

## **TEACHERS' ADJUSTMENT AND STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ZARIA EDUCATIONAL ZONE, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA**

**Tukur, Hadiza Ahmed Ph.D**

Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling,  
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

### **Abstract**

*This study used correlational design to investigate the relationship of teachers' adjustment and students' emotional problems and achievement in English language among senior secondary school students in Zaria Educational Zone of Kaduna State. Three hypotheses guided the study. One hundred and fifty (150) senior secondary school students and fifty (50) English Language teachers were purposively drawn and used as sample of the study. The instruments for data collection were Teachers' Adjustment and Students' Emotional Problem Questionnaire (TASEPQ) and Students' English Language achievement tests. The findings of this study revealed that, teachers' adjustment was significantly related with students' emotional problems and academic achievement, and that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers' in their levels of adjustment. It was recommended, among others that, schools and Teacher Education Institutions should organize workshops on adjustment strategies to motivate teachers to be well adjusted; and due recognition be given to the teaching profession to enhance fulfillment on the job for teachers. All these will create enabling environment for better students' emotional stability that will possibly enhance academic achievements.*

### **Introduction**

Education is generally acknowledged as a veritable tool for development. This position is aptly reflected in the current National Policy on Education which espouses the role of education as an instrument par excellence for National development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Currently, Nigerians are becoming increasingly critical of the relevance of education in solving myriads of socio-economic and political problems confronting the nation. Indeed, these problems especially those that border on priority and relevance, standards, funding, access to education, examination malpractices, cultism, teacher motivation and the like, have raised multiple questions on the viability of education in Nigeria (Nwagwu (2003) and Obanya, (2002)).

One aspect of education which is also of vital importance to National development in the present scheme of things is Teacher Education. The role of the teacher in the development of the nation is so fundamental that no serious minded leader can afford to trifle with the proper training of teachers. This is reflected in the

popular assertion that “no society can rise above the quality of its teachers” (FRN, 2004).

To underscore the important role of teacher education to the developmental needs of Nigeria, the National Policy on Education outlines clearly the purpose of teacher education to include among other things, “the production of highly motivated, conscientious and effective teachers for all levels of our educational system who will be committed to the realization of Nigeria’s national objectives” (FRN, 2004). The implication of this position is that the education of teachers is very crucial to the survival of Nigeria’s educational system and her overall progress towards sustainable development.

Teachers are the most essential tool for a child’s success as they exercise significant influence on students. They serve not only as educators but also as important socializing agents who fulfill basic socio-emotional needs such as belongingness and esteem needs. They also teach students how to be good influence on other students, how to respect and accept others, as well as developing the individual’s ability to cope and adjust in the society they find themselves (Umeono & Adimora, (2010)).

Every individual makes a long series of adjustments between the whole unique personality and the environment. In psychology, the behavioural process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs and the obstacles of their environments is known as adjustment. Adjustment is a process of altering one’s behavior to reach a harmonious relationship with one’s environment. This is typically a response brought about by some type of change that has taken place. The stress of this change causes one to try to reach a new type of balance or homeostasis between the individual (both inwardly and outwardly), and with his or her environment (Casey, 2001).

Adjusted teachers do much to bring about pupil’s adjustment and conformed behavior. However, the energies of children and the turmoil of the classroom inevitably create tensions within the teacher which may make teacher to become maladjusted to the extent of developing mental ill health just as the pupils or other individuals do. In support of this assertion, Colman (1995) explained that one gets maladjusted when there is a failure to deal adequately with problems of adaptation to physical, emotional, social, economic or occupational circumstances, events or experiences, generally leading to coping difficulties or symptoms of stress. (Generally teachers are not more maladjusted than members of other vocations.) Murray and Murray (2004) reported that teachers have been noted to be dealing with emotionally toned activities- hostility, defiance, dependency, demands, destruction of properties and dishonesty among others. Thus, teachers who are unable to discover mechanisms of release are apt to become irritable, emotionally disturbed, and maladjusted. The teacher, who screams, cries, threatens, or ridicules pupils is the one who has failed to attain other means of relieving pressure and uses the children in the classroom as scapegoats for his own frustrations. Kasinath (1990) reported that as a result of the emotional tone and tension-producing activities that teachers encounter daily, it is

possible that the incidence of mental disturbance and maladjustment will exist among teachers.

