

Self Esteem, Motivation, Time Management and Academic Adjustment of Guidance and Counselling Undergraduate Students in the University of Uyo

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of self-esteem, motivation, and time management on the academic adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduates at the University of Uyo. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 849 registered Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Uyo as of the 2023/2024 academic session. Simple random sampling techniques were used in selecting 272 students for the study. Data was collected using a researcher-developed instrument named "Self-Esteem, Motivation, Time Management Questionnaire (SEMTMQ) and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (AAQ)." The instruments were subjected to face validation by three experts. The internal reliability coefficients of SEMTMQ and AAQ were .84 and .86, respectively, determined using Cronbach's alpha statistical analysis. The simple linear regression statistic was used to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that motivation and time management significantly

predict academic adjustment among students. The result also revealed that self-esteem does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students. It was recommended, among others, that counsellors should encourage students to undergo continuous professional development programmes that enhance their time management for effective integration of healthy practices in adjustment.

Keywords: Academic Adjustment, Guidance and Counselling For Students, Motivation, Self-Esteem, Time Management.

Introduction

Handling the shift from memorising facts to mastering the hidden curriculum of time, pressure, and intellectual independence is the true crucible of student life. This metamorphosis into an active architect of one's own learning defines the journey. Academic adjustment is a component of student wellbeing, serving as a fundamental tool for managing stress, maintaining healthy study habits, and achieving life satisfaction. Academic adjustment has traditionally relied on personal coping mechanisms, social support, and institutional accommodations. The increasing demands of academic and personal responsibilities have shifted focus towards the role of psychological factors in academic health. Integrating effective psychosocial factors can enhance emotional stability, reduce stress, and promote inclusivity (Ukaegbu and Obikoya, 2017). However, in many developing countries like Nigeria, the adoption of these constructive strategies among students remains inconsistent and relatively low. This gap underscores the need to examine the enabling factors that could improve students' capacity and willingness for better academic adjustment.

Etim *et al.* (2023) defined academic adjustment as the ability to cope with emotional challenges, adapt to changing circumstances, and maintain academic health. It encompasses practices such as stress management, emotional regulation, academic satisfaction, and overall life contentment. Undergraduate students, as key drivers of both academic and personal spheres, are expected to be at the forefront of this balance. Yet, many students face challenges ranging from academic personal conflict, inadequate social support, limited coping skills, and resistance to change (Bassey and Udoh, 2022). These barriers not only hinder the adjustment process but also undermine the potential benefits of a stable academic state. Therefore, developing and

strengthening psychosocial factors has become a vital strategy to foster the academic health of students in their dual roles.

According to Ukaegbu and Nnaji (2025), psychosocial factors are competencies that enable individuals to adapt to dynamic academic environments, solve complex interpersonal problems, utilise academic resources effectively, and personalise solutions for targeted needs. Self-esteem, motivation, and time management could be pivotal in enhancing students' ability to embrace, implement, and sustain academic health in a rapidly evolving educational landscape. By equipping students with psychosocial skills, institutions can foster a culture of continuous harmony, informed decision-making, and person-centred wellbeing. The psychosocial factors considered for this study are self-esteem, motivation and time management.

Self-esteem refers to the ability to perceive one's own worth, capabilities, and value within the academic context. In academic adjustment, self-esteem enables students to develop a positive self-concept, assert personal needs, and maintain emotional balance during conflicts. As noted by Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017), daily academic life generates vast amounts of stress; students must possess the psychological capacity to interpret this need accurately and use it to improve personal and academic practices. For example, Ekanem (2019) stated that by analysing feelings of inadequacy, a student can identify common stressors, adjust personal strategies, and provide targeted support to himself and his peers. This evidence-based approach enhances the effectiveness and relevance of adjustment and promotes a culture of continuous improvement. Moreover, self-esteem enhances transparency and accountability in academic life. When students base their decisions on self-worth, it reduces bias, promotes fairness, and builds trust in the academic process. Social tools such as group discussions, counselling, and peer networks provide analytics that help students identify patterns of distress, detect disparities in emotional load, and ensure consistency in well-being (Ntekim, 2021). However, without adequate self-awareness, students may misinterpret needs, make flawed decisions, or become overwhelmed by the volume of academic demands. Motivation is another crucial psychosocial factor.

