

# Student's Motivation And Their Adjustment To Handle Academic Demands In Tertiary Institutions In South Zone Of Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *This study investigated student's motivation and their adjustment to handle academic demands in tertiary institutions in South-South zone of Nigeria. Student's adjustment variable were regularity to lectures, interaction with lecturers, interaction with fellow students, use of library and other learning resources and responds to tests and assignments. Hypothesis was stated and the sample for the study consisted of 1200 subjects. Questionnaire obtained respondents views. The data collected was analyzed using one-way ANOVA and a pair-wise post hoc multiple comparison analysis using Fishers Least Significant Difference Analysis (LSD). The major funding was a significant influence of student's motivation on their adjustment to handle academic demands on the five (5) dimensions. Based on the funding it was recommended that a healthy positive relationship should be encouraged between lecturers and students as well as an effective reward system to encourage diligent and hardworking students to achieve optimum academic achievement.*

## I. INTRODUCTION/LITERATURE REVIEW

When an academically poor student improves, people begin to ask why he has improved. When a bright student starts to perform poorly, questions are usually raised about his declining performance. The first instance may be attributed to the students becoming encouraged or motivated to achieve higher academically. The second instance may be attributed to lack of motivation or some other intervening variables. One is aware that whatever people do, they do it to satisfy a given need. It is this need that motivates them to do what they do.

Motivation is a psychological construct. It plays a determining role in the academic performance as well as adjustment of the students. Motivation has been variously defined by different psychologists who study the concept. Usually, one or more of the following words are included in the definition "desire", "want", "wishers", "goal", "need", "drives", "motives" (Asagwara, 2000). The term motivation is derived from the Latin word "movere", which means, "to move". Students are generally activated by many motives,

such as desire for money, praise, social status, security and self-respect.

Asagwara (2000), defined a motive as "an inner state that energizes, activates, or moves and directs or channels behaviour towards goals. It is restlessness, a lack, a yen, a force. Psychologists believed that much of human behaviour is motivated and purposive; being consciously carried out to fill certain felt needs. Consciously, psychologists have described motivation as an internally generated force which initiates action in man, directs and sustains the action until a desired goal object is achieved. According to Iheanacho (2002), school learning goes on with the learner's mental activity. A maximum mental activity produces the most effective learning. It is through strong motivation that maximum mental activity is best attained. He regards motivation as the superhighway to learning. Motivation is the internal or external condition or need that arouses action, sustains the activity in progress and relates the pattern of that activity in order to attain the desired goal.

Iheanacho (2002), defines motivation as theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity and

persistence of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour. It refers to the subjective experiences of students, particularly their willingness to be involved in learning activities including their reasons for the involvement.

Motivation is an important force resident in the individual that impels his pattern of thinking, feeling, and actions whether viewed as “Primary Drives” or needs to be competent and effective. These internal needs are usually classified in hierarchy that ranges from the most simple and biological to the highest that is most abstract and complex.

According to Ukpog (2000), motivation is a state of being aroused to action-armed from passivity to calmness to restlessness, to a degree of dissatisfaction of disturbance, and then to directed, purposeful acts. Such state of aroused to action, the disturbance of homeostasis many result from some internal organic or psychic need. Hunger, thirst, tissue injury and sex are common examples of aroused states which become conditioned or directed through learning into purposes or desires to obtain something or escape from something.

To Oladele (1986), motivation is a process by which the learner’s internal energies are directed towards various goal objects in his environment. Similarly Denga (1987) says motivation connotes the social and psychological forces that energies behaviour and poke it towards goal attainment.

It is forces which ignite, propel, poke, spur or energies, direct and sustain behaviour towards goal attainment. For Renschler (1992) the strength of ones motivation to act depends on the importance attached to the goal in question and ones judgment about its achievability. Armstrong, (1985), conceives motivation as a term that is inferred from, or defined by goal-directed behaviour which is anchored in two basic concepts: the needs that operate within the individual and the goal in the environment towards or away from which the individual moves. In its simplest form, the process of motivation is initiated by the conscious recognition of unsatisfied need. A goal is then established which, it is thought, will satisfy that need and a course of action is determined that will lead towards the attainment of that goal.

Maslow (1970) sees human motivation as occurring in hierarchy. To him, it is this orderly sequence that tends to regulate the needs of man. It shows that when ones need from the list of the most is met, it no longer attracts the individual and that if an individual is not doing what he is fitted for the lower needs may emerge again. In the same vein, the acquisition of higher academic certificate depends on earlier success. But constraint failure to acquire any certificate could make one to look for the least certificate even though by this social status he may seem to be above such a certificate. In this regard, student motivation is related to his earlier successes or failure.

