

## ***Influence of Psycho-Social Adjustment on Academic Achievement among Adolescents in some Selected Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria***

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the influence of psycho-social adjustment on academic achievement among adolescents in some selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design using three (3) objectives as a guide. Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of two hundred (200) students from five (5) public and five (5) private secondary schools. The study used Psycho-social Adjustment Questionnaire and students' academic achievement result for data collection. The data collected were analysed using chi-square and t-test statistical tool and all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement; that gender significantly influences psycho-social adjustment exhibited by students; and that gender significantly influences academic achievement exhibited by students. From the results, it was recommended that counselling, modelling, cognitive restructuring, values reorientation and mentoring should be the counselling strategies that counsellors should apply in handling youth problems.*

**Keywords:** psychosocial, adjustment, gender, academic, achievement

### **Introduction**

Students have many obstacles to overcome in order to attain academic excellence. It takes a lot more than just studying to achieve a successful school career. These students undertake a journey full of varying experiences. Not many of them regard all these experiences as exciting. Some young people see most experiences of life as

unfortunate. To some, experiences of life are homely and becoming because, experience means different things to different people; and experience that stagnates people in life is psychosocial maladjustment (Oliha & Audu, 2010). Psychosocial adjustment problems can pose their own threat to students' academic achievement and make them conclude that nothing more can happen in their favour in life again (Ayeni, 2011).

In Nigeria, the poor academic achievement of secondary school students with its negative consequences has been of concern to many parents, teachers, counsellors and educational administrators. Study by Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg and Walberg (2007) posited that psychosocial factors, such as motivation, social control, and self-regulation, play key roles in classroom learning. According to them, students need to be highly motivated to learn well in school, to recognize and use the social supports that can facilitate their learning, and to regulate their behaviours and manage their feelings.

Psychosocial adjustment of students is considered to be important because of its positive relationship with academic achievement (Stoynoff, 2012). Similarly, Steinmayr and Spinath (2009) showed that motivational variables were significantly correlated with academic achievement. With respect to social control, Hill and Tyson (2009) argued that family plays an important role in students' learning. In school, learning is a social process that often takes place in collaboration with peers and teachers (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2007). Also, safer school environment improves students' learning (Kutsyuruba, Klinger & Hussain, 2015). Study by Duckworth and Seligman (2005) found a linear relationship between self-regulation and academic achievement.

Adolescent whose social life is free of problem will be well adjusted. The concept of adjustment refers to an individual's general adaptation to his environment and the demands of life such as the way he relates to other people that is interpersonal behaviour, handles his responsibility, deals with stress and meets his own needs and life satisfaction (Hastings, 2007). In the process of adjustment, forces are balanced naturally within the system with forces originating from the environment. The immediate goals of the process may be characterized generally as a type of equilibrium with the system and in the interaction of the system with the environment (Hastings, 2007). Adjustment is not a one way process in which the individual conforms to the duties and requirement of others; it is rather a two way process, for it is the ability to be oneself, hold on to one's own and make reality adapt itself to one's requirement and needs. It does not imply a state or condition of contentment or pure mind. Since life is constantly changing, the ability to revise one's attitude and behaviour appropriately is an essential ingredient of adjustment. Life adjustment is easier when the individual is

educated. There are several issues an individual needs to adjust to in life, academic, social life, marital life, job experience etc. For the adolescents, academic challenges are one of the issues they may need adjustment.

Adolescence is a distinct phase of life. It is a period of rapid social expansion. Agubosi (2003) outlined some causes of ineffective study that are consequent to poor academic achievement in adolescent students. These, according to the author, include inability to cope with anxiety, rigidity of thought and poor study habit, lack of reading skills, unplanned and sporadic attempt to study, low rate of productivity resulting in inability to complete work on time, poor note taking, inability to develop arguments in a reasoned and coherent manner, lack of good expression in written work and inability to reason logically. Adolescents that have problem in their social lives are likely not to perform well and are usually withdrawn, shy and anti-social among their mates. The end result of the above is truancy and absenteeism from school. Adolescent with social problems may want to attend school because of adjustment problem. Psychologists theorize that an individual who is emotionally healthy is the one who has learned to cope effectively with himself and his environment, since the environment is in a constant state of flux and the adolescent is continuously developing and changing; psychological effectiveness or good mental health is an on-going process and not static achievement. If a person's social and personal behaviour appears to be reasonably well integrated, he/she appears to be reasonably happy. If the society approves of his/her behaviour, his/her means of coping with himself and his environment may be more effective. Thus, he/she may be psychologically healthy or well-adjusted.

Chen, Chang and He (2003) declared that psycho-social adjustment affects group norms and adolescents' academic performance. Hughes (2005) opined that person's gender or cultural heritage can shape who they are and what they do in life. He further explained that it also affects adolescents' psycho-social development in positive and negative ways and that cultural socialization was associated with fewer behaviour problems in both genders. Ayayo (2007) indicated in an investigation spanning twelve industrialized countries the ability of both male and female students in their general academic performance. The result revealed that males were superior over females.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Adolescence is a turbulent period, often between the ages of 12 – 15 years of an individual's life. This stage, according to Osarenren (2001), is a period of storms, stress and identity formation. Adolescence is an important period of physical, social, psychological and cognitive growth (Stagman, Schwarz & Powers, 2011). Adolescence is a period of growth and development bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood. The physical and emotional changes in this period influence

behaviours in that adolescence is a time of risk taking and experimentation (Dowdell & Santucci, 2004). Also, adolescence is a critical period of life in which abilities to express and understand emotions, to assign meaning to emotional experience, and to regulate feelings may be particularly helpful for psychological and social adjustment (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe & Bakker, 2007). To survive this period the adolescent needs guidance and honest assistance. At this stage of life, the adolescent is besieged with multifarious challenges such as sex, somatic variations, socio-economic, ego centricism, nervousness, intellectual excitement, argumentation and debating, aggression, day-dreaming, delinquency and social challenges. Failure to resolve these challenges can lead to psycho-social maladjustment.