Motivation refers to the internal and external factors that drive individuals to achieve their academic goals. In academic adjustment, motivation enables students to leverage their drive for real-time advice, formative feedback, and personalised learning pathways. Students with strong motivation can systematically address these challenges, troubleshoot academic issues, and innovate alternative solutions that maintain

academic integrity (Thomas, 2022). For instance, a student faced with overlapping academic and personal commitments may develop a shared motivational strategy or utilise academic networks. According to Peter (2023), in institutions where resource constraints and traditional roles often pose barriers to success, students with strong motivation can act as change agents who model best practices and mentor others. Time management is another crucial psychosocial factor.

Time management refers to the ability to plan and control how much time to spend on specific activities. In academic adjustment, time management enables students to design schedules that are flexible, student-centred, and responsive to individual academic trajectories (Akpan, 2020). For example, using digital platforms such as calendar apps, scheduled study sessions, or academic advisors, students can create differentiated study plans, offer varied learning formats, and provide individualised feedback based on academic profiles (Udoh, 2024). This approach not only accommodates students with different learning styles and abilities but also fosters inclusivity and equity in the academic process. In institutions characterised by busy schedules and diverse academic needs, time management skills are especially important for enhancing student engagement, motivation, and satisfaction. Time management tools that support personalisation enable students to monitor academic progress in real time, intervene promptly, and adjust study content and difficulty to suit individual needs (James, 2023). Students who are adept at personalising time management can also use formative academic data to design remedial or enrichment activities, thereby promoting mastery in academics and reducing failure rates. This holistic approach enhances the quality, effectiveness, and impact of academic adjustment in the modern era.

Academic crises may expose the vulnerabilities of traditional educational systems and accelerated digital learning, making the need for such psychosocial factors even more urgent. Many students were compelled to transition abruptly to new learning models and increased study time without adequate preparation or support. Those who possessed psychosocial skills were better able to adapt, experiment with new learning modes, and maintain academic continuity. There is a growing recognition that effective psychosocial factors are not a temporary fix but a permanent feature of a healthy academic life. It is based on this background that the researchers were motivated to carry out a study to determine how psychosocial factors predict academic adjustment of guidance and counselling undergraduate students at the University of Uyo.

Statement of the Problem

Academic adjustment, which is critical for reducing stress and fostering engagement, is a growing challenge for university students in Nigeria. This is particularly paradoxical for undergraduate students in Guidance and Counselling, who are being trained to support the psychosocial well-being of others. Despite their field of study, these students often struggle to apply effective psychosocial strategies such as motivation, time management, and data-driven coping to their own academic lives. Instead, many rely on traditional, inefficient methods, leaving them unprepared for the demands of modern academia.

This failure to adjust is compounded by significant barriers, including inadequate institutional support, poor academic literacy, and infrastructural deficiencies like unreliable lecture schedules. While government policies and counselling services have been introduced, their implementation is inconsistent and lacks follow-up. Consequently, the academic adjustment and subsequent life outcomes of these future counsellors are compromised. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to determine the extent to which psychosocial factors predict the academic adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduates at the University of Uyo.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which psychosocial factors predict the academic adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduates at the University of Uyo. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to determine:

- I. To what extent does self-esteem predict academic adjustment among students?
- ii. To what extent does motivation predict academic adjustment among students?
- iii. To what extent does time management predict academic adjustment among students?

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

- i. To what extent does self-esteem predict academic adjustment among students?
- ii. To what extent does motivation predict academic adjustment among students?
- iii. To what extent does time management predict academic adjustment among students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for this study and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance

- i. Self-esteem does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students.
- ii. Motivation does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students.
- iii. Time management does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students.

Scope of the Study

The study investigated how psychosocial factors predict academic adjustment of guidance and counselling undergraduate students at the University of Uyo. Psychosocial factors investigated in this study were self-esteem, motivation, and time management, and they served as the independent variables, while academic adjustment served as the dependent variable. Only registered guidance and counselling undergraduate students at the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, were studied.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1986)

Social Cognitive Theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1986. The theory, particularly as applied to academic studies, focuses on the beliefs and expectations that individuals hold about their capabilities and how these evaluations impact behaviour and emotional wellbeing. In the context of students, this theory examines the demanding roles they are expected to play within the institution, such as learner and peer, alongside their high-pressure personal role in the social sector. The theory posits that conflict and psychological distress can arise when there are perceived inefficiencies, where the contributions of one role outweigh the benefits, or when the cumulative demands of all roles become overwhelming.

