

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES AS PREDICTORS OF
ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT OF FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES
IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA**

Assoc. Prof. (Mrs.) Betty-Ruth Ngozi Iruloh and Hanson Manuabuchi Ukaegbu

Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, University of Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *This study was designed to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence competencies predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates in Rivers State, Nigeria. Correlational design by multiple prediction was adopted for the study. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses guided the conduct of the study at 0.05 alpha levels. A sample of 382 first year university undergraduates of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, 2015/2016 academic session was drawn from the population through simple and proportional stratified random sampling techniques. Two instruments namely; Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory and Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire - Academic subscale were used for data collection. Simple and multiple regression analyses were used for data analysis. All data were subjected to analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS). Results showed that; emotional intelligence competencies (self-awareness, relationship management, social-awareness and self-management) taken together statistically significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates; on the basis of individual contributions, self-management and self-awareness were significant contributors while social-awareness and relationship management were not. Based on the findings, conclusion and recommendations were made.*

KEYWORDS: Emotional, Intelligence, Competencies, Prediction, Academic Adjustment

INTRODUCTION

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 (Aggarwal in Salami, 2011). It implies changes in our thinking and way of life to the demands of the situation. Weiten and Lloyd (2006) defined adjustment as the psychological processes through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. According to Denga in Kinanee (2010), adjustment is the harmony, congruence or a goodness-of-fit between an individual and standards against he/she is adjudged.

Furthermore, adjustment has been defined as the individual's response to the physical, psychological, and social demands of the self, other people, and the environment (Napoli, Kilbride & Tebbs, in Kinanee, 2010). This implies that man can adjust in any environment, whether in a school, family/marriage, workplace, or even in a relationship or an academic programme (Kinanee, 2010). Based on the above definitions, adjustment could be defined as an individual's general adaptation to his/her environment, and the demands of life.

Baker in Salami (2011) stated that there are basically four sub-scales of adjustment which include academic, social, personal – emotional as well as institutional attachment adjustment. Academic adjustment refers to how well students deal with educational demands, such as

motivation to complete academic requirement, academic effort and satisfaction with academic environment. Social adjustment refers to how well the students involve in social activities and the satisfaction with various aspects of college experience. Institutional attachment describes a student's satisfaction with the college experience in general and with the college he/she is attending in particular. Personal-emotional adjustment refers to how satisfied a student feels psychologically and physically.

Goleman (2006) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Emotional intelligence describes abilities different from, but complementary to academic intelligence or the purely cognitive capacities measured by intelligence quotient. In his own view, Bar-On (2006) posited that emotional intelligence is an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures. This definition does not make any direct reference to the acquisition, retrieval, and instantiation (through appropriate behaviours) of emotional information.

In his first model of emotional intelligence, in 1998, Goleman identified five domains or dimensions of emotional intelligence encompassing twenty-five competencies. Later on, Goleman collapsed the twenty-five competencies into twenty, and the five domains into four which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management.

Self-awareness is the ability to identify one's own internal states, preferences, resources, and intuition (Goleman, 2006). Self-awareness involves recognizing one's emotions and their effects, accurate self-assessment which involves knowing one's emotions and their effects, as well as self-confidence which refers to a strong sense of strength and limit. Self-management is the ability to manage one's internal states, impulses and resources. It is the ability to regulate distressing effects like anxiety and anger and to inhibit emotional impulsivity (Goleman, 2006).

Social-awareness is the ability to sense, understand and react to others' emotion while comprehending social networks. In other words, social awareness is the ability to understand the feelings of others and why they act in the way they do. Social awareness competencies determine how we handle relationships. Relationship management is the ability to inspire, influence and develop others while managing conflict. The relationship management domain, as explained by Goleman (2006) contains competencies that have the most direct effect on interactions with other people. Orluwene and Wachukwu (2014) stated that relationship management is the ability to manage emotions in others.

Adeyemo (2006) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment of students transitioning from primary school to secondary school. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to analyze the data. Results showed that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment.

Abdullah, Elias, Uli and Mahyuddin (2010) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and university adjustment and academic achievement of 250 first year students attending various undergraduate programs at a Malaysian public university. Results also indicated that throughout a period of one semester, students overall adjustment and academic achievement were found to be significantly predicted by their emotional intelligence.

Omranian, Hoseinchari, Sepasian and Asaadi (2015) conducted a research to predict adolescents' adjustment based on emotional intelligence. Multiple regression analysis showed that emotional intelligence was able to significantly and positively predict the emotional, social and academic adjustment of the adolescents. Moreover, t-test analysis showed that there were significant differences in social adjustment between girls and boys. Bang and Sim (2015) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence, stress coping, and adjustment to college life in nursing students using 227 associate nursing students in Korea. No significant correlation was found between emotional intelligence and adjustment to college life in nursing students.

