



## Emotional Intelligence Dimensions as Correlates of Adjustment among First Year Students of University of Ibadan

SOLOMON ADEKUNLE ODEDOKUN, MUMUD OLABODE OJUOLAPE  
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Abstract.** Adjustment of freshmen in the higher institution depends on a variety of factors which can have both positive and/or negative influence on their ability to stay focused, motivated and succeed in the school system. Parents, Counsellors Teachers, Curriculum experts and other significant stakeholders have also expressed considerable concern about the level of adjustment of the students especially among the first year students. Some freshmen easily adjust irrespective of the enormous challenges that they encounter while some find it difficult to cope and eventually dropped out of the school. This study, therefore, sought to investigate emotional intelligence dimensions as correlates of adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design of correlational type. A total of two hundred (200) first year students of University of Ibadan were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Three research questions were raised and answered for the study. Validated and standardized instruments were used to collect the data. Data collected were analysed using the Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that there was significant relationship between self-awareness ( $r = .704$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), self-regulation ( $r = .143$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), motivation ( $r = .682$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), empathy ( $r = .472$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and social skills ( $r = .700$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) in relation to adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. The independent variables jointly accounted for 52.4% variance in predicting adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. In term of contribution to adjustment; self-awareness ( $\beta = .428$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and social skills ( $\beta = .740$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had significant positive relative contribution to adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. Self-regulation ( $\beta = -.091$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and motivation ( $\beta = -.249$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) had no significant relative contribution to adjustment while empathy ( $\beta = -.237$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) had negative significant relative contribution to the adjustment of first year students at

University of Ibadan. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the school management should guide, inform, and advice students by giving good and fantastic orientation programs to the newly admitted students as this would foster excellent adjustment to their new environment. Also, the service of an Emotional Intelligence coach can be employed by parents, school management and even the students, to learn assertive skills, setting boundaries and act of maintaining harmony. Students should also be encouraged to use the right emotional intelligence skills at different situations they find themselves for their proper adjustment in their newly found environment.

**Keywords:** Adjustment, Emotional Intelligence, Self-awareness, Emotional Intelligence, Motivation, Empathy, Social skills

### 1. Introduction

Adjustment plays a vital role in the process of development of an individual. It is a dynamic and continuous process throughout an individual lifespan. No human can live a successful life without a good interaction with one's environment be it social or physical environment. Adjustment is an interaction between the individual and his or her environment. It refers to adaptation of the organism to demands of a new environment. Human beings do not only adapt to their environment but also make use of their intelligence to change the environment in order to meet their needs effectively. Adjustment connotes conformity; it deals with the way an individual adapts to his/her environment and its demands in life. This includes how he/she relates to others which could be interpersonal and how he deals with his responsibilities and inner feelings.

Psychologically, adjustment helps the individual to cope with the demands and pressures of the outside world as well as the needs, desires and conflicts

experienced from within (Dickens, 2006). Recently, school education places more emphasis on the learning of knowledge rather than on students' frame of mind. Students feel nervous, anxious, frustrated, depressed and abased when instructors ignore their emotions. If students cannot receive timely guidance and interventions from school authorities, teachers, their parents, peers, siblings and other significant stakeholders, it could lead to psychological distress as well as other behavioural problems. Educational activities are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objectives. In school, the extent to which these objectives are achieved, is determined by their level of emotional intelligence as students' success are reflected in their adjustment to their new environment

First year student's adjustment is a phenomenon that is of great concern to educationists and other significant stakeholders. Educationists need to know what they can do to help the freshmen to adjust positively and attain good grades in their newly found environment (school). Adjustment among students is a wide construct that include many different aspects such as school adaptation, satisfaction, engagement, academic achievement, and pro-social behavior (McInerney, (2012). First year students who are well-adjusted usually enjoy most of the school activities and value what they learn. As a result, they are positively involved in classroom activities hence, receive academic high academic grades. Poor school adjusted individual on the other hand, register low academic grades, portray behavioral problems, exhibit discordant educational aspirations and may even opt out of the school if they are not properly helped or guided by the significant stakeholders.

