
Psychosocial Variables and Students' Social Adjustments in Uruan Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

GERTRUDE A. ARCHIBONG, Ph. D

*Department of Educational Foundation, Guidance and Counselling,
University of Uyo, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State.*

NSEABASI ESSIEN, Ph. D

*Department of Vocational Education
University of Uyo, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State.*

And

IDOPISE O. JAMES

*Department of Educational Foundation, Guidance and Counselling,
University of Uyo, Uyo,
Akwa Ibom State.*

Abstract

The study determined the relationship between psychosocial variables and students' social adjustments in Uruan Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 2905 SS2 students in the study area. A sample size of 350 students was selected for the study which was determined using Taro Yamane sampling formulae. Seven (7) public secondary schools were selected using purposive sample technique out of 9 schools found in the area. With the help of hat and draw method of sampling, 35 percent of SS2 students were selected from each of the 7 schools based on their population. A self-structured and validated questionnaire entitled "Psychosocial Variables and Students Social Adjustment Questionnaire (PVSSAQ)" was used for data collection. Data generated were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) for answering the research questions, using the r-value to determine the weight of relationship between variables. The same statistical tool was used to test the research hypotheses, all at .05 level of significance and at 348 degree of freedom. The finding of the study showed a very high positive and significant relationship between peer self-concept, peer social support and social adjustment of students' in the study area. Conclusion was

drawn that peer self-concept and social support have significant relationship with social adjustment of students in public schools and the study recommended among other things that, school counsellors should always encourage the students to have positive perception of themselves and their abilities so as to adjust better socially and academically.

Keyword: Social adjustment, Peer self-concept, Social support.

Education is seen as the prime mover of change and a veritable instrument for National development. Learners go to school with different social attitudes and behaviour in order to acquire the right attitude, knowledge, skill, ideas and values necessary for individual growth and development. During the process of interaction, peer groups are important socialization agent which may exert positive or negative influence on the overall social adjustment of students in schools. According to Ukpog (2003), peer group refers to a social group of equal status or equal social standard, such as classmates, age mates, room mates among others. A child tends to behave the way his age mates, classmates or group mates behave in a given situation, through social interaction with fellow peers; and such interaction may influence students social behaviour in school. Lack of proper interaction may lead to maladjustment, which may cause inability to form good relationship with other people. Isangedighi (2007) stated that every individual need proper social adjustment in a new environment to be able to function well.

Social adjustment is a personality trait. Shrirali and Golestanipour (2017), stated that social adjustment requires changes in personal behavior in order to achieve an agreement and establish harmonious relations with the environment. It could be described as a condition whereby a student work close-knit with other peers and teachers in school, adjust to classroom interactions and hold positive attitude towards the entire school programmes and its rules. Friedlander (2007) asserted that attending secondary institution of learning offers students learning experiences and opportunities for social development and adjustment. Such transition usually increases contact and social support from friends.

Theoretical and Conceptual Review

Theory of Differential Association by Edwin Sutherland (1939)

The theory of differential association was formulated by Edwin Sutherland in 1939. This is a theory of social learning that offers explanation on how value based and interpersonal conflicts are resolved. According to differential association theorists, behaviour is learned during the course of communication with others in the group. Differential association referred to the different groups of people with which an individual interacted, some of which defined behaviour as acceptable and some of which did not. However, such learning is best achieved through social support.

With his theory of differential association, Sutherland attempted to identify universal mechanisms that explain the genesis of crime regardless of the specific concrete structural, social, and individual conditions involved. Sutherland in essence in

his theory, meant that other agents of socialization such as mass media, peer group and other big social group have significant influence on individual's learning and internalization of behaviour.

The differential association theory is relevant to this work in that it provides an outstanding prove that students learn social adjustment in the school from social groups in the society. Also, the theory has held to clarify the fact that student's ability to withstand challenges, learn to interact with his environment, developed good moral standard and ability to participate in social activities depends largely on social support received from close associates of the students in the society.

The Concept of Social Adjustment

Adjustment is a continuous process by which a person varies his or her behaviour to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself/herself and his/her environment. It implies change in our thinking and way of life to the demands of a particular situation. The important components of social adjustment in this study include students' academic, social and emotional adjustment as well as institutional attachment. Academic adjustment includes how well students' deal with educational demands such as motivation to complete academic requirement, academic effort and satisfaction with academic environment (Friedlander 2007).