Teachers are expected to serve as important socializing agents who fulfill basic socio-emotional needs, and as such, good teachers are able to analyze their relationships with their students and the learning environment, and keep close watch on problems and potential problems. In line with this, Smith (2007) reported that children with Emotional Behavioural Difficulty (EBD) cover the range of disability and generally behave unusually or in an extreme fashion in a variety of social, personal, emotional or physical circumstances. Many school pupils who are unable to trust or to form relationship with peers and adults are considered to have emotional and behavioural difficulties depending on the nature, frequency, persistence, severity or abnormality and cumulative effect of the behaviour in context compared with normal expectations for a child. He further explained emotional behaviour problem as something that usually occurs when somebody cannot control his or her emotions or behaviour. Emotional behaviour problem has many levels from serious such as temper tantrums and violence toward self or others, to mild such as mood swings and sulking excessively. Emotional behavioural problems are usually recognized when one finds it difficult to interact with persons because of his or her heightened emotional behavioural problems. Emotional Behaviour Problem is thus a big umbrella and can be caused by many factors, including mental illness, hormones and brain damage.

By and large, children and youth spend a considerable portion of their lives in schools, and much of this time is spent with teachers. A number of researchers like Piñata (1999) have extended the primary concepts of attachment theory to theories of how teacher-child relationships can affect development. They further argued that emotional supports versus emotional problem, and active responsiveness versus unresponsiveness, are essential features of teacher-child relationships that contribute to the psychological adjustment of the teacher and the child's better emotional behaviour and academic achievement. This perspective of the relationship between teachers and students characterized by open communication, support, and involvement can provide children with a sense of security within school settings that can promote social, emotional, and academic achievements.

Similarly, Sroufe (1995) revealed that emotional behavioural disorder is always apparent when a student displays a repetitive and impact persistent pattern of behavior that results in the significant disruption of other students and such a behavior pattern is consistent throughout the individual's life. The characteristics of emotional problem among children and adolescents include: Initiation of aggressive behavior and reacting aggressively towards others, a display of bullying, threatening, or intimidating behavior, being physically abusive of others, deliberate destruction of other's property, showing little empathy and concern for the feelings, wishes, well being of others, showing callous behavior towards others and lack of feelings of guilt or remorse. Such disturbances may cause significant impairments in academic, social, and or occupational achievement.

Bunk and Vander Lam (2002) revealed that male students who have more salient independent self might not let the impact of adjustment manifest in their social relationship, while the female students who have a more inter-dependent self might not be able to hide their emotions or negative feelings of adjustment. Pelham and Wachsmuth (2001) found some differences between males and females. The gender differences in personality, values and emotions illustrate how variation can possibly be apparent in adjustment. Teachers naturally compare themselves with their counterparts in other professions to gain a sense of where they stand due to their lack of job satisfaction, and gender has a major role to play due to differences in self-assessment which may eventually result to maladjusted behaviour. Pelham and Wachsmuth further stressed that in spite of gender differences in values, emotions, personalities and other variables, male and female teachers equally exhibit discrepancies in their areas or dimensions of adjustment, but all in all they adjust equally. In their study, gender was considered a significant personality variable of interest.

Piñata (1999) explained that children with well adjusted teachers exhibit fewer behavioural problems, had greater academic achievement than children with maladjusted teachers, and that the level of teachers' adjustment was associated with children's academic performance and school involvement.

Academic achievement is the overall academic performance of a student in the school. Academic achievement tests therefore, are tests designed to measure knowledge acquisition after a specific course of study and the goal of academic achievement tests is to determine whether or not students have gained the knowledge targeted by a specific course of instruction. It is assessed by use of the teachers' ratings' tests and examinations (Umaru, 2010). In this study, academic achievement describes the students' academic work in English Language. It is measured with the cumulative class tests and end of first and second terms examinations. Students' academic achievement can therefore be cultivated in the classroom, by good student-teacher relationship, or at a broader level, throughout an entire ideal school environment.

The problem of this study therefore is Teachers' Adjustment and students' emotional problems and achievement in English Language among senior secondary school students in Zaria Educational Zone of Kaduna State, Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses**

HO1: There is no significant relationship between teachers' adjustment and students' emotional problems.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' adjustment and students' achievement in English Language.

HO3: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in their levels of adjustment.

**Method**

The study employs correlational research design. A correlational design is used to determine whether a relationship exists between two or more variables (Morell & James 2015). Correlational research design allows the study of hypotheses that cannot be examined directly. It also allows for more data on more variables to be collected more quickly than in experimental set up, problems of interpretation are reduced when association is found and when strong correlation are found, it may be obvious that no causal relationship exist.

The population of the study comprises of all English language Teachers serving in Zaria Educational Zone which stands 113 and 10,499 senior secondary students. A multi stage stratified sampling technique was used to get the sample. The sample comprised of one hundred and fifty (150) secondary school (SS I-III) students and fifty (50) English teachers were purposely drawn and used for the study.