Adjustment to first year students include: difficulty in making friends, keeping up academically, fitting in to the group, and being bullying. It is worth noting that peer harassment or bullying, in particular, would place students at risk for lower academic grades and other school problems. Peer victimization may directly affect school outcomes resulting to low grades attainment as well as irregular school attendance. These may eventually translate to social and psychological problems (Chen, Chen, Li, and Wang, (2009).

Failure to adjust can lead to mental health issues and school refusal or dropout and this may require school counselling. Indeed, a first year student's adjustment depends on the match between his or her competencies and needs and the demands of the school environment. The adjustment may fluctuate

across schools and years or across different domains or classrooms within the same year and is influenced by a myriad of complex and interconnected factors (Karbalaee, (2012).

Human beings are creatures of feelings and emotions. If there had been no emotions in the life of an individual, the life would have been without any aspirations and adjustment. Also, in the absence of emotions, social and family life would have ceased and progress would have been checked. The concept of emotional intelligence taken together means how intelligently an individual can control his emotions. Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing one's feelings and those of others, for motivating oneself and for managing emotions well in one's and in one's relationships (Hoerger, Chapman, Epstein, & Duberstein, 2012). Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions (Mehta &Singh, 2013). Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an inborn characteristic. Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their influential article "Emotional Intelligence," they defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions as well as to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

The self-Awareness of first year students are with this competence to know which emotions they feels and realize the links between their feelings and what they think and also recognize how their feelings affect their level of adjustment and performance of their values and goals (Fernández-Abascal & Martín-Díaz, 2015). First year students with high emotional intelligence are usually high on self-awareness. They understand their emotions, and because of this, they don't let their feelings rule them. They're confident – because they trust their intuition and don't let their emotions get out of control. Motivation is considered the basic ingredient to adjustment and learning. Motivation is considered the basic ingredient to adjustment and every child is born with an intrinsic motivation to learn and understand the world around them. According to Redorbit (2008), individual is born with an intrinsic motivation to adjust and understand the world around them, an aspect of development that referred to as competence motivation. This type of motivation helps explain people's interest in their environment and their ability to persist in learning difficult things. Although children are born with this, it unfortunately could

diminish over time due to reactions or perceptions of others and life experiences.

Empathy simply refer to understanding people's feelings, entering into their world of feelings and showing them one's feeling. Aiming for empathy has a significant importance, especially to the level of adjustment of students. It enables one to live in a multicultural environment as well as ability to survive among people who are in a different situation (Preston, & de Wall, (2002). Being empathic has a lot of benefits: it helps an individual to see more clearly the perception of one's own words and actions as well as that of other people's actions. It enables the individual to acquire better conflicts management and communication. Those with strong social skills are typically team players they excel as a team. Rather than focusing on their own success, they help others to develop and shine better. They can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships (Dean, 2014). The ability to manage people and relationships is very important in all leaders, so developing and using one's emotional intelligence can be a good way to show others the leadership traits in an individual. One would then ask why do some children beat the odds while others experience poor outcomes such as school drop-out due to inability to adjust to school terrain? These unhealthy behaviours of students which in turn impacts negative adjustment make the researcher to ask "why are students not very concern about the current trend on their positive adjustment in school? Could it be that they are insensitive to the possible negative self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills on their adjustment? It is in view of these concerns that this study was carried out to determine emotional intelligence dimensions as correlates of adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan.

## 1.2 Research Questions

- Is there any significant relationship among emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills) and adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan?
- What is the joint influence of emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills and adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan?
- What is the relative influence of each of emotional intelligence dimension (self-

awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills and adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan?

## 2. Methodology

The study adopts descriptive survey research design of correlational type and the research design is adopted because the researcher did not manipulate the variables of interest in the study. The design enables the researcher to measure relationship among the variables.

### 2.1 Population

The study population for this study comprise of all first year students of the University (Year One). A total of two hundred (200) of the participants were selected using simple random sampling technique. Seventy seven (77) i.e (38.5%) of the respondents are males while one hundred and twenty three (123) i.e. (61.5%) are females. One hundred and sixty three (163) i.e. 81.5% of the respondents are between the age range of 16 – 20 years while thirty seven (37) i.e 18.5% of the respondents are between the age range of 21 years and above). This technique was adopted because the target participants have homogeneous in nature and they have equal chances of being selected for the study. Fifty (50) first year students were selected from four major faculties namely; Education, Agriculture, Art and Social science.