However, social adjustment is a concept that has been interpreted variously by different academic researchers and authors. Conrey (2017) defined social adjustment as the variation of individual to the social environment. Such adjustment according to the author takes place by adjusting the self to the situation or conditions within the environment. It is the most significant feature of one's growth and it is assimilated through the relationship with others particularly with the parents, peers and the educators. In addition, Slicker (2004) conceptualized social adjustment as ability of one to withstand challenges, learn to interact with his environment, develop good moral standards and conscience as well as learn to deal appropriately with anxiety and conflict within the school setting. Thus, social adjustment incorporates such components as ability to interact with others, ability to participate in social activities, as well as conforming to social norms.

Social adjustment includes the students' involvement in social activities and satisfaction with various aspects of college experience, emotional problems, including manifestation of depressive symptoms. Institutional attachment describes a student's satisfaction with the university experience in general and with the institution he or she is attending in particular.

Peer Self Concept and Social Adjustment

Self-concept of students could influence their social adjustment. It is known to be the complex and dynamic system of beliefs which one holds true about himself or herself. Ybrandt (2008) stated that self-concept is a main factor in social relationship, peer relationship and compatibility with the life events and behavior problems. It is being reviewed continually through action, decisions, words, facial expressions and even body language. Consequently, the self-concept of a student will assist the student

regarding how to interact within the campus, especially meeting new faces and new concepts in the tertiary institutions. As such, students with low self-concept find it difficult to integrate themselves with fellow peers and teachers, thereby resulting in poor academic performance (Steven, 2006).

Self-concept is the cognitive aspect of self and generally refers to the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learned beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds to be true about his or her personal existence. As stated by Ukpong (2000), self-concept is the way we perceive ourselves, what we hope to become and what we are capable of achieving. Self confidence is the hob on which success and energy or motivation revolves. Once an individual has confident and is convinced of being capable of achieving success, definitely the sky will be his or her limit. People that have low self-concept hardly achieve success. Driscoll, Stewart, Hayhoe and Leech, (2007) discovered that failure in social activities depend on one's self evaluation and personal abilities. The author further observed that the theory of self forms the basis for a growing number of students attempting to determine the existing relationships between "bright students' perception of themselves and their abilities. Fink (2002) asserted that students who trust themselves and their abilities adjust better socially and are more successful and perform well academically. Those with negative views of themselves and their mental ability resort to poor social adjustment.

The significance and positive relationship between student's self-concept and social adjustment has long been established by Fink, Brookover, Thomas, Patterson and Irwin in Ukpong (2000). The authors found that individuals who feel uncomfortable about their abilities rarely adjust well in school. Devi and Prasanti (2004) revealed that the highly competitive grading approach in schools have an impact on the self-concept of students. When students compete for grades, those who are ranked low develop a sense of failure that leads of feelings of inadequacy and rejection. Burns (2006) supported the existence of positive relationship between self-concept and social adjustment. The author found that self-concept is more closely related to academic achievement for girls than boys.

Peers Social Support and Social Adjustment

Social support is crucial for students' adjustment in schools. Social support, as defined by World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) is a broad scale movement to engage people's participation in achieving a specific development goal through self-reliant efforts. It involves all relevant segments of society: opinion leaders, communities, parents, students, teachers, religious leaders, decision and policy makers, professional groups, bureaucrats and technocrats, commerce and industry. It is a planned and decentralized process which seeks to facilitate change for educational development through a range of players engaged in interrelated and complementary efforts. It takes into account the felt needs of the people, embraces the critical principle of community involvement and seeks to empower individuals and groups for action.

Gurung (2006) defined social support as the experience of being valued, respected, cared for, and loved by others. As observed by Dusselier, Dunn, Wang, Shelley and Whalen (2008), social support has been defined as an exchange of

resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient. Social support is known to help individuals to reduce the amount of stress experienced and to cope better in dealing with stressful life situations. Lin (2006) defined social support as perceived or actual instrumental and/or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners. To corroborate this view, Oluwadare (2009) stated that social support calls for a journey among students, teachers, parents, and other educational stakeholders aimed at enhancing successful transformation of educational goals into societal action.

Students need social support from peers, parents and teachers in other to succeed academically, socially, behaviourally among others, but are sometimes influence by their peer group. Social support is pertinent because as students move away from home to secondary school to learn, such transition usually reduce contact and support from friends and family members. So, if such support is denied, students are most likely to experience difficulties in adjusting to school climate.

Studies have shown a strong association between social support and social adjustment of students. Yasin and Dzulkifli (2010) investigated the relationship between social support and psychological problems among students in Malaysia. Correlation coefficient was used to measure the relationship between social support and psychological problems. The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between social support and psychological problems suggesting that the higher the social support, the lower the psychological problems. This corroborate the finding of Aycock (2011), that social support can predict student's social adjustment in public school. A study conducted by Tuna (2010) on the influence of social support as a coping strategy for students' adjustment found that active coping and using emotional support positively predicted the overall adjustment of students while denial, behavioural disengagement, substance use, and religion negatively predicted first year students' overall college adjustment.

