

## **ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT AS CORRELATE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS' IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA**

**Victor-Aigbodion Vera<sup>1</sup>, Ossai O.V. PhD<sup>2</sup>, & Nicholas C<sup>3</sup>.**

Department of Educational Foundations,  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka

### **Abstract**

*The study sought to measure the extent to which academic adjustment predicts school attendance among in-school adolescents in Edo state, Nigeria. A correlational design was adopted. Two research questions with corresponding null hypotheses were posed and answered. Data collected from the population of the study consisted of all in-school adolescents in Edo state. A multi stage random sampling procedure was used to draw up a sample consisting of 405 in-school adolescents of both gender; 205 males and 200 females from the three senatorial districts in Edo state. The instrument used for collecting data was questionnaire and school attendance records. Mean scores, Standard Deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to answer the research questions while Regression Analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 probability level. An overview of the overall results showed that there exist a direct but moderate positive relationship between academic adjustment and school attendance among in-school adolescents. The result of the study also revealed that academic adjustment significantly predicts school attendance among male and female in-school adolescents. It was therefore recommended Based on the findings among others that all stake holders should create awareness and organise seminars on the implication and impacts of academic adjustment on school attendance. The provisions of necessary facilities in the schools by the government will be of good help in arousing students interest and thus, increasing academic adjustment among in-school adolescents.*

### **Introduction**

Education has been globally realized as the major potent tool for the realization of reliable attainment of sustainable growth and development in all aspects of human endeavours. It is the most viable tool for the development of human and material resources in every society. At interpersonal level, education creates a better chance to healthy relationships.

The right to education of all children and young people in our country, regardless of social or ethnic origin, gender or religious affiliation, is

enshrined in the Nigerian policy on Education. However, it is worrisome to note that academic adjustment of students has not been adequately monitored yet; its adverse effects on school attendance are overwhelming of all the phases in the developmental route in which adjustment to school is intriguing, adolescence captures the spotlight. Fundamentally, adolescence is one of the most compelling and yet complex developmental phases. The complexity is made more profound because for many youth adolescence occurs together with the move to senior secondary school—a new educational environment. Adolescence, particularly when it coincides with the transition to senior secondary school, can be a phase of experimentation, emotional turmoil, doubt, and apprehension. (Akaneme & Ngwoke, 2010)

Adolescence can be a defining moment in the academic lives of young individuals (Goodeneow, 2015). It is a phase in which the ability toward self-reflection is emerging. It is also a time when youth are starting to explore their individuality in relation to novel interests and taking steps toward those interests which have bearing on their prospects in the future. In view of that, Goodenow (2015) made the case that early adolescence is a time for some in which there are more negative experiences in relation to schooling (e.g., apprehension about academic performance, in evaluating their ability in terms of others, and in uncertainty about the source of one's educational outcomes). Operationally, in-school adolescents refer refers to learners who are senior secondary school and chronologically within the age range of 13 to early 18 years.

According to Victor-Aigbodion & Nwoke (2017), they viewed adjustment as the ability of individuals to develop adequate techniques to handle stress in connection with the amount of support provided by their environment. The authors however confirmed that there are no such things as ideally adjusted individuals. The authors further stated that adjustment to academic activities is considered as one of the main indicators of success in school life as it is an indicator for the student's ability to face the problems resulting from fulfilling his/her academic, social and emotional needs.

The term adjustment refers to the extent to which an individual's personality functions effectively in the world of other people. It refers to the harmonious relationship between the person and the environment. In other words, it is the relationship that comes among an individual's personality and his/her environment. A 'well-adjusted' personality is well prepared to play the roles which are expected of the status assigned to him within a given environment. (Enochs & Roland, 2016).

Academic adjustment refers to the degree of a student's success in coping with various educational demands such as motivation, application,

performance and satisfaction with the academic environment (Hsieh, Sullivan, Sass, & Guerra, 2012). It is a psychological and behavioural process of change as individuals try hard to regulate themselves to achieve a balance in their new academic environment at the same time, meet the new learning requirements of a school (Quan, Zhen, Yao & Zhou, 2014). In the context of this research, academic adjustment refers to in-school adolescents' organization of their behavior in order to strike a balance with the academic environment which results into harmonious interaction between in-school adolescents with the school environment. By adjusting with school life, in-school adolescents will be able to form a kind of good relationships with others leading to improved school attendance and enhanced academic achievement.