The Social Cognitive Theory was highly relevant to the present study because for students, the Social Cognitive Theory helps clarify how the expectations linked to their academic roles, such as studying and managing assignments, often clash with the demands of their personal roles, which may include part-time jobs, family responsibilities, and social activities. When a student is pressured to excel simultaneously in both the academic and personal domains, the resulting role strain can lead to significant emotional exhaustion, stress, and poor academic adjustment.

Understanding these processes provides a critical framework for this study. It suggests that effective psychosocial factors such as maintaining self-esteem, enhancing motivation, and practising time management are essential mechanisms for managing and reconciling these competing role demands.

Empirical Studies

Edet and Umoh (2023) conducted a study titled "Influence of Motivation and Time Management on Academic Adjustment of Students in Nigerian Universities." The study was carried out in six major universities across the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population for the study comprised all registered students across the selected universities, totaling approximately 4,000 students. From this population, a sample of 400 students was drawn using stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation across university types and academic levels. The researchers developed a structured questionnaire titled "Students' Motivation and Time Management Questionnaire" (SMTMQ). The instrument was validated through expert review by three specialists in educational psychology and counseling from two Nigerian universities. The reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.85 for motivation, 0.83 for time management, and 0.89 for academic adjustment through using Cronbach's Alpha. Data collected from the main study were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that motivation and time management had a statistically significant joint influence on the academic adjustment among students in universities.

In a study by Isong and Akpan (2022) titled "Self-Esteem as a Predictor of Academic Adjustment among Students in Southern Nigeria," the researchers investigated the extent to which self-esteem among students influences their academic adjustment. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population consisted of all full-time registered students in the selected universities, which totaled about 2,500 students across various departments. From this population, a sample of 280 students was drawn using a proportionate stratified random sampling technique to ensure that different academic disciplines and levels were adequately represented. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment Scale" (SEAAS), structured into two major sections. To ensure content and construct validity, the instrument was reviewed by three experts in educational studies and psychology from Nigerian universities. Reliability of the instrument was 0.81 for the self-esteem items and 0.86 for the academic adjustment section. This coefficient was determined using Cronbach's alpha. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson

product moment correlation and simple linear regression statistics. The results showed no significant correlation between self-esteem and academic adjustment.

Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between psychosocial factors and academic adjustment of first-year university undergraduates in Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1,500 first-year students in five public universities in Rivers State. The multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 300 students used for the study. Two researcher-made instruments entitled "Psycho Social Factors Questionnaire" (PSFQ) and "Academic Adjustment Questionnaire for Undergraduate Students" (AAQUS) were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated, while the internal consistency reliability of the instruments was established, and reliability coefficients of 0.80 and 0.78 were obtained for PSFQ and AAQUS, respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics were used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between motivation, time management, and academic adjustment of first-year university undergraduates in Rivers State.

Ukaegbu and Nnaji (2025) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in Etche LGA of Rivers State. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of 1,200 secondary school students in ten public schools in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. The multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample of 250 students used for the study. Two researcher-made instruments entitled "Social Adjustment Strategies Questionnaire" (SASQ) and "Academic Achievement Questionnaire for Secondary School Students" (AAQSSS) were used for data collection. The instruments were face validated, while the internal consistency reliability of the instruments was established, and reliability coefficients of 0.79 and 0.77 were obtained for SASQ and AAQSSS, respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics were used to answer the research questions and also test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between social adjustment strategies and academic achievement of secondary school students in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Given that existing studies were conducted in other local government areas, this research aims to fill a contextual gap by examining how self-esteem, motivation, and time management influence the academic adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduates at the University of Uyo.

Research Method

Research Design

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. This design is important and should be used in any investigation that aims to predict a criterion variable using known predictor variables (Udoh, 2018). The design was considered appropriate since the researcher is interested in determining how psychosocial factors influence academic adjustment among students.

Population of the Study

The population consisted of 849 undergraduate students enrolled in the Guidance and Counselling programme at the University of Uyo for the 2023/2024 academic session.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 272 students, determined using the Taro Yamane formula for the study. This technique ensured that every eligible student had an equal opportunity to be selected, thereby enhancing the objectivity and generalisability of the study's findings.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected using a researcher-developed instrument named "Self Esteem, Motivation, Time Management Questionnaire (SEMTMQ) and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (AAQ)". The SEMTMQ had 15 items on psychosocial factors. Five items were included for each of the following constructs: self-esteem, motivation, and time management. The AAQ consisted of 10 items assessing academic adjustment. The instrument was constructed using a four-point rating scale: strongly agree (SA) = 4 points, agree (A) = 3 points, disagree (D) = 2 points, and strongly disagree (SD) = 1 point.