Statement of the Problem

Social adjustment of students is one of key determinant of students' academic progress. Students who have proper social adjustment among peers and teachers are bound to achieve better both in character and learning. Despite the importance of social adjustment in students' academic growth and development, the researchers observed that most students find it difficult to cope with the new school environment they find themselves, especially if the new environment is far from their homes. Students' inability to cope with the school environment may result in dependency and maladjustment. The students' increased personal freedom can be wonderfully frightening. They can come and go as they choose with no one to worry about them. This freedom could be a mixed blessing as they may not face their studies appropriately. The freedom may infringe on school rules and regulations. Most of the students need social support from parents and are sometimes influenced by their peer groups.

Poor social adjustment by students could result in poor academic performance and engagement in antisocial behaviours such as examination malpractice, cultism, drug abuse, truancy, poor study habit and even drop-out. Considering the menace of poor social adjustment, the researcher saw the need to carry out this study to determine the relationship between psychosocial variables and students' social adjustments in Uruan Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between psychosocial variables and students' social adjustments in Uruan Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The specific purposes are to determine:

1. The relationship between peer self-concept and social adjustments of students in Uruan Local Government Area.
2. The relationship between peer social support and social adjustments of students in Uruan Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study: -

1. What relationship exists between peer self-concept and social adjustments of students in Uruan Local Government Area?
2. What is the relationship between peer social support and social adjustments of students in Uruan Local Government Area?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at .05 level of confidence: -

1. There is no significant relationship between peer social support and social adjustments of students in Uruan Local Government Area.
2. There is no significant relationship between peer self-concept and social adjustments of students in Uruan Local Government Area.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to only psychosocial variables and students' social adjustments in Uruan Local Government Area. Variables considered include peers self-concept and peer social support. Only Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in public secondary schools in Uruan Local Government Area were used for the study.

Research Method

Design of the Study

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. This design is used whenever the researcher wants to find out the magnitude and direction of relationship that exists between the dependent and independent variables (Udoh and Joseph, 2005). Thus, this design was considered suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to measure the interrelationship between variables of this study.

Population for the Study

The study was conducted in Uruan Local Government Area. The population for the study consisted of all Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in the nine (9) public secondary schools found in area. There is a total number of 2905 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in the study area (State Secondary Education Board, Uyo, 2018).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 350 students was selected for the study, from the total number of 2905 SS2 students found in the study area. This sample size was determined using Taro Yamane sampling formula. Seven (7) public secondary schools were selected using purposive sample technique out of 9 schools in the area. With the help of hat and draw method of sampling, 35 percent of SS2 students were selected from each of the 7 schools based on their population.

Instrument for Data Collection

A self-structured and validated questionnaire entitled "Psychosocial Variables and Students Social Adjustment Questionnaire (PVSSAQ)" was used for data collection. The items were frame in line with the research questions and hypotheses. The instrument had two sections. The bio-data part carried section (A), section (B) had two parts, part 1 contained 15 items on psychosocial variables while part 2 contained 8 items measuring students' social adjustment. The subjects were required to tick from a list of options that best match their opinions on the issue raised.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, three copies of the instrument were given to three experts, one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit and 1 each from Educational Psychology, and Guidance and Counselling to assess the suitability or otherwise of the items in the instrument. The inputs and corrections made by the experts were codified into final copy for administration.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered on 50 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in a selected school not included in the sample of the study. Two weeks after, the same set of students were given clean copies of the same instrument to fill. The Test-Retest reliability of the instrument was obtained based on the scores from the first and second test. The analysis of the scores in the two tests was carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic. The items yielded a correlation coefficient of .80 for the fifteen items in part 1 and .83 for the eight items in part 2. This is an indication of a reasonable reliability, based on the postulation of Nunnally (2007), who asserted that any reliability co-efficient of 0.50 and above should be accepted.

Method of Data Collection

The research instruments were personally administered on the respondents in their respective schools by the researcher together with two research assistants.

Method of Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using Pearson's product moment correlation and the decision rule for answering the questions were adopted from Uzoagulu's (2011) interpretations as follows:-

Coefficient (r)	-	Relationship
$\pm .00$ to $\pm .20$	-	Negligible, weak, very low, little or none
$\pm .21$ to $\pm .40$	-	Present, slight, but low
$\pm .41$ to $\pm .60$	-	Average, moderately high, fairly high
$\pm .61$ to ± 1.00	-	Very high

For the null hypotheses, the same statistical tool was used to test the null hypotheses by comparing the r-value with the critical value, so as to determine the significant of the relationship between variables at .05 level of significance and at 348 degree of freedom.