The attendance rate is important because students are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently. It becomes practically difficult or impossible for teachers to monitor the progress of her learners if a large number of students are frequently absent. In addition to falling behind in academics, students who are not in school on a regular basis are more likely to get into trouble with the law and cause problems in their communities which are indices of students who are not academically adjusted. School attendance in the context of this study refers to the amount of time in-school adolescents attend school. (Meisel & Colder, 2015)

The school attendance rate of in-school adolescents who are majorly senior secondary school students is important because these students are more likely to succeed in academics when they attend school consistently. However, it is only when a student is academically adjusted that he/she can attend school consistently. Presumably, many students experience homesickness, sadness, fear and frustration, they also might have difficulties integrating into new academic environment as senior students face multiple challenges. In most secondary schools it is expected that senior secondary school students perform academic task with little or no supervision and are assessed as young adults. Research has revealed that Senior secondary school Students are expected to handle academic demands, develop relationships with their teachers and school administrators. Another adjustment concerns for senior secondary school students are different study techniques, test taking strategies, classroom instruction, and oral communication other than what they have been used to in their junior secondary schools These variations in study techniques, test taking strategies, classroom instruction, and oral communication which greatly affects students interest or otherwise and consequently affect school attendance constituted the purpose of the study. Specifically, the structure of learning conditions within the senior secondary school setting is more complex than the structure of the learning environment of junior secondary

and primary school. Considering these factors, the pertinent question is: would the experiences in-school adolescents have within the learning community which consequently determine their adjustment to school predict their school attendance?

The study sought purpose of this study is to find out whether academic adjustment predicts school attendance among senior secondary school students. It specifically determined the

- extent academic adjustment predicts school attendance among in-school adolescents .
- extent academic adjustment predicts school attendance among in-school adolescents based on gender.

Two research Questions and two corresponding hypotheses guided the study and they include:

- To what extent does academic adjustment predicts school attendance among in-school adolescents in Edo State Nigeria?
- To what extent does academic adjustment predicts school attendance of male and female in-school adolescents?
- Academic adjustment will not significantly predict school attendance among in-school adolescents.
- Academic adjustment will not significantly predict school attendance of male and female in-school adolescents.

### **Method**

The study adopted a correlation research design. The population comprised all senior secondary school students in Edo state. The subjects of the study were drawn from fourteen secondary schools selected through simple random sampling technique from the three senatorial districts in Edo state. The sample of the study comprised of 300 males and 342 females. The sample size was obtained using purposive sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a self constructed Questionnaire tagged Academic Adjustment and School Attendance Questionnaire (AASAQ) containing 20 items which was developed with a guide from College Adjustment Questionnaire and school attendance records. The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A contains the bio-data of the respondents while section B have two parts, part 1 contains information about their level of academic adjustment while part 2 contains information about their school attendance rate. The questionnaire was structured using the 4 point scale (i.e., Always, Often, Sometimes, and Never) to measure the extent at which the respondents agree or disagree with a statement. Each response was scored as thus; Strongly Agreed = 4; Agreed = 3; Disagreed = 2; Strongly Disagreed = 1. The instruments were face- validated by two experts in Educational Psychology and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation from the faculty of Education, Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma. Their views, Comments, suggestions and corrections were incorporated before the instrument was

trial tested using in-school adolescents in Nsukka metropolis. The scores of students were collated and analyzed for internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and a reliability co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained. The researchers considered these scores high enough to consider the instrument reliable to be used for the study. Six hundred and forty two copies of the instruments were administered to the respondents which were completed and used for data analyses. The data was analyzed using Mean scores, Standard Deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis. To ascertain the extent to which academic adjustment predicts school attendance, the researchers adopted the following real limit of numbers based on the correlation coefficient: 0.80 and above (high extent), 0.60-0.79 (moderate extent), 0.40-0.59 (low extent), 0.00-0.39 (very low extent). The null hypotheses were tested using linear regression at 0.05 probability level.

### Results

**Table 1:** Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Academic Adjustment and school Attendance

Variable	$\bar{X}$	SD	n	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Academic attendance	2.11	0.13	642	0.78	0.61
School Attendance	2.95	0.16			

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R<sup>2</sup> = coefficient of determination

The result shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between academic adjustment and school attendance was .78. This means that, there exists a positive relationship between academic adjustment and school attendance. Data in table 1 also show that, the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) associated with the correlation coefficient of .78 was .61. This coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) indicates that 61% of in-school adolescents' academic adjustment predicts their school attendance. In other words, 61% of in-school adolescents is accounted for by their level of academic adjustment.

**Table 2: Regression Analysis of Academic Adjustment and school Attendance.**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.510	1	2.510	231.101	0.00
Residual	1.618	149	.011		
Total	4.128	150			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 1 ( $H_{01}$ ), Linear regression analysis was used. The data in Table 2 shows that an F-ratio of 231.10 with associated exact probability value of .00 was obtained. The null hypothesis which stated that academic adjustment level will not significantly predict school attendance among in-school adolescents is therefore rejected. Inference drawn was that, academic adjustment level significantly predicts school attendance among in-school adolescents. In other words, academic adjustment is a significant predictor of school attendance of in-school adolescents.

**Table 3:** Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Academic Adjustment level and school attendance of male in-school adolescents

<b>Variable</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>SD</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
Academic Adjustment Level	2.12	0.19	642	0.73	0.54
School Attendance rate of Male	2.93	0.12			

$R^2$  = coefficient of determination

The result shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between academic adjustment level of male in-school adolescents and their school attendance was .73. This means that, there exist a positive relationship between academic adjustment level of male in-school adolescents and their school attendance rate. Table 3 also shows that, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) associated with the correlation coefficient of .73 was .54. This coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that 54% of students’ academic adjustment level predicts male in-school adolescents. In other words, 54% of male in-school adolescents’ attendance was accounted for by their academic adjustment level.