Study examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and family environment was conducted by Ozabaci (2006). Pearson correlation coefficient was used for data analysis. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and family cooperation. Iruloh and Ukaegbu (2015) investigated the relationship between emotional, social, cognitive intelligence and social support network among youths in Rivers State, Nigeria, using a sample of 856 respondents drawn via cluster sampling method. Pearson correlation coefficient was used for data analysis. Results indicated that emotional intelligence demonstrated significant positive relationship with social support network among youths.

In another study, Salami (2011) examined the contribution of psychological and social factors to the prediction of adjustment to college. The participants were randomly selected for the study. Regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence predicted adjustment among first year college of education students. Jahil and Muazzan (2013) investigated whether emotional intelligence predicts marital adjustment in fertile and infertile women using 240 women (120 fertile, 120 infertile) drawn through stratified random sampling method. The comparison of the two groups showed that fertile women's marital adjustment was better than infertile women. Results also suggested emotional intelligence as a predictor of marital adjustment.

Sergio, Dungca and Ormita (2015) examined a cross-cultural study of demographic variables and their role on emotional intelligence and work values among 437 purposively selected call centre representatives from the Middle East, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, India, and the Philippines. The general findings confirmed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (particularly on the clusters of self-management, social awareness and relationship management) and work values.

Masrek, Osman, Khamis and Paiman (2014) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. The findings showed that out of the four clusters of emotional intelligence which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management, only three turned out to be the significant predictors of job satisfaction. The self-awareness cluster was not found to have any effect on job satisfaction. Dhingra, Manhas and Thakur (2007) studied emotional quotient (EQ), spiritual quotient (SQ) and social adjustment of Kashmiri migrant women. The sample consisted of 50 migrants randomly selected. Social Adjustment Inventory, Spiritual Quotient Scale and Emotional Quotient Scale were used for data collection. Correlation coefficient was used for data analysis. Results showed that self-awareness correlated with social adjustment.

Orluwene and Wachukwu (2014) investigated how the dimensions of emotional intelligence can predict teachers' job involvement in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State,

Nigeria. Results showed that emotional intelligence and its dimensions had significant predictions on teachers' job involvement. Again, that self-awareness had the highest prediction followed by self-management, social awareness and then lastly by relationship management. Nwadinigwe and Azuka – Obieke (2012) investigated the impact of emotional intelligence on academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. Results revealed that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence skills and academic achievement.

However, from all empirical literature reviewed, the present researchers found that no empirical study has been done on the joint contribution of emotional intelligence competencies to the prediction of academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates in Rivers State. This is the rationale behind the researchers' choice of this topic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Correlational design by multiple prediction design was used for the study. Multiple prediction design was relevant in the present study because the study sought to find out the extent to which emotional intelligence competencies such as self-awareness, relationship management, social-awareness and self-management predict academic adjustment.

A sample of 382 year one students of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, 2015/2016 session was used for the study. Simple and proportional stratified random sampling techniques were used to select participants for the study. Simple random sampling was used to select four faculties from the six faculties in the institution. Proportional stratified random method was employed to ensure that the four faculties; Social Science, Humanities, Science, and Business Studies were adequately represented in the study based on their sub population. In order to justify the use of the sample size for the study, Taro Yamen's formula was applied.

Two instruments were used in this study, namely; Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory (MEII) by Mangal and Mangal (2004) and Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) by Baker and Siryk (1989).

Though the two instruments had earlier been validated by their originators however, to ensure validity of the instruments in the present study since they were adapted, the instruments were presented to three experts in test construction who ensured their face and content validity. All the corrections were incorporated before the final draft was made.

The reliability of the two instruments was established by their originators. However, for the purpose of the present study, the reliability of the two instruments was determined by the researchers through the test-retest method. The initial and the (second) retest scores were then correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The stability coefficients obtained for the four (4) sections of Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory were as follows: Intrapersonal awareness = 0.84; Interpersonal – awareness = 0.80; Intrapersonal management = 0.81, Interpersonal management = 0.79. The overall reliability of the MEII was 0.81. Finally, the reliability coefficient obtained for Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (academic adjustment sub section) was 0.82.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management) taken together predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates?

Hypothesis 1: Emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management) taken together do not significantly predict academic adjustment of first year University undergraduates.

Table 4.1: Multiple Regression Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Competencies (Self-Management, Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Management) and Academic Adjustment of First Year University Undergraduates

R = 0.780						
R ² = 0.608						
Adjustment R ² = 0.114						
Std. Error of Estimate = 10.993						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Sq.	F	P-Val	Resul
Regression	40.883	4	40.883	2.338	0.001	Sig
Residual	45920.803	377	120.844			
Total	45961.686	381				

Table 4.1 shows that $R = 0.78$, $p < 0.05$. This means that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship-management) and academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates. The result is that emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management) taken together significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates. Furthermore, Table 4.1 shows that F-ratio of $F(4, 377) = 2.338$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, hypothesis one was rejected. This implies that emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management) taken together significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates.