To say the least, if an individual has no need to fulfill, he is said to be at the state of homeostasis. However, in practice, no such state is known to exist for human beings. Maslow, put forward a theory which avoided this issue of homeostasis by suggesting that man is a wanting being, that there is always some need he wants to satisfy.

Okon (2003) conducted an experimental study on the effect of positive reinforcement on the academic achievement motivation of secondary school students in Cross Rivers State. The sample was drawn through the random sampling

technique from a total of 467 students. Students were involved in the study-experimental group 1, experimental group 2, and the control group. The experimental groups were separated from the control group to ensure that treatment given to them did not affect or alter the interest and performance of the control group members who were not given any treatment. Treatment involved introducing a special reinforcement programme into the regular teaching. Experimental group 1 received both social and material reinforcement. Materials rewards involved the use of exercise books and pencils, while social rewards involved praise and clapping of hands. Experimental group II received only social reinforcement. The control group did not receive any reinforcement. At the end of the treatment, the academic achievement motivation scale was administered to the participants. The result of the findings revealed that there is no significance difference in the academic motivation of student given different types of reinforcement.

In the school system, students can be either self-motivated or other-motivated. Those who believed that they are largely responsible for their success or failure and would thus, try to improve their lot are intrinsically motivated. On the other hand, chances and luck, is other motivated. A self-motivated person as an internal locus of control while other motivated person posses and external locus of control.

According to Asagwara (1987), a student motivation depends greatly on how the student perceives the general school education. If a student believes that school examinations are always “rigged” such a student will make no effort to study hard. If a student understands why he is in school and works hard toward achieving his aim he is bound to achieve academically high.

There is considerable evidence that motivation indicates some relationship to academic performance vis-à-vis students’ adjustment in school. Joe (1989) in a study of the influence of motivation on the academic of first year undergraduate trainees in the University of Port Harcourt, found a correlation of 0.32 between achievement motivation score and the first year (GPA) scores of the student.

According to Denga (2002), a lack of motivation is manifested in an individual difference to learning, a lack of interest in learning generally, a weak drive towards goal attainment and little identification with school subjects. To him, a child who is not motivated does not take school work in class seriously. He shies away from competition in class, absent himself from school without good reasons and is not keen in doing school work and assignment. He is like a horse that has been led to water but cannot be made to drink.

On the other hand, adjustment is individual’s reaction to the pressure and demands imposed upon him by the physical and social environment. Educational adjustment is concerned with the extent to which a child works harmoniously in the school and finds the subjects, courses an academic programme compatible with his needs.

Adjustment is often seen as into one’s society, abiding by the laws and living with the bounds of customary behaviour and maintain the ideas of ones’ group. As stated by Denga (1987), the term “adjustment connotes harmony, congruence and a goodness-of-fit between an individual and the standard against which the individual is judged. It is concerned with the individual maintain as congruent relationship with other

people, the family peers, and teachers and so on. In fact, the pattern of this relationship impacts on the student's adjustment in school.

Farley and Allen (1987) noted that school adjustment of a child is rooted in a number of factors such as child's environment, opportunities to obtain education, parental education attainment, the child's own individual characteristics and other basic historical differences. However, adjustment to the school includes positives interest towards the school and its environment. Poor adjustment in school is manifested in negative attitude towards the school. A student, who is maladjusted, fights with little provocation, aggressive, unnecessarily anxious and non-conforming.

Adjustment to academic demands in this work is viewed in terms of student's ability to cope and react positively to school and its environment. It is measures by student's regularity to lectures, interaction with lecturers, interaction with fellow students on academic matters, use of library and other learning resources and response to texts and assignments in tertiary institutions.

## II. METHODOLOGY

Three states were randomly selected from the six states that make up the South-South Zone, using the hat and draw procedure of random sampling. The same procedure was adopted to select three universities and three Colleges of education, faculties and departments. At the end, sample of 1200 students, 620 from Universities and 580 from Colleges of Education representing 52% and 48% respectively. Of this figure males were 666 and 534 females, 56% and 44% respectively. Students Opinion Survey Questionnaires (SOSQ) was constructed validated and a reliability co-efficient that ranged from 0.63 to 0.82 was obtained.