Validation of the Instrument

The instruments underwent face validation by three experts: one from the Department of Guidance and Counselling and two from the Measurement and Evaluation section of

the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instruments was assessed by selecting a random sample of 25 students from the population who were not included in the study sample. These students were asked to respond to the instrument. The data collected was analysed using Cronbach's alpha statistics to evaluate the internal consistency of the instruments. The results indicated that the instruments were reliable for the study, with reliability coefficients of 0.84 for the SEMTMQ and 0.86 for the AAQ.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed using simple linear regression statistics. The R and R-square values (coefficients) of simple linear regression statistics were used to answer the research questions based on the interpretation scale of + or - 1, while the null hypotheses were tested using the sig. value at the 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of self esteem and academic adjustment among students (n= 272)

Variables	R	R square	Extent of Relationship	Adjusted R square	Remarks
Self esteem	0.140	0.020	2.0%	0.019	Very Low Extent
Academic adjustment					

Source: Researcher's survey (2025)

In Table 1, the R value of 0.140 indicates a positive and very low extent of prediction, while the R-squared value of 0.020, which is the coefficient of determination, shows the extent to which self-esteem predicts academic adjustment among students. In addition, 2.0% variance in academic adjustment is accounted for by self-esteem. This means that the extent to which self-esteem predicts academic adjustment among students is very low.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of motivation and academic adjustment among students (n= 272)

Variables	R	R square	Extent of Relationship	Adjusted R square	Remarks
Motivation	0.710	0.504	50.4%	0.503	High Extent
Academic adjustment					

Source: Researcher's survey (2025)

In Table 2, R-squared is 0.504. The R value of 0.710 indicates a positive and high extent of prediction, while the R-squared value of 0.504, which is the coefficient of determination, shows the extent to which motivation predicts academic adjustment among students. In addition, 50.4% variance in academic adjustment is accounted for by motivation. This means that the extent to which motivation predicts academic adjustment among students is high.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of time management and academic adjustment among students (n= 272)

Variables	R	R square	Extent of Relationship	Adjusted R square	Remarks
Time management	0.830	0.689	68.9%	0.688	Very High Extent
Academic adjustment					

Source: Researcher's survey (2025)

In Table 3, the R value of 0.830 indicates a positive and very high extent of prediction, while the R-squared value of 0.689, which is the coefficient of determination, shows the extent to which time management predicts academic adjustment among students. In addition, 68.9% variance in academic adjustment is accounted for by time management. This means that the extent to which time management predicts academic adjustment among students is very high.

Table 4: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Self esteem and academic adjustment among students

Variables	Sources of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	MS	Sig.	Decision at p<.05
Self esteem	Regression	10.105	1	10.105	.085	Retain H01
Academic adjustment	Residual	340.438	271	1.035		

Source: Researcher's survey (2025)

The results of Table 4 show that the sig. value of .085 is greater than the .05 level of significance, with 1 and 271 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that "Self-esteem does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students" was accepted. This means that self-esteem does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students.

Table 5: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Motivation and academic adjustment among students

Variables	Sources of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	MS	Sig.	Decision at p<.05
Motivation	Regression	180.315	1	180.315	.000*	Reject H02
Academic adjustment	Residual	177.228	271	0.539		

*= Significant at .05 alpha level. Source: Researcher's survey (2025)

The results of Table 5 show that the sig. value of .000 is less than the .05 level of significance, with 1 and 271 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that "Motivation does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students" was rejected. This means that motivation significantly predicts academic adjustment among students.

Table 6: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for Time management and academic adjustment among students

Variables	Sources of Variation	Sum of Square	Df	MS	Sig.	Decision at p<.05
Time management	Regression	250.442	1	250.442	.000*	Reject H03
Academic adjustment	Residual	102.101	271	0.310		

*= Significant at .05 alpha level. Source: Researcher's survey (2025)

The results of Table 6 show that the sig. value of .000 is less than the .05 level of significance, with 1 and 271 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that "time management does not significantly predict academic adjustment among students" was rejected. This means that time management significantly predicts academic adjustment among students.

