the causes of low psycho-social adjustment and assess the long-term impact of various school and family-based interventions.

Keywords: Parental Support, Peer Learning, Academic Adjustment, Undergraduates.

Introduction

The inability of students to adapt academically in recent years has contributed to significant problems, such as subpar academic outcomes, higher dropout rates, and mental health difficulties. Students who find it challenging to meet the academic demands of higher education often struggle with managing their time, maintaining self-discipline, and engaging with course material, which results in lower grades and dissatisfaction with their academic experience (Credé & Niehorster, 2016). The intense pressure to fulfill institutional requirements, combined with insufficient coping mechanisms, can lead to elevated stress and burnout, increasing the likelihood of academic failure or withdrawal (Bewick, 2015). Furthermore, the shift toward online and hybrid learning environments has introduced additional obstacles, as students navigate less structured settings, often leading to reduced motivation and feelings of disconnection (Garris& Fleck, 2020).

These factors perpetuate a cycle of academic challenges that not only impede students' immediate achievements but also have lasting impacts on their career goals and personal growth. Beyond academic setbacks, difficulties in academic adjustment are strongly associated with negative psychological and social outcomes. Students who struggle to integrate into their institution's academic and social environment often face feelings of isolation, diminished self-esteem, and increased anxiety, which can contribute to depression and other mental health issues (Dyson & Renk, 2016). The absence of robust social support systems, particularly for international students and those from marginalized communities exacerbates these challenges, hindering their ability to seek assistance or access essential resources (Sherry, 2015).

Academic adjustment refers to the dynamic process through which students adapt to the academic demands and socio-cultural environment of an educational institution. This process involves several critical dimensions, including adapting to diverse learning modalities, managing rigorous academic expectations, developing effective study strategies, and integrating into the broader social and institutional culture of the educational setting. For many students, particularly those transitioning from secondary to tertiary education or navigating unfamiliar cultural and linguistic contexts, academic adjustment necessitates a significant recalibration of learning approaches, requiring enhanced time management, self-regulation, and resilience (Credé & Niehorster, 2012). Successful academic adjustment is a pivotal determinant of student persistence and achievement, as those who adeptly navigate these transitions are better positioned to surmount challenges, sustain academic motivation, and achieve their educational objectives (Baker & Siryk, 2018). A critical facet of this process is the development of robust social and psychological coping mechanisms to mitigate the stressors inherent in new educational environments. Students often encounter heightened academic rigor, diverse peer dynamics, and varying instructor expectations, which can amplify stress and necessitate adaptive strategies (Tinto, 2016).

Psycho-social factors, comprising interconnected psychological and social dimensions such as self-efficacy, social support networks, family dynamics, socio-economic status, and cultural influences, profoundly shape students' mental health, behavioral responses, and academic adjustment within educational contexts. These factors critically influence students' capacity to manage academic stressors, foster resilience, and engage effectively with educational demands,

with robust self-efficacy and adaptive coping mechanisms correlating strongly with enhanced academic motivation and performance outcomes (Thoits, 2011; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Supportive interpersonal relationships with family, peers, and educators cultivate a sense of belonging, mitigate stress, and promote positive academic trajectories, whereas negative social dynamics, such as excessive peer comparison or parental pressure, can exacerbate anxiety and diminish academic engagement (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Moreover, socio-economic and cultural contexts significantly influence access to educational resources and shape students' attitudes toward learning, posing additional challenges for academic adjustment, particularly among international students and those from marginalized backgrounds who navigate complex socio-cultural integration barriers (Sherry & Thomas, 2015).

Parental support, comprising emotional encouragement, financial resources, and active academic engagement, significantly enhances students' academic adjustment and success by fostering motivation, resilience, and positive educational outcomes (Grolnick, 2019). This support manifests through involvement in school activities, provision of learning materials, and establishment of high academic expectations, which collectively bolster students' self-efficacy and academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2015) Students benefiting from robust parental involvement exhibit reduced stress, elevated self-esteem, and a stronger sense of academic belonging, enabling them to effectively navigate educational challenges (Wang & Eccles, 2012). Conversely, a lack of parental support can precipitate diminished motivation, lower academic self-efficacy, and heightened dropout risks, particularly among socioeconomically disadvantaged students (Jeynes, 2016; Hill & Tyson, 2017). Financial support further facilitates access to quality education and extracurricular opportunities, reinforcing academic achievement and psychosocial adjustment (Cheung &Pomerantz, 2015). To Wang and Eccles (2012) found that students who received high levels of parental support demonstrated better academic adjustment, higher motivation, and greater persistence in school. To Jeynes (2016) parental involvement significantly contributed to students' academic adjustment, particularly in the early years of university. Students who maintained strong relationships with their parents and received emotional and financial support adjusted more easily to the academic and social challenges of higher education.