Research Question 2: To what extent do emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management) taken separately significantly predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates?

Hypothesis 2: Emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship management) taken separately do not significantly predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates.

Table 4.2: Relative Contribution of Each Emotional Intelligence Competency to the Prediction of Academic Adjustment of First Year University Undergraduates

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t Value	Sig. Levels	Result
	β	Std. Error	β eta			
Constant	43.899	2.578		17.030	0.000	
Self-awareness	0.516	0.061	0.714	3.705	0.000	Sig.
Social awareness	0.037	0.116	0.222	1.323	0.747	Not Sig.
Self-management	0.625	0.014	0.881	5.011	0.000	Sig.
Relationship mgt.	0.166	0.115	0.486	1.443	0.150	Not Sig.

In order to test the corresponding null hypothesis two that each emotional intelligence competency taken separately does not significantly predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates, t-values associated with the respective beta values were used. Hence, significant t-value indicates that the relative contribution of self-awareness ($\beta = 0.714, t = 3.705, p < 0.05$) and self-management ($\beta = 0.881, t = 5.011, p < 0.05$) competencies to the prediction of academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates was significant at 0.05 levels of significance while those of social-awareness ($\beta = 0.222, t = 1.323, p > 0.05$) and relationship management ($\beta = 0.486, t = 1.443, p > 0.05$) were not significant at 0.05 alpha levels. This means that social-awareness and relationship-management are not significant contributors to academic adjustment at 0.05 alpha levels.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 4.1 showed that $R = 0.78, R^2 = 0.608, p < 0.05$. The result is that emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management) taken together significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates. Result also indicated that there is a high positive relationship between emotional intelligence competencies and academic adjustment. The Table (4.1) further revealed that $R^2 = 0.608$ which means that all the emotional intelligence competencies investigated jointly accounted for 60.8% of the variance in an academic adjustment, and this is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). More so, Table 4.1 revealed F-ratio of $F(4, 377)$ that is, $F = 2.338$, and $p < 0.05$ which was found to be significant. The result therefore, is that emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management) taken together, statistically significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates.

Additionally, Table 4.2 showed the relative contribution of each emotional intelligence competencies of (self-management, self-awareness, social-awareness and relationship management) to the prediction of academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates. Significant t-value indicated that the relative contribution of self-awareness ($\beta = 0.714, t = 3.705, P < 0.05$) and self-management ($\beta = 0.881, t = 5.011, p < 0.05$) competencies to the prediction of academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates were significant at 0.05 level of significance while those of social awareness ($\beta = 0.222, t = 1.323, p > 0.05$) and relationship management ($\beta = 0.486, t = 1.443, p > 0.05$) were not significant at 0.05 level of significance.

The finding of the present study is in agreement with that of Adeyemo (2006) who in his study of the relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment of students transitioning from primary school to secondary school found that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment. The present result also lends credence to Abdullah, Elias, Uli and Mahyuddin (2010). This result is not surprising because accurate self-assessment, ability to regulate distressing effects like anxiety, anger, etc. self-control and flexibility in handling change in the new school environment will help first year university undergraduates to successfully accomplish different educational demands.

However, the present finding is dissimilar with Bang and Sim (2012) who found no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and adjustment to college life in nursing students. The divergent results for the present and past studies may be attributed to many reasons. While the present study used first year university undergraduates, nursing students in college of nursing were used in the previous study. More so, while the present study was carried out in Rivers State, Nigeria, with a sample size of 382, the past study was undertaken in far Korea with a sample size of 227. All these may have influenced the directions of the result.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were made based on the findings of this study:

1. Emotional intelligence competencies (self-awareness, relationship management, self-management and social awareness) taken together significantly predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates.
2. However, on individual basis, self-awareness and self-management are significant contributors to academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates while social-awareness and relationship-management are not significant at 0.05 alpha levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. Since emotional intelligence competencies (self-awareness, relationship-management, self-management and social-awareness) have been found to jointly and significantly predict academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates, it is therefore recommended that university authorities should introduce personality development programmes that will provide training in emotional skills that will help university undergraduates in their overall adjustment to the new university environment.
2. More so, there is need for regular assessment of university undergraduates' emotional intelligence quotient by university authorities. Intervention programmes such as guidance and counseling services should be put in place to assist university undergraduates identified with low intelligence quotient (IQ).
3. Government and its agencies responsible for regulating activities of universities in Nigeria should ensure that a functional guidance and counseling unit is established in each university in the nation.

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