**Table 4:** Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Academic Adjustment level and school attendance of female in-school adolescents

<b>Variable</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>SD</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
Academic Adjustment level	2.13	0.19	642	0.41	0.16
School Attendance of Female	2.96	0.13			

$R^2$  = coefficient of determination

The result shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between academic adjustment level of female students and school attendance was .41. This means that, there exist a positive relationship between academic adjustment level of female students and their school attendance. Table 4 also shows that, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) associated with the correlation coefficient of .41 was .16. This coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) indicates that 16% of in-school adolescents' academic adjustment level predicts their school attendance. In other words, 16% of female in-school adolescents' school attendance is accounted for by their academic adjustment level.

**Table 5: Regression Analysis of Academic adjustment level and school attendance of male in-school adolescents'**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.585	1	0.585	78.11	0.00
Residual	0.502	67	0.007		
Total	1.087	68			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 2 ( $H_{02}$ ), Linear regression analysis was used. The result in Table 5 shows that an F-ratio of 78.11 with associated exact probability value of .00 was obtained. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Inference drawn was that, academic adjustment level significantly predicts school attendance of male in-school adolescents. In other words, school attendance is a significant predictor of school academic adjustment level of male in-school adolescents.

**Table 6: Regression Analysis of Academic Adjustment Level and School Attendance of Female in-school adolescents.**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	0.491	1	0.491	15.70	0.00
Residual	2.502	80	0.031		
Total	2.993	81			

$\alpha = 0.05$

In order to test hypothesis 2 ( $H_{02}$ ) with reference to female students, Linear regression analysis was used. The result in Table 6 shows that an F-ratio of 15.70 with associated exact probability value of .00 was obtained. The

null hypothesis is therefore rejected. Inference drawn was that, academic adjustment level significantly predicts school attendance of female in-school adolescents. In other words, academic adjustment level is a significant predictor of school attendance of female in-school adolescents. The result therefore showed that academic adjustment level significantly predicts school attendance among male and female in-school adolescents.

### **Discussion**

The study found out that there exist a direct positive relationship between academic adjustment and school attendance but the relationship was moderate. Hence, there was a statically significant relationship between in-school adolescents' academic adjustment level and their school attendance rate. This finding suggests that in-school adolescent's school attendance rate is accounted for by their level of academic adjustment. These findings lend credence to earlier findings of Ramsay (2016) and Tanaka, Takai, Koyama & Fujihara (2014) who observed that academic adjustment level emerged as a significant predictor of learning activities in school and insignificant predictor in truants and constant absentees. The results revealed that in-school adolescents who have moderate level of academic adjustment enjoy going to school and engage in healthy habits which resultantly leads to greater motivation for studies.

The study further revealed that there exist a direct but moderate positive relationship between male in-school adolescents' academic adjustment and their school attendance also; there exist a direct but moderate positive relationship between female in-school adolescents' academic adjustment and their school attendance. Inference drawn was that, academic adjustment level significantly predicts school attendance of male and female in-school adolescents. In other words, academic adjustment level is a significant predictor of male and female in-school adolescents' school attendance. However, female students' have higher academic adjustment level in relation to their school attendance rate. This study confirms Simons, Kalichman & Santrock (1994) findings that the female students academic adjustment level is accounted for by their better study habits. The reason that could also be adduced to these findings according to Victor-Aigbodion & Ngwoke, (2017) is that women are more verbally and non-verbally expressive of their feelings with more intensity which consequently enables them to adjust easily to any given situation.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the outcome of this study, it was concluded that in-school adolescents' attendance' is accounted for by their academic adjustment level. Also, academic adjustment level is a significant predictor of male and female in-school adolescents' attendance rate. However, female students exhibit higher level of academic adjustment than their male counterparts in Edo state.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the significant link between academic adjustment level and academic adjustment as established in this study, it is highly recommended that:

- Educators and psychologists should intensify efforts to assess the prevailing levels of academic adjustment among in-school adolescents'. If lower levels are identified, then appropriate measure should be taken to help raise in-school adolescents' academic adjustment levels.
- In order to help increase in-school adolescents' academic adjustment, psychological counselling services should be provided for all in-school adolescents. This is essential in that psychological counselling services can help in-school adolescents develop harmonious relationship with their academic environment and with the significant others.
- It was recommended among others, that Parents should work in partnership with the school, notifying the school of the reason for any of their child's absences and highlighting any areas of concern they may have so they can be addressed promptly to enhance positive adjustment to school activities
- Educators and psychologists should give continuous advice and develop techniques that will help make academic activities pleasurable and consequently boost academic adjustment and school attendance among in-school adolescents.

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