### 2.2 Instrumentation

College Adjustment scale by William, Anton and James (1991) was used to measure the first year student's adjustment to the university. The scale consists of 108 items. Some samples of the items are: "I feel tense much of the time" and "I need more information about career options." It has Cronbach alpha of .85. The internal consistency of the scale was established by this study and it returned a Cronbach coefficient alpha of 0.78.

The Emotional Intelligence scale developed by Afolabi (2016) was adopted for this study. The scale was developed to measure the emotional feelings of the participants. The scale consist of ten items and each item was rated using five-point Likert scale which ranges from "Very right" = 4 to "Very wrong" = 1. Two sample items are "I am good at reading people's feelings" and "I enjoy the company of my friends". The developers reported reliability of 0.80.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The researcher made use of Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 to analyze the data of the study. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the joint contribution and the relative contribution of the independent to dependent variable while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the independent and the dependent variables.

### 3. Results

**Research Question One:** Is there any significant relationship among emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills) and adjustment of first year students at University of Ibadan?

**Table 1:** Summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between the study variables

Variables	Adjustment	Self-awareness	Self-regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social skills	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD
Adjustment	1.000						49.43	9.74
Self-awareness	.704	1.000					33.22	9.23
Self-regulation	.143	.346	1.000				56.76	7.99
Motivation	.682	.917	.261	1.000			24.98	8.80
Empathy	.472	.785	.435	.660	1.000		31.69	5.755
Social skills	.700	.967	.338	.963	.779	1.000	51.50	16.14

**Source:** Field Survey (University of Ibadan)

The table 1 above reveals the inter-correlational matrix of the independent variables emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills) and the dependent variable (adjustment) of first year students at University of Ibadan. All the factors are positively correlated with the adjustment of first year students. self-awareness ( $r = .704, p < 0.05$ ) had significant relationship to adjustment, self-regulation ( $r = .143, p < 0.05$ ) had significant relationship to adjustment, motivation ( $r = .682, p < 0.05$ ) had significant relationship to adjustment, empathy ( $r = .472, p < 0.05$ ) had significant relationship to adjustment and social skills ( $r = .700, p < 0.05$ ) had significant relationship to adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan. This implies that self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills play a significant role on adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan.

**Research Question Two:** What is the joint contribution of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills to adjustment of first year students at University of Ibadan?

**Table 2:** Multiple Regression Analysis on Adjustment

Multiple R= .724					
Multiple R <sup>2</sup> = .524					
Multiple R <sup>2</sup> (adjusted)=.512					
Standard error of estimate= 6.77105					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9693.729	5	1938.746	42.287	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	8802.635	192	45.847		
Total	18496.364	197			

**Source:** Field Survey (University of Ibadan)

The table 2 above shows the joint contribution of the independent variables emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills) to the dependent variable (adjustment) among first year students of University of Ibadan. The value of  $R = .724$ , while  $R^2 = .524$ . This suggests that all the factors combined together accounted for (Adj.R<sup>2</sup>= .512) variance in the prediction of adjustment. The other factors accounted for 52.4% variance in the prediction of adjustment is beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis indicates that there was a significant combine influence of the independent variables; emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills) on adjustment,  $F (6.77105, p < 0.05)$  among first year students of University of Ibadan.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relative contribution of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills to adjustment among first year students of University of Ibadan?

**Table 3:** Relative contribution of each of the independent variables to the prediction of adjustment among the participants Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	37.349	4.065		9.188	.000
Self-awareness	.451	.211	.428	2.133	.034
Self-regulation	-.109	.067	-.091	-1.623	.106
Self-motivation	-.274	.245	-.249	-1.118	.265
Empathy	-.398	.161	-.237	-2.466	.015
Social skills	.444	.205	.740	2.172	.031

*Source:* Field Survey (University of Ibadan)

The table 3 revealed the relative contribution of each of the independent variable emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills) to the dependent variable (adjustment) among first year students of University of Ibadan; self-awareness ( $\beta = .428, p < 0.05$ ) and social skills ( $\beta = .740, p < 0.05$ ) had significant positive relative contribution to adjustment of first year students at University of Ibadan. Self-regulation ( $\beta = -.091, p > 0.05$ ) and motivation ( $\beta = -.249, p > 0.05$ ) had no significant relative contribution to adjustment while empathy ( $\beta = -.237, p < 0.05$ ) had negative significant relative contribution to the adjustment of first year students at University of Ibadan. That is, factors such as self-awareness and social skills contribute to the adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. In term of magnitude of contribution, self-awareness made the most significant contribution to adjustment of first year students among the participants, followed by social skills.