Peer learning, a collaborative educational approach wherein students share knowledge, ideas, and problem-solving strategies, significantly enhances academic adjustment by fostering active engagement, critical thinking, and psychosocial development among undergraduates (Boud, 2015). This approach, occurring in structured settings like study groups or informal peer discussions, promotes deeper conceptual understanding and hones communication and teamwork skills essential for academic and professional success (Johnson & Johnson, 2019). Effective peer learning cultivates accountability and exposes students to diverse perspectives, enriching learning beyond traditional instruction (Slavin, 2014). However, its efficacy hinges on group dynamics and interaction quality, as poorly structured collaborations may lead to misinformation or unequal participation, particularly among students with varying ability levels (Topping, 2015). To Topping (2015), found that students who engaged in peer learning activities demonstrated significantly higher levels of academic adjustment. They reported improved study habits, better time

management, and increased confidence in handling coursework. Peer learning fostered a sense of belonging and social integration, which further enhanced students' ability to adjust to university life. To Capstick and Fleming (2014) observed that students who participated in peer tutoring programs reported better academic adjustment, improved problem-solving skills, and greater confidence in handling coursework.

Statement of Problem

The challenge of academic adjustment among undergraduates has emerged as a pressing issue in Nigerian higher education, contributing to poor academic performance, increased dropout rates, and significant emotional distress. Students transitioning to new academic environments, such as from secondary school to university, often struggle to adapt to unfamiliar teaching methods, rigorous workloads, and institutional expectations, resulting in reduced motivation, disengagement, and failure to meet academic standards (Adebayo &Okeke, 2012). Low self-efficacy, characterized by a student's lack of confidence in their ability to succeed academically, intensifies these difficulties by fostering self-doubt, fear of failure, and diminished resilience, ultimately hindering academic performance and adjustment (Eze& Umar, 2016). Psycho-social factors, including social support from family and peers, significantly shape students' emotional resilience and learning behaviours, with strong support networks alleviating stress and enhancing academic adjustment, while their absence may lead to isolation, anxiety, and poor academic outcomes (Tinto, 2016). Psychological factors, such as effective stress management and emotional regulation, further influence students' ability to cope with academic pressures, with deficiencies in these areas increasing susceptibility to anxiety and disengagement (Adeyemi& Hassan, 2017). Motivated by these concerns, this study investigates parental support and peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate parental support, peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi. Specific objectives of the study include;
1. examine the relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi.
2. ascertain the relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
1. What is the relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates ofMoses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi?
2. What is the relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated and tested at r=0.01 level of significance:

1. Parental support has no significant relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi.

2. Peer learning has no significant relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi.

Theoretical Framework

Student Integration Theory by Vincent Tinto (1975) was used for the study which stated that students who have clear academic and career aspirations are more likely to remain motivated and persist through challenges. Similarly, if students feel a strong attachment to their institution whether through faculty mentorship, peer support, or campus involvement they are more likely to develop a sense of institutional commitment, which enhances their willingness to stay. Conversely, students with weak goal commitment or who feel alienated within their academic environment are at greater risk of academic adjustment failure. This assumption emphasizes the importance of fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment that encourages students to remain engaged both academically and socially.

Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977) was also used for this whish stated that behaviour, personal factors (such as cognitive and emotional processes), and environmental influences interact with one another. This challenges the traditional one-way view of learning, where the environment alone shapes behaviour. Instead, Bandura proposed that individuals influence and are influenced by their surroundings. For example, a student struggling academically may feel discouraged (personal factor), leading them to avoid studying (behaviour), which further results in poor academic performance (environmental consequence). This cycle illustrates how learning is not simply a reaction to external stimuli but is shaped by an individual's thoughts, emotions, and interactions with their environment.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a correlational design for the study. The population of the study comprised all the 30,000 undergraduates from (8) faculties and 47 Departments of the University. Sample size of 310 students was selected from a total population of 30,000 across the eight (8) faculties of the University using Glenn (2012) formula for sample size determination, through multi-staged sampling. The instrumentation for this research was a combination of three instruments. Self-developed Parental Support Questionnaire (SEQ), Peer Learning Questionnaire (AQ), and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (AAQ). The instrument generated for collection of data was presented after which, the instrument was also presented to two experts in the Faculty of Education Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi for further corrections. The instrument was personally administered to the respondents with the help of one research assistant from each selected faculty (class representatives). The researchers briefed the research assistant on the contents and the method of administration and collection of the data. Responses collected from the

respondents (students) was analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMMC) to answer research questions and Product-Moment Correlation (PPMMC) chi-square to test hypotheses at r= 0.01. level of significance. Anything from 0.-1 was considered as negative correlation.