Result and Discussion of Findings

Research Questions 1

What relationship exists between peer self-concept and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area?

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Responses on the Relationship between Peer Self-Concept and Social Adjustment of Students

Variables	N	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value	Remark
Peer Self-Concept	350	5494	80546			
Students' Social Adjustment	350	3428	403124	190256	0.68	Very High Positive Relationship

Result in Table 1 shows that a very high positive relationship exists between peer's self-concept and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area. This is shown from the correlation coefficient of 0.68, which means that peer self-concept is highly associated with social adjustment of students in the study area. This result implies that students tend to be easily adjusted socially if they hold positive self concept about themselves and vice versa.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between peer social support and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area?

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Responses on the Relationship between Peer Social Support and Students' Social Adjustment of Students

Variables	N	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-value	Remark
Peer Social Support	350	5724	84642			
Students' Social Adjustment	350	3428		180254	0.76	Very High Positive Relationship
			403124			

Result in Table 2 shows that a very high positive relationship exists between peer social support and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area. This is shown on the correlation coefficient of 0.76, which means that peer social support is associated with social adjustment of students in the study area. This result implies that an increase in social support to a higher level of social adjustment of students in public schools and vice versa.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between peer self-concept and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Responses on the Relationship between Peer Self-Concept and Social Adjustment of Students

Variables	N	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ value $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-	r-crit	Decision
Peer Self-Concept	350	5494	80546				
Students' Social Adjustment	350	3428		190256	0.68	0.088	S Reject
			403124			HO ₁	

* = Significant; $P < .05$; $df = 348$; critical $r = 0.088$

Result in Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.68 is greater than the critical value of 0.088 at .05 level of significant and at 348 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is retained. This finding implies that positive self-concept of students increases the likelihood of getting adjusted socially in school. It also implies that students who hold positive self-concept tend to adjust socially in schools than students who do not.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between peer social support and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area.

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Responses on the Relationship between Peer Social Support and Social Adjustment of Students

Variables	N	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ value $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-	r-crit	Decision
Peer Social Support	350	5724	84642				
Students' Social Adjustment				180254	0.76	0.088	S
	350						Reject
	13428		403124			HO ₂	

* = Significant; $P < .05$; $df = 348$; critical $r = 0.088$

Result in Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.76 is greater than the critical value of 0.088 at .05 level of significant and at 348 degree of freedom. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is retained. This finding implies that the more students gain social support, the greater the get adjusted socially in school and vice versa.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher made a combined discussion of findings from the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Peer Self-Concept and Social Adjustment of Students

Result from research question one and hypothesis one revealed that a very high positive and significant relationship exist between peer self-concept and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area. This finding is in agreement with the finding of the study conducted by Driscoll, Stewart, Hayhoe and Leech, (2007) who found that failure in social activities depend on one's self evaluation and personal abilities.

This finding is also in line with the finding of the study conducted by Fink (2002), who found that students who trust themselves and their abilities adjust better socially and are more successful and perform well academically. Those with negative views of themselves and their mental ability resort to poor social adjustment. Burns (2006) also added that the individual self-concept is more closely related to academic achievement for girls than boys. From the above finding, the researchers wish to observe that peer self-concept is highly associated with students' social adjustment in public secondary schools.

Peer Social Support and Social Adjustment of Students

Result from research question two and hypothesis two revealed that a very high positive and significant relationship exist between peer social support and social adjustment of students in Uruan Local Government Area. This study is in line with the

finding of the study conducted by Aycock (2011), who found that social support predicts student's social adjustment in public school. Also, in a study was conducted by Tuna (2010) on influence of social support as a coping strategy for students' adjustment. The researcher found that active coping and using emotional support positively predicted the overall adjustment of students while denial, behavioural disengagement, substance use, and religion negatively predicted first year students' overall college adjustment. This finding is also in tandem with the finding of the study conducted by Ward and Kennedy (2007), who found that social support is one of the social adjustment strategies which enhance positive performance on the part of the students coping behaviour in schools. From the above finding, the research wishes to observe that peer social support is strongly associated with social adjustment of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that peer self-concept and social support have significant relationship with social adjustment of students in public schools

Recommendations

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

- (1) School counsellors should always encourage the students to have positive perception of themselves and their personal ability so as to adjust better socially and academically.
- (2) Parents, guardians, teachers and other educational stakeholders should always assist the students by providing effective coping strategies and emotional support so that they can easily adjust socially in schools.
- (3) School counsellors should take up the tasks of identifying students with poor social adjustment problems early enough and offer them necessary guidance on how to cope with such problems.

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