Socio-Emotional Learning and Academic Adjustment of Fresh Undergraduate Students in the University of Uyo, Uyo

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Abstract

This research work was designed to determine the relationship between socioemotional learning and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Aspects of socioemotional learning isolated for the study included self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Based on these, five specific objectives were outlined to guide the study. Five research questions were raised and answered in the study while five null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted the correlational research design. The study area was the University of Uyo. The population of this study comprised all 17,550 fresh undergraduate students at the University of Uyo during the 2024 academic year. From this population, a sample of 390 students were selected through the multi-stage random sampling process to participate in the study. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formular. The instrument for data collection was the researcher made questionnaire tagged: Socioemotional Learning and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education. The instrument had a reliability index of .83 Cronbach's Alpha which indicated a high level of internal consistency. Findings from data analyses carried out in this study indicated that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills had significant relationships with academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students. It was also found that responsible decision making had no significant relationship with the academic adjustment of the students. Based on these findings, it was recommended that, among others, the university should make provisions to foster the academic adjustment of these fresh students through orientation programmes and carefully curated social activities.

Keywords: Socioemotional Learning; Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills, Responsible Decision Making; Academic Adjustment

Introduction

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2020). SEL encompasses five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and

responsible decision-making. These competencies are critical as they equip students with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of life both within and outside the classroom.

Self-awareness involves the ability to accurately recognize one's emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behaviour. It includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism (Durlak et al., 2015). Self-management involves the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations. It includes managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself to set and achieve goals (Zins and Elias, 2007). Social awareness entails the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. It also involves understanding social and ethical norms for behaviour and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports (Jones and Bouffard, 2012). Relationship skills involves the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. It includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed (CASEL, 2020). Responsible decision-making involves making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behaviour. It includes considering the well-being of oneself and others, recognizing the consequences of various actions, and making decisions based on this evaluation (Elias, 2016).

This study assumes that these socio-emotional learning (SEL) variables could play a crucial role in the academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students, particularly given the significant transitions and challenges they face. For instance, students with strong self-awareness are better equipped to identify their strengths and weaknesses, which helps them set realistic goals and pursue them effectively. As indicated by Adeyemo (2017), they are also more likely to seek help when needed, engage in self-reflection, and adjust their strategies to improve academic performance. Conversely, a deficiency in self-awareness can lead to a lack of understanding of one's own learning needs and emotional responses. Students may struggle to identify when they are overwhelmed or stressed, leading to poor stress management and decreased academic performance. Ogunyemi (2014) indicated that without self-awareness, students might not recognize the need to seek help or resources, which can hinder their ability to adapt to the demands of university life. Moreover, Jones and Bouffard (2021) suggested that students lacking self-

awareness may experience heightened stress, anxiety, and confusion, which can negatively affect their academic performance and overall adjustment.

In the aspect of self-management, Taylor et al. (2017) indicated that students who have competence in self-management are resilient in the face of setbacks and can cope with academic pressures without becoming overwhelmed. Conversely, students who are deficient in self-management may struggle with procrastination, poor time management, and inability to cope with stress. They may find it challenging to stay organized and prioritize tasks, leading to missed deadlines and subpar academic performance. As noted by Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2018), the resulting emotional outbursts or constant stress can disrupt their study routines and negatively impact their mental health. Furthermore, those with poor self-management may face academic difficulties, increased stress levels, and the potential decline in mental health may hinder their overall academic adjustment (Durlak et al., 2015).

Competence in social awareness can facilitate positive relationships with peers and lecturers, enabling the students to engage in collaborative learning, and navigate the social aspects of university life effectively (Elias, 2016). A lack of social awareness can result in difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships. Students may struggle with group work, misunderstand social cues, or feel isolated. Oluwatayo and Adeleke (2019) suggested that this can lead to feelings of loneliness, reduced motivation, and disengagement from the academic community. Moreover, students lacking social awareness may feel isolated and unsupported, making it difficult to adapt to the university environment and succeed academically (Weissberg et al., 2015).