### HYPOTHESIS:

Student motivation does not significantly influence their adjustment to handle academic demands in tertiary institutions in the South-South Zone of Nigeria.

The independents variable in this hypothesis is student's motivation while the dependent variable is adjustment to handle academic demands (which has five variables; regularly to lectures, interaction with lecturer, interaction with fellow students, use of library and other learning resources and response to tests and assignments), students in the sample were categorized into three groups of those with low level of motivation (group 1 scoring half standard deviation below the mean and below), moderate level of motivation (group 2 scoring between half standard deviation below and above the mean) and high level motivation (group 3 scoring half standard deviation above the mean and above). The statistical analysis technique deployed to test the hypothesis was one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and the testing was done on each of the five sub-variables of adjustment. The results of the analyses are presented in table 1 and 2. Table 1 shows the group means and standard deviation, while table 2 shows the actual results of ANOVA.

S/N	Adjustment Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD
1	Regularity to lectures	1(low)	320	17.31	1.86
		2(moderate)	480	16.88	2.03
		3(high)	400	17.75	4.02
		Total	1200	17.28	2.84
2	Interaction with lecturers	1(low)	320	11.88	3.24
		2(moderate)	480	14.66	3.10
		3(high)	400	15.70	2.90
		Total	1200	14.27	3.42
3	Interaction with fellow students	1(low)	320	15.81	2.88
		2(moderate)	480	15.04	2.37
		3(high)	400	15.20	2.10
		Total	1200	15.30	2.75
4	Use of library and other learning resources	1(low)	320	9.00	2.32
		2(moderate)	480	11.42	2.87
		3(high)	400	11.90	2.78
		Total	1200	10.93	2.95
5	Response to tests and assignment	1(low)	320	18.25	2.08
		2(moderate)	480	19.00	1.39
		3(high)	400	18.25	2.15
		Total	1200	18.55	1.90

Table 1: Group Means and Standard Deviation of Students' Adjustment to Handle Academic Demands Based on their Level of Motivation.

S/N	Adjustment Variables	Source of variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean	F
1	Regularity to lectures	B/w groups	167.42	2	83.71	10.53*
		Within groups	9516.25	1197	7.95	
		Total	9683.67	1199		
2	Interaction with lecturers	B/w groups	2728.20	2	1364.1	144.32*
		Within groups	11313.1	1197	0	
		Total	14042.2	1199	9.45	
3	Interaction with fellow students	B/w groups	120.08	2	60.04	8.05*
		Within groups	8931.92	1197	7.46	
		Total	9052.00	1199		
4	Use of library and other learning resources	B/w groups	1682.00	2	841.00	115.01*
		Within groups	8752.67	1197	7.31	
		Total	10434.67	1199		
5	Response to tests and assignment	B/w groups	162.00	2	81.00	23.45*
		Within groups	1435.00	1197	3.45	
		Total	4297.00	1199		

\*p<.05; critical F<sub>2, 1197</sub>=3.00

Table 2: Analysis of variance of influence of students' motivation on their adjustment to handle demands

The result presented in table 1 have shown that the calculated F-values of 10.53(for regularity to lecture) 144.32 (for interaction with lecturers), 8.05 (for interaction with fellow students), 115.01 (for use of library and other learning resources) and 23.45 (response to tests and assignments) are each greater than the critical f-value of 3.00 at .05 level of

significance, with 2 and 1197 degrees of freedom. With these results, the null hypothesis is rejected in each of these five instances. This implies that there is a significant influence of student's motivation on their adjustment to handle academic demands on the five dimensions.

In order to understand the pattern of the significant influence, a pair-wise post hoc multiple comparison analysis was carried out using fishers' least significant difference (LSD) analysis. The result of the LSD analyses are presented in table 3.