Results

Research Question 1:

What is the relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi?

Table 3:

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Relationship between Parental Support and Academic Adjustment among Undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi.

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	R	Remark
parental support	310	60.59	17.785		
				0.980**	Positive Relationship
Academic Adjustment	310	15.30	4.342		

Table 3 shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates, r=0.980**. This means that parents encourage their children to study and provide them with the necessary resources like books, internet access to support learning. This shows positive relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi.

Research Question 2:

What is the relationship peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduatesof Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi?

Table 4:

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Relationship between Peer Learning and Academic Adjustments among Undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi

Variables	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	R	Remark
Peer Learning	310	60.59	17.785		
				0.976**	Positive Relationship
Academic Adjustment	310	15.29	4.271		

Table 4 shows the result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates, r=0.976[**.] This means that discussing academic topics among peers helps students understand concepts better and help students to adjust to new academic challenges effectively. This shows positive relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi.

Hypothesis 1: Parental support has no significant relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi.

Table 4: Pearson Chi-square Test on Relationship between parental support and adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi

	Value	df	Level of sig.	P.Value	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	2920.023[a]	611	.05	0.00	H$_O$ Rejected
Likelihood Ratio	1034.685	611		0.00	
Linear-by-Linear Association	296.856	1		0.00	
N of Valid Cases	310				

Pearson Chi-square= 2920.023[a],Df= 705, Sig, =.05, P =.000, P<.05, R=rejected. Table 4 presents results as Pearson chi-square=2920.023[a], Df=705, Sig=.05, P=0.00, P<.05. This showed that the null hypothesis which states that parental support has no significant relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi is not statistically significant is rejected. This shows that there is a positive significant relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi.

Hypothesis 2: Peer learning has no significant relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi.

Table 4: Pearson Chi-square Test on Relationship between peer learning and adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi

	Value	Df	Level of sig.	P.Value	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	3201.558[a]	705	.05	0.00	H$_O$ Rejected
Likelihood Ratio	1026.844	705		0.00	
Linear-by-Linear Association	294.213	1		0.00	
N of Valid Cases	310				

Pearson Chi-square= 3201.558ª,Df= 705, Sig, =.05, P =.000, P<.05, R=rejected. Table 4 presents results as Pearson chi-square=3201.558ª, Df=705, Sig=.05, P=0.00, P<.05. This showed that the null hypothesis which states that peer learning has no significant relationship with academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi is not statistically significant is rejected. This shows that there is a positive significant relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduatesof Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi.

Discussion of Findings

The first Hypothesis revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi responses showed that parents encourage their children to study and provide them with the necessary resources like books, internet access to support learning. This shows positive relationship between parental support and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi. The finding agrees with Wang and Eccles (2012) who found that students who received high levels of parental support demonstrated better academic adjustment, higher motivation, and greater persistence in school. Emotional and academic support from parents helped students develop resilience, allowing them to navigate academic challenges effectively. It also agrees with Jeynes (2016) that parental involvement significantly contributed to students' academic adjustment, particularly in the early years of university. Students who maintained strong relationships with their parents and received emotional and financial support adjusted more easily to the academic and social challenges of higher education.

The second hypothesis revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University. Mean scores from undergraduates' responses indicated that discussing academic topics among peers helps students understand concepts better and help students to adjust to new academic challenges effectively. This shows positive relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses OrshioAdasu University Makurdi. This finding is in line with Topping (2015) who found that students who engaged in peer learning activities demonstrated significantly higher levels of academic adjustment. They reported improved study habits, better time management, and increased confidence in handling coursework. Peer learning fostered a sense of belonging and social integration, which further enhanced students' ability to adjust to university life. It also agrees with Capstickand Fleming (2014) that students who participated in peer tutoring programs reported better academic adjustment, improved problem-solving skills, and greater confidence in handling coursework.

Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between parental support, peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi. This revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between parental support

and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University Makurdi There is a positive significant relationship between peer learning and academic adjustment among undergraduates of Moses Orshio Adasu University.

Recommendations

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

1. University administrators and teachers should foster a positive environment and atmosphere that discourages bullying and discrimination, encourages peer support, and promote mutual respect among students and staff.

2. Researchers should conduct longitudinal and intervention-based studies to better understand the causes of low psycho-social adjustment and assess the long-term impact of various school and family-based interventions.

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