Students proficient in relationship skills can effectively collaborate with peers, seek and offer help, and build a supportive social network (Zins and Elias, 2017). Conversely, deficiencies in these skills can lead to conflicts, misunderstandings, and difficulties in group work or social interactions. Students may find it challenging to communicate their needs, resolve conflicts, or build trust with others, resulting in strained relationships and a lack of support. Moreover, students with poor relationship skills may experience social and academic isolation, making it harder to adjust to university life and succeed.

Finally, Weissberg et al. (2015) indicated that responsible decision-making competence aids students evaluate the consequences of their actions, consider the well-being of themselves and others, and make informed decisions that support their academic and personal goals. Students

lacking in responsible decision-making may engage in risky behaviours, make impulsive choices, or fail to consider the long-term consequences of their actions. As noted by Elias (2016), this can lead to academic misconduct, poor academic choices, and negative social interactions. This poor decision-making ability can also lead to academic and social problems, hindering a student's ability to adjust and thrive in the university environment (Jones and Bouffard, 2021).

It is needful to keep in mind that academic adjustment within the purview of this study describes how well students adapt to the various academic demands of their educational environment, including managing their workload, developing effective study habits, interacting with faculty and peers, and navigating the administrative processes of their institution. Proper academic adjustment is crucial for student success, retention, and overall well-being.

For fresh undergraduate students, particularly those entering the university environment for the first time, the transition can be challenging. This period of adjustment is often marked by significant changes, including increased academic demands, greater independence, and the need to form new social connections. SEL provides students with the necessary tools to navigate these challenges effectively. According to Taylor et al. (2017), students who engage in SEL programs demonstrate better academic performance, improved attitudes and behaviours, and reduced emotional distress. These programs help students develop resilience, adaptability, and a growth mindset, all of which are essential for academic success.

Moreover, public universities in Nigeria present a unique set of challenges for fresh undergraduate students. These institutions are often characterized by large class sizes, limited resources, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and frequent disruptions due to strikes and other administrative issues. These factors can create a stressful and overwhelming environment for new students, making academic adjustment particularly challenging.

Additionally, the transition from secondary school to university represents a significant shift in the academic environment. Secondary school education in Nigeria is typically structured and closely monitored, with teachers providing substantial guidance and support. In contrast, university education demands a higher level of independence and self-regulation. Students are expected to manage their time effectively, seek out resources, and navigate the complexities of university administration on their own (Okebukola, 2015).

Fresh undergraduate students have reasons for academic adjustment. First and foremost, university education often requires a more rigorous approach to studying and learning. Oluwatayo and Adeleke (2019) suggested that students must develop effective study habits, critical thinking skills, and the ability to engage deeply with complex material. Without proper adjustment, students may struggle to meet these demands, leading to poor academic performance and increased stress. Secondly, unlike secondary school, where teachers provide structured guidance, university students must take responsibility for their learning. This includes managing their time, setting goals, and seeking out resources independently. Adeyemo (2017) earlier indicated that SEL can help students develop the self-management skills necessary for this level of autonomy. Additionally, given that forming new social connections is a crucial aspect of the university experience. Positive relationships with peers and faculty can provide support, enhance the learning experience, and contribute to a sense of belonging. In this aspect, Ogundokun and Adeyemo, 2018) had earlier indicated that SEL programs that emphasize social awareness and relationship skills can facilitate this process. Lastly, university administration can be complex and bureaucratic, requiring students to navigate various processes and procedures. Effective decision-making skills, developed through SEL, can help students manage these administrative challenges more efficiently.

Theoretical Framework

Chickering's Theory of Student Development provides the theoretical framework for this study. Often referred to as Chickering's Seven Vectors, the theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding student growth during college years. The theory identifies seven key vectors of development namely, developing competence, managing emotions, moving through autonomy toward interdependence, developing mature interpersonal relationships, establishing identity, developing purpose, and developing integrity. Each vector represents a stage of personal growth, emphasizing intellectual, emotional, and social aspects. Developing competence involves mastering academic, physical, and interpersonal skills. Managing emotions focuses on recognizing and expressing emotions appropriately. Moving through autonomy toward interdependence emphasizes self-sufficiency while valuing collaboration. Developing mature interpersonal relationships centres on forming healthy relationships and tolerance for differences. Establishing identity involves achieving a stable sense of self. Developing purpose includes setting clear goals

and aspirations. Developing integrity aligns behaviour with values (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). This theory is relevant to the present study as it indicates that students' academic adjustment is an important aspect of their growth which can be impacted by various factors. The present study thus examines how socioemotional learning could enhance this growth and adjustment.