English Language teachers were purposely used for the study because it is one of the core subjects that is compulsory for all the secondary school students. The teachers were further stratified into thirty five (35) males and fifteen (15) females while same procedure were used to select the students in public schools.

The instruments for data collection were Teachers' Adjustment and Students' Emotional problems Questionnaire (TASEPQ) and Students' English Language achievement tests. The TASEPQ has two clusters of ten (10) items each. The first cluster investigated the level of teachers' adjustment. The second cluster investigated the students' emotional problems. The questionnaire was developed on a four point scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point.

The instruments were face validated by three experts who are Educational Psychologists. Their suggestions were useful and were incorporated.

The researcher administered the instruments personally along with two research assistants to the respondents. All the questionnaires were completed and handed over to the researchers. The students' cumulative scores in English Language for the first and second terms were also collected and used for the academic achievement.

For each respondent, an overall mean score for all the items was computed. An overall mean score of 20.0 and above revealed teachers' high level of adjustment and students' high level of emotional problems whilst a mean score of below 20.0 revealed teachers' low level of adjustment and students' low level of emotional problems. For English Language achievement, the score of 100% was transformed 40 and a mean score of 20.0 and above indicates good academic achievement, while a mean score of below 20.0 showed poor academic achievement. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and t-test statistics.

**Results**

Hypothesis 1:

**Table 1: Correlation of Students’ Emotional Problems by Teachers’ Adjustment**

Variables	N	mean	SD	r	P
Teachers’ Adjustment	50	16.60	1.96	.099	0.10
Students’ Emotional Problems	150	36.2	7.04		

**P < 0.05**

Table 1 above shows positive correlation between Teachers’ Adjustment and Students’ Emotional Problems with  $r = 0.99$ ;  $P < 0.05$ . Since the result shows significant relationship, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that significant relationship exists between Teachers’ Adjustment and senior secondary school Students’ Emotional Problems.

Hypothesis 2:

**Table 2: Correlation of teachers adjustment by Students’ Achievement in English Language.**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	P
Teachers’ Adjustment	50	16.60	1.96	.162	0.000
Achievement in English Language	150	19.34	6.10		

**P < 0.05**

Table 2 above shows the result of correlation between teachers’ adjustment and students’ achievement in English Language with  $r = .162$  and  $P = 0.000$  thus indicating significant relationship between teachers’ adjustment and students’ achievement in English Language. There is therefore no basis for retaining the hypothesis which says that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ adjustment and students’ achievement in English language.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between male and female teachers in their levels of adjustment.

**Table 3: t-test statistics of teachers’ adjustment by gender**

Teachers’ Adjustment Level by gender	N	mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	35	5.6	0.13	48	0.03	1.96	NS
Female	15	5.24	0.22				

**P < 0.05**

The calculated t value is 0.03s as observed in table 3 is less than the critical t value of 1.96 at 48 df and 0.05 levels of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore upheld. This implies that there is no significant difference between male and female teachers in their level of adjustment.

### **Discussion**

Emotional behaviour usually occurs when somebody cannot control his or her emotions or behaviour. It has many levels from serious such as temper tantrums and violence toward self or others to mild such as mood swings and sulking excessively. Emotional behavior problems are usually recognized when one finds it difficult to interact with persons because of his or her emotional and behavior problems. It is a big umbrella and can be caused by many factors such as, mental illness, hormones and brain damage.

The findings of this study indicate that teachers' adjustment is significantly related to students' emotional behaviour problem and academic achievement. Children with high adjusted teachers exhibit fewer behavioural problems and better academic achievement in English Language, compared to children taught by low adjusted teachers' affirms the observation of Shumba (2002) which suggests that the teacher-child relationship exerts a major influence on children's social, behavioral, emotional, and academic achievement. Repeated acts of maladjusted behavior by the teacher, thus, may derive their destructive potential of these acts through the fact that the fulfillment of the child's basic socio-emotional needs is denied, thereby undermining healthy development of emotional behavior and academic achievement. However, it was revealed that education theories make a greater conviction to the primacy of social processes in student learning and development, and suggest that teacher-student relationships, both social and emotional, play a meaningful role in schooling and learning gains.

In fact, this paper found out that some teachers were adjusted while some were not adjusted. This finding agrees with the assertion made by Monroe, (1990) that adjustment is a behavioural adaptation to a particular environment or a set of circumstances; he said that the faulty or inadequate adjustment may be as a result of inability to adjust to the demands of interpersonal relationships and the stresses of daily living. It also concurs with Casarjian, (2000) who reported that teachers become maladjusted and develop ill health in the same manner as do pupils or other individuals. The fundamental cause is frustration resulting from blocked goals. Teachers like individuals in other professions desire security, recognition, new experiences and independence and they become tense when these needs become unfulfilled.