Discussion of Findings

Self-Esteem and Academic Adjustment

The findings for research question one indicated that self-esteem has a very low influence on students' academic adjustment. Similarly, the result of hypothesis one showed that self-esteem does not significantly affect academic adjustment among students. This outcome may be due to students' limited access to psychological support systems that promote self-awareness or institutional policies which do not encourage flexible coping strategies. Even when students possess the ability to reflect on personal experiences, they may still be constrained by rigid academic schedules, heavy workloads, or insufficient training in emotional regulation. These factors could hinder the effective use of self-esteem in promoting academic adjustment.

However, the findings of this study contradict those of Isong and Akpan (2022), who reported a significant positive relationship between self-esteem and academic adjustment.

Motivation and Academic Adjustment

The answer to research question two revealed that motivation highly influences academic adjustment among students. The result of hypothesis two revealed that motivation significantly influences academic adjustment among students. This finding could be attributed to the fact that motivation equips students with the ability to navigate the complexities and challenges that come with managing academic and personal life. With strong motivation abilities, students can effectively troubleshoot academic issues, adapt to new educational demands, and design innovative coping strategies that align with personal needs. This competence fosters confidence and flexibility, enabling students to integrate healthy practices more seamlessly into their daily lives, thereby enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness in managing academic health. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Edet and Umoh (2023), who reported that motivation had a statistically significant joint influence on the academic adjustment among students in universities.

Time Management and Academic Adjustment

The answer to research question three revealed that time management very highly influences academic adjustment among students. The result of hypothesis three revealed that time management significantly influences academic adjustment among students. This finding could be attributed to the fact that time management enables students to collect, analyse, and interpret academic tasks effectively, which enhances their ability to make informed decisions during stress. With this skill, students are more likely to adopt healthy practices that offer real-time planning, shared scheduling, and personalised feedback. As a result, their adjustment practices become more objective, efficient, and tailored to individual personal needs, thereby advancing the academic adjustment of students in public universities. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Ukaegbu and Obikoya (2017), who reported that there is a significant positive relationship between time management and academic adjustment of first-year university undergraduates.

Conclusion

In all, while psychosocial factors like motivation and time management significantly enhance academic adjustment, this study finds that a student's self-esteem does not play a statistically significant role.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Counsellors should encourage students to undergo continuous professional development programmes that enhance their time management for effective integration of healthy practices in adjustment.
- ii. University management should prioritise investment in student support programmes and provide targeted training that aligns with motivational competencies.
- iii. Counsellors should guide students on how to translate their self-esteem into academic adjustment practices through mentorship and exposure to adaptable psychological platforms.

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Appendix

Self Esteem, Motivation, Time Management Questionnaire (SEMTMQ)

Instruction

Please tick (✓) against the items as applicable to you using the following key:

SA – Strongly Agree, **A** – Agree, **D** – Disagree **SD** – Strongly Disagree

S/N	Self-Esteem	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I believe I am a person of worth, equal to others.				
2.	I do not feel confident in my abilities to succeed in my studies.				
3.	I am not able to handle criticism without feeling personally attacked.				
4.	I generally feel good about myself.				
5.	I avoid comparing myself to other students.				
	Motivation				
6.	I have a strong desire to earn a degree.				
7.	I do not find my course material interesting.				
8.	I set clear academic goals for myself.				
9.	I am not willing to work hard for my academic success.				
10.	I see the value in what I am learning for my future career.				
	Time Management				
11.	I create a schedule to manage my study time effectively.				
12.	I do not usually finish my assignments before the deadline.				
13.	I do not avoid procrastinating on important academic tasks.				
14.	I set priorities for my daily academic activities.				
15.	I balance my academic work.				



Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (AAQ)

	Academic Adjustment	SA	A	D	SD
1.	I have adapted well to the teaching methods at my university.				
2.	I am not satisfied with my academic performance.				
3.	I can cope with the stress of my academic workload.				
4.	I feel a sense of belonging in my academic department.				
5.	I have not developed effective study habits for my courses.				
6.	I am comfortable participating in class discussions.				
7.	I do not understand the academic expectations of my lecturers.				
8.	I can easily access the academic resources I need.				
9.	I feel motivated to put in my best effort academically.				
10.	I have successfully adjusted to the overall university environment.				