S/N	Adjustment Variables	Groups	Low (N=320)	Moderate (N=480)	High (N=400)
1	Regularity to lectures	Low	17.31 <sup>a</sup>	0.43 <sup>b</sup>	-9.44
		Moderate	2.11 <sup>*c</sup>	16.88	-0.87
		high	-2.08 <sup>*</sup>	-4.56	17.75
			MSW=7.95		
2	Interaction with lecturers	Low	11.88 <sup>a</sup>	-2.78 <sup>b</sup>	-3.82
		Moderate	-12.53 <sup>*c</sup>	14.66	-1.04
		high	-5.00 <sup>*</sup>	-5.00 <sup>*</sup>	15.70
			MSW=9.45		
3	Interaction with fellow students	Low	15.81 <sup>a</sup>	0.77 <sup>b</sup>	0.61
		Moderate	3.91 <sup>*c</sup>	15.04	-0.16
		high	2.98 <sup>*</sup>	-0.87	15.20
			MSW=7.46		
4	Use of library and other learning resources	Low	9.00 <sup>a</sup>	-2.42 <sup>b</sup>	-2.90
		Moderate	-12.40 <sup>*c</sup>	11.42	-0.48
		high	-14.30 <sup>*</sup>	-2.62 <sup>*</sup>	11.90
			MSW=7.31		
5	Response to tests and assignment	Low	18.25 <sup>a</sup>	-0.75 <sup>b</sup>	0.00
		Moderate	-5.60 <sup>*c</sup>	19.00	0.75
		high	0.00	5.96 <sup>*</sup>	18.25
			MSW=3.45		

Table 3: Fishers LSD of significant influence of students' motivation on their adjustment to handle academic demands

- a. - Group means placed along the diagonals
- b. - differences in group means are placed above the diagonal
- c. - fishers' to values are placed below the diagonal
- \* - Significant at .05 level (critical t= 1.96)

The results in table 3 have shown that:

- ✓ For regularity to lectures, significant t- values -2.08 and -4.56 indicate that students with high level of motivation are significantly more adjusted than students with both low and moderate levels of motivation respectively. However, the significant t-value of 2.11 indicates that students with low level of motivation are significantly more adjusted than students with moderate level of motivation.
- ✓ For interaction with lecturers, t-values of -16.57 and -5.00 imply that students with high level of motivation are significantly more adjusted than students with both low and moderate levels of motivation respectively. Also, the significant t-value of -12.53 implies that students with moderate level of motivation are significantly more than students with low level of motivation.
- ✓ For interaction with fellow students, significant t-values of 3.91 and 2.98 indicate that students with low level of motivation are significantly more adjusted than students with moderate and high levels of motivation respectively. However, there is no significant difference between the adjustment levels

of students with moderate and high levels of motivation as depicted by the non significant t- value of -0.87

- ✓ For the use of library and other resources significant t-value of 14.30 and -2.62 implies that students with high levels of motivation are significantly more adjusted than students with low and moderate levels of motivation respectively. Also, the significant t-value of -12.40 implies that students with moderate level of motivation are significant more adjusted than students with low of motivation.
- ✓ For response to test and assignments, significant t-value of 5.60 and 5.96 indicate that students with moderate level of motivation.

However, students with low level of motivation are more adjusted and those with high exhibit the same level of adjustment (same mean values of 18.25), and therefore record t-value of 0.00.

### III. DISCUSSION

The finding of this study revealed that motivation influence students adjustment to academic demands. This finding support the established fact that a maximum mental activity produces the most effective learning, and that it is through strong motivation that maximum mental activity is best attained (Iheanacho, 2002).

Base on the result of the study, it is pertinent to state that motivation is part of human behaviour. Student who do not consider their present qualification as being too valuable to them but look forward to acquiring a higher qualification are said to have a need that motivate them. This is perhaps the reason why Pigors and Meyers (1995) conceived motivation as a pattern of planning of actions and of feedings connected with striving to achieve some internalized standard of excellence. Denga (1987) also supports this when he contends that a student level of achievement depends on the level of his motivation. He also said that, students require different level of motivation in order to influence their academic motivation, since high motivation leads to high achievement.

More so, several studies conducted have reveled a significant influence of motivation to academic achievement (Ranchler, 1992, Myers, 1995, okon,2003). The major conclusions in these finding are that, people are normally motivated to engage in behaviors which they believe will contribute to goal achievement. The strength of ones motivation to act depends on the importance attached to the goal in question and ones judgment about its achievability. Motivational strength depends on ones judgement about how successful a particular behaviour will be in moving toward goal achievement.

They also concluded that motivation is a catalyst or fuel to the person, motivation is awareness that the learner lacks something and that there is a willingness to work to obtain whatever he is lacking. Again, Denga (2002) summarized the finding of this study when he posited that, motivation is manifested in an individual's learning and that a child who is not motivated does not take school work in class seriously, he shies away from competition in class, absent himself from



school without good reasons and not keen in doing school work-tests an assignment. He is like a horse that has been led to water but cannot be made to drink.

From the forgoing, motivation is essential for proper adjustment. A student who is not motivated is likely to be maladjusted and deviant and a student who is motivated is purposeful and goal-directed.

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