These challenges may adversely affect the academic achievement of the adolescent. In recent times, schooling no longer mean much to many adolescents as they are so much engrossed with the psychological and social challenges. A society whose adolescents are not academically oriented may be classified as underdeveloped. Consequently, adolescents need to be reintegrated academically into their classes through well thoughts out counselling programmes geared towards improving academic achievement that will foster national development in the long run. This work therefore investigated the influence of psycho-social adjustment on academic achievement among adolescents in some selected secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To determine the relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria.
2. To find out whether differences exist in the psycho-social adjustment of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender.
3. To find out whether differences exist in the academic achievement of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender.

### **Hypotheses**

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the psycho-social adjustment of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender.

**Ho3:** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender.

### **Methodology**

Descriptive survey design was used to establish the influence of adolescents' psycho-social adjustment on their academic achievement in selected secondary schools in Lagos State. The population of the study comprised all adolescents from all senior

secondary schools in Apapa Local Government Area of Lagos State. Two hundred adolescents (200) were sampled using simple random sampling technique to select students from SS2 class. However, there was mortality of eight (8) out of two hundred (200) copies of the instrument administered. Therefore, one hundred and ninety two (192) was used for data analysis. Altogether, Ten (10) public and private schools within Apapa Local Government Area in Lagos State were sampled. The sample comprised five (5) private secondary schools and five (5) public secondary schools. The target respondents were the adolescents.

The study made use of two instruments. The instruments are Psycho-social Adjustment Questionnaire and students' academic achievement result. The Psycho-social Adjustment Questionnaire comprises of 14 items on five likert scale, while academic achievement result of students was obtained from the schools. The instruments were validated by experts in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Based on their observations, some modifications were made. The area of modifications includes language interpretation where necessary, clarification of sentences and the likes. The psycho-social adjustment instrument was validated to determine the face and content validity, its relevance and appropriateness in the study. The instrument is reliable and has an appreciable internal consistency of .810. The data obtained from the respondents for the study were coded, scored and analysed using Chi- square and t-test statistical tools to determine the level of significance. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Presentation of results**

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement among secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Chi-square of psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><math>\chi^2_{cal}</math></b>	<b><math>\chi^2_{crit}</math></b>	<b>Remark</b>
Psychosocial Adjustment	192	3	34.29	7.82	Reject Ho
Academic achievement					

Table 1 shows that  $\chi^2$ Calculated of 34.29 was greater than  $\chi^2$ Critical of 7.82 at 0.05 level of significance and 3 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value, then the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement among secondary school students was rejected while the alternate hypothesis which states that

there is significant relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement among secondary school students was accepted. This implies that adolescents' psycho-social adjustment has implications on their academic achievement.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the psycho-social adjustment of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender.

**Table 2:** t-test comparison between male and female in their psycho-social adjustment

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Remark
Male	96	65.70	5.79	190	2.31	1.96	Reject Ho
Female	96	65.71	5.49				

Table 2 shows that t-cal value of 2.31 was greater than t-critical of 1.96 given 190 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the psycho-social adjustment of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender was rejected while the alternate hypothesis which states that there is significant difference in the psycho-social adjustment of male and female secondary school students was accepted. From the finding, it is revealed that female students have higher mean in psycho-social adjustment than their male counterparts. This implies that female students have more psycho-social adjustment than their male counterparts.

**Ho3:** There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, based on gender.

**Table 3:** t-test comparison between male and female secondary school students on their academic achievement

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-critical	Remark
Male	96	65.71	5.79	190	2.21	1.96	Reject Ho
Female	96	65.70	5.49				

Table 3 shows that t-cal value of 2.21 was greater than t-critical of 1.96 given 190 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value was greater than the critical hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the academic achievement of secondary school students in Lagos State,

Nigeria, based on gender was rejected while the alternate hypothesis which state that there is significant difference between male and female secondary school students in their academic achievement was accepted. This implies students do differ in their academic achievement based on their gender.

### **Discussion of the findings**

The finding arising from the first hypothesis revealed that there is significant relationship between psycho-social adjustment and academic achievement. This finding is in agreement with Chen, Chang and He (2003) who declared that psycho-social adjustment affects group norms and affect adolescents' academic performance.

The second finding of the study arising from testing of hypothesis II revealed that there is significant difference between male and female secondary school students in their psycho-social adjustment. This implies that students, in terms of gender status, differ in psycho-social adjustment. This finding agreed with Hughes (2005), who opined that person's gender or cultural heritage can shape who they are and what they do in life. He further explained that it also affects adolescents' psycho-social development in positive and negative ways and that cultural socialization was associated with fewer behaviour problems in both genders.

Arising from the third hypothesis, another finding of the study revealed that there is significant difference between male and female secondary school students in their academic achievement. This is in agreement with that of Ayayo (2007), who indicated in an investigation spanning twelve industrialized countries the ability of both male and female students in their general academic performance. The result revealed that males were superior over females.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of this study, it is concluded that psychosocial adjustment has a strong prediction on academic achievement. Also, gender differences have influences on psychosocial adjustment and academic achievement.

### **Recommendations**

1. Counselling centres should introduce personality development programmes that will provide training in psychological and social skills that will help adolescents in their overall academic achievement.
2. Social skill training should be included in the curriculum of secondary students from the first year to the last year most especially to the female counterpart.
3. Stakeholders in education should put gender equality in consideration and pay more attention to both male and female students for better academic achievement.

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