**4. Discussion**

From the results stated above, it was revealed that all the factors positively correlated with the adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. Self-awareness, empathy, motivation and social skills had strong significant relationship with adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan while self-regulation had weak significant relationship with the participants' adjustment. That is, all the factors influence and determine adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. This is in line with the study of Adeyemo (2005) when he reported that EI is an important aspect for children to possess the ability of a good social adjustment. Abdullah, et al. (2009) also concluded in their findings that social adjustment becomes the main predictor of emotional intelligence. Again, Punia & Sangwan (2013) found that there is a positive and significant impact between EI and the students' ability of social adjustment. Moreover, emotional intelligence also affects the

students' academic adjustment. The same conclusion is also derived from their previous researches (2011). Those results showed that EI is indeed correlated with the student's ability of social adjustment. This negates the findings of Sandhya (2013) when he opined that there is no significance difference in the emotional intelligence of the students and adjustment. This could be as a result of different participants as well as locations or timing of carrying out the research this therefore calls for more work on the concept of EI and students adjustment

The result also reveals that there was a significant joint contribution of self-awareness, emotional regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills to adjustment among the participants. The value of  $R = .724$ , while  $R^2 = .524$ . This suggests that all the factors combined together accounted for (Adj.  $R^2 = .512$ ) variance in the prediction of adjustment. The other factors accounted for 52.4% variance in the prediction of adjustment is beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis indicates that there was a significant combine influence of the independent variables; emotional intelligence dimension (self-awareness, emotional intelligence, motivation, empathy and social skills) on adjustment, The result is in line with the study of Lenaghan, Buda and Eisner (2007) and Carmeli (2003) where they revealed that students who score high in social skill are likely to adjust as they recognize and manage feelings of conflict as they occur. Singh (2015) noted that there is positive relationship between emotional intelligence and students' level of adjustment. .

In answering the question of relative contribution of each of the components of emotional intelligence and adjustment, self-awareness and social skills contribute immensely to adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. Self-regulation and motivation had no significant relative contribution to adjustment while empathy had negative significant relative contribution to the adjustment of the

participants. In term of magnitude of contribution, self-awareness made the most significant contribution followed by social skills. This is in line with the study of Tak, Curlin and Yoon (2017) which revealed that early and late adolescents group differed significantly from each other in the home, health and social areas of adjustment. Carmeli (2003) also discovered that students who score high in social skill are likely to adjust as they recognize and manage feelings of conflict as they occur.. It can then be deduced that the higher the emotional intelligence of an individual especially among the freshmen, the higher the chances of a better adjustment of an individual irrespective of the situations and challenges that an individual is exposed to.

### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research work has established that emotional intelligence positively correlated with the adjustment of first year students at University of Ibadan; self-awareness had strong significant relationship to adjustment, motivation, empathy and social skills also had strong significant relationship to adjustment of first year students of University of Ibadan. Again, self-awareness and social skills also had significant relative contribution to adjustment, self-regulation and motivation had no significant relative contribution to adjustment and empathy had negative significant relative contribution to the adjustment In term of magnitude of contribution, self-awareness made the most significant contribution to adjustment of first year students at University of Ibadan, followed by social skills. It can then be deduced that the higher the emotional intelligent a freshman is, the better the chances of adjusting to his new environment (school) and the better the chances of doing well in his study as he would be focus and committed to his academic goals and aspirations irrespective of the challenges and bottleneck that could come on his way.

### 6. Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

- There is need to address the issue of adjustment among fresh students in as this will determine how well they will cope and achieve their goals and aspiration in the university
- It was recommended that the school management should guide, inform, and advice students by giving good and fantastic orientation programs to the newly admitted

students as this would foster excellent adjustment to their new environment.