In spite of gender differences in values, emotions, personalities, areas of dimensions of adjustment, there is presently no evidence that reveals difference between male and female teachers' adjustment. This is contrary to Bunk and Vander Lam, (2002) whose findings revealed difference in the adjustment level of male and female teachers. The researchers explained the possible reason for the difference to be that men have a more salient independent self and thus may not let the impact of

adjustment manifest on their social relationship, while the women who have a more inter-dependent self may not be able to hide her emotions or negative feelings of adjustment.

### **Conclusion**

The study aimed at investigating the relationship between teachers' adjustment and students' emotional behaviour problem and achievement in English Language. In doing this, private and public secondary schools were used. Using the correlation research design the study made use of fifty (50) teachers and one hundred and fifty (150) students in Zaria Educational zone of Kaduna state. The findings of the study showed that:

- Teachers' adjustment is significantly related to students' emotional problems in school.
- Teachers' adjustment is significantly related to students' academic achievement in English Language.
- Male and Female teachers had no significant difference in their level adjustment.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made:.

- Teachers should be motivated to be more adjusted and friendlier to students, which include assisting students in any way possible, acting as surrogate parents, being considerate, and ready to accept changes.
- Schools and Teacher Education Institutions should organize workshops on adjustment strategies as frequently as possible and concerted efforts should be made by employers to motivate teachers to be well adjusted;
- Due recognition must be given to the teaching profession to enhance fulfillment on the job for teachers as this will create an enabling environment to better students' emotional behaviour problems and academic achievement.
- Policy makers in education should strive to devise ways to offer useful trainings for the teachers and school Directors that will create an enabling environment for students' effective learning.

### **References**

- Buunk and Vander Lam (2002). Intrinsic Motivation and self determination in human behaviour. In steers, R.M. and Porler, LW. (Eds) Motivated and work behaviour, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: MC and Hill, Inc.pp.44-58.
- Casey, P. Dowrick C. Wilkinson G. (December 2001). "Adjustment disorders: fault line in the psychiatric glossary". *Br J Psychiatric* 179: 479-81. PMID 11731347.<http://bjp.rcpsych.org/cgi/pmidlookup?view=ong&pmid=11731347>.
- Coleman, J.S. (1996). Equality of Educational Opportunity. Washington: US Department of Education.

- Grobe, C. and Bishop, G. (2001). *School Attributes and Student Achievement*. New Brunswick: Department of Education.
- FRN (2004) *National policy on education* Yaba NERDC press.
- Kasinath, H.M. (1990). Adjustment between migrated Hindi and non-Hindi speaking students studying in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. *The Progress of Education*, 9,8-10.
- Kerlinger F.N *foundation of Behavioural Research* (Ed) New York Holt-Rinehart and Wiastan
- Morell P.D. & James B.C. (2015). *Conducting Educational Research. A Primer for Teachers and Administrators*. USA Sense Publishers
- Murray, C. and Murray, K.M. (2004) Child level correlates of teacher-student relationships: An examination of demographic characteristics, academic orientations, and behavioural orientations. *Psychology School.*; 41:751-762 Cross Ref Web of Science.
- Nworgwu, B.G (1991) *Educational Research. Basic issues and methodology*. Nigeria. Wisdom publisher ltd
- Obanya, P. (2002) *revitalizing Education in Africa*. Logos sterlin hordem publisher ltd.
- Pelham, B.M. and Wachsmuth, J.O. (2001): The Bias blind spot: Perceptions of bias in self v others. *Personality and Psychology Bulletin*, 28,369-3
- Piñata, R.C. (1999) *Enhancing Relationships between Children and Teachers*. Washington, American Psychological Association.
- Shumba, A. (2002) The nature, extent and effects of emotional abuse on primary school pupils by teachers in Zimbabwe. *Child Abuse Neglect*. 26. 783-791 Cross Ref Web of Science Medline retrieved on 22/3/2010 from <http://peadiatrics.aapublications.org/cgi/external-ref?accessum=000178150600006a&link-type=ISI>
- Smith, D.D. (2007) *Introduction to special educaiotn: making a difference*. P. 248-254. Retrived on 18/03/2010 from <http://www.education.com/refence/article/emotional-behavioural-disorder-prevention>.
- Sroufe, L.A. (1995). *Emotional Development: The Organization of Emotional life at the early years*. New York: Cambridge University.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *The development of higher Psychological Processes*. MA: Harvard University Press.
- Umaru, Y. (2010) *Effect of Instruction in Metacognitive Skills, on Mathematics Self Efficacy belief, Interest and Achievement among low achieving Students in Secondary Schools*. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis UNN.