- Also, the service of an Emotional Intelligence coach can be employed by parents, school management and even the students, to learn assertion skills, setting boundaries and act of maintaining harmony. Students should also be encouraged to use the right emotional intelligence skills at different situation they encounter for their proper adjustment in their newly found environment

### References

- Abdullah, M.C., Elias, H., Mahyuddin, R., & Uli J (2009). "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Adjustment amongst First Year Students in a Malaysian Public University." *Int J Interdiscip Soc Sci.* 4(9):95–105,
- Adeyemo DA (2005). "The Buffering Effect of Emotional Intelligence on the Adjustment of Secondary School Students in Transition." *Electron J Res Educ Psychol.* 3(6):79–90.
- Carmeli, A. (2003).The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Work Attitudes, Behavior and Outcomes. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18, 788-813.
- Chen, X., Chen, H., Li, D. and Wang, L (2009), Mapping Barriers to Successful School Transitions in Comparative Perspective – Irish and Estonian Experiences. *TRAMES: A Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences.* 12 (62/57), 1, 51-72.
- Dean A. Haycock (2014). "Successful, Unsuccessful, and Other Types of Psychopaths". *Murderous Minds: Exploring the Criminal Psychopathic Brain: Neurological Imaging and the Manifestation of Evil.* Pegasus Books. ISBN 978-1-4804-4798-1
- Dickens, W.T. (2006). "Cognitive Ability" *The New Dictionary of Economics*, Steve Durlauf ed.
- Fernández-Abascal, E. G., & Martín-Díaz, M. D. (2015). Dimensions of emotional intelligence related to physical and mental health and to health behaviors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 1-14.
- Gaikward US (2015). "The Relation between Social Adjustment, Emotional Intelligence and Personality among College Students." *Indian J Heal Wellbeing.* 6(2):196–9.
- Hoerger, M., Chapman, B. P., Epstein, R. M., & Duberstein, P. R. (2012). Emotional intelligence: A theoretical framework for

- individual differences in affective forecasting. *Emotion*, 12(4), 716-725.
- Karbalaei, A 2012, "Critical thinking and academic achievement," *Íkala, revista de lenguaje y cultura*, 17(2), pp.121-128,
- Lenaghan, J. A., Buda, R., & Eisner, A. B. (2007). An Examination of the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Work and Family Conflict, *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 11 (1), 76-94.
- Mayer, J.D., DiPaolo, M., & Salovey, P. (1990). Perceiving affective content in ambiguous stimuli: A component of emotional intelligence. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 54 (3&4), 772-781.
- McInerney, D.M., Cheng, R.W.Y., Mok, M.M.C. and Lam, A.K.H.,(2012), Academic self concept and learning strategies: Direction of effect on student academic achievement," *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 23(3), pp.249-269
- Mehta, Sandhya .,Singh, Namrata. (2013). A Review paper on emotional intelligence: Models and relationship with other constructs. *International Journal of Management and Information Technology*. 4(3),342-353.
- Preston, S.D. & de Wall, F.B.M. (2002). "Empathy: its ultimate and proximate bases"(PDF). *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. 25 (1): 1–72.
- Punia S, Sangwan S (2011). "Emotional Intelligence and Social Adaptation of School Children." 2(2):83–7.
- Redorbit. (2008). Bushad ministration announces new requirements for no child left behind. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 44,(3): 152-170.
- Sandhya .,Singh, Namrata. (2013). A Review paper on emotional intelligence: Models and relationship with other constructs. *International Journal of Management and Information Technology*. 4(3), 342-353.
- Singh (2015). "Adjustment among Senior Secondary School Students in Relation To Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health." 6(12), 2015.
- Sulaiman SMA (2013). "Emotional Intelligence, Depression and Psychological Adjustment among UniversitySstudents in the Sultanate of Oman." *Int J Psychol Stud* [Internet]. 5(3):169–89.
- Tak HJ, Curlin FA, Yoon JD (2017). "Association of Intrinsic Motivating Factors and Markers of Physician Well-Being: A National Physician Survey". *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 32 (7): 739–746.