Empirical Framework

Several empirical studies have also been carried out to explain the correlation between socioemotional learning and various student outcomes. Adeyemo (2017) examined the impact of socioemotional learning on the academic adjustment of secondary school students in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study utilized a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The findings indicated a significant positive correlation between SEL and students' academic adjustment. Students who exhibited higher levels of emotional intelligence and better interpersonal skills were more likely to adapt effectively to academic demands and social environments. Adeyemo concluded that integrating SEL into the curriculum could enhance students' academic performance and overall well-being.

Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2018) studied the relationship between emotional intelligence, a core component of SEL, and academic achievement among university students in Nigeria. Using a sample of 200 undergraduates, the researchers employed standardized tests to measure emotional intelligence and academic performance. The results showed a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and academic success. Students with higher emotional intelligence scores were better at managing stress, maintaining focus, and interacting positively with peers and instructors, which facilitated their academic adjustment.

Oluwatayo and Adeleke (2019) investigated the role of SEL in facilitating student adjustment in higher education institutions in Nigeria. The study used a cross-sectional survey design with 300 participants from three public universities. The researchers found that students with well-developed SEL skills reported higher levels of academic motivation, better time management, and improved problem-solving abilities. These factors contributed significantly to their academic adjustment, suggesting that SEL competencies are critical for thriving in the university environment.

Omoniyi (2016) examined the influence of SEL on school readiness and academic success among primary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. The study used a longitudinal design, tracking

students' progress over three years. The findings revealed that students with higher SEL skills demonstrated better academic performance, higher levels of school engagement, and lower rates of behavioural problems. Omoniyi emphasized the importance of early SEL interventions to support long-term academic adjustment and success.

Ogunyemi (2014) examined the relationship between SEL and the development of 21st-century skills among Nigerian secondary school students. Using a sample of 250 students, the study employed a combination of surveys and focus group discussions. The results indicated that students with strong SEL skills were more adept at critical thinking, collaboration, and effective communication. These skills, in turn, facilitated their academic adjustment by enabling them to navigate complex learning environments and engage actively in their education.

Bassey (2021) studied the impact of teacher training in SEL on students' academic adjustment in Nigerian public schools. The research involved 150 teachers who received SEL training and their 1,500 students. The study found that students taught by SEL-trained teachers showed significant improvements in academic performance, classroom behaviour, and social interactions. The findings highlighted the importance of teacher SEL competencies in creating supportive learning environments that promote students' academic adjustment.

Durlak et al. (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of school-based SEL interventions across various countries, including the United States. The meta-analysis reviewed 213 studies involving over 270,000 students. The findings demonstrated that SEL programs significantly improved students' social-emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour, and academic performance. The study concluded that SEL is a powerful tool for enhancing students' academic adjustment and overall development, emphasizing the need for its integration into educational systems worldwide.

Taylor et al. (2017) conducted a meta-analysis focused on the long-term effects of SEL interventions on students' academic adjustment. The study reviewed 82 SEL programs implemented in different countries and followed up with participants over time. The results showed that students who participated in SEL programs maintained their academic and social-emotional gains over time, demonstrating better adjustment in academic settings. The study highlighted the enduring benefits of SEL, suggesting that early and sustained interventions can have lasting positive effects on students' academic trajectories.

Statement of Problem

Each year, the University of Uyo, many other public universities in Nigeria admits tens of thousands of adolescents into various undergraduate programmes. Often, these students are leaving home for the first time and have to grapple with the stress of the university environment without the guidance of parents and guardians. Research reveals that most of these students fail to adjust adequately during their fresher years leading to various negative academic and psychological outcomes. If this trend is not addressed quickly, the university may inadvertently become a slaughter ground for these youngsters, murdering them off mentally and academically before they could find their foothold for higher learning. This study assumes that socioemotional learning, if mastered could rescue these students from this predicament and give them the boost they need for their academic adjustment. However, for educational psychologists to develop effective socioemotional learning intervention programmes, it is needful to determine the correlation between the five facets of socioemotional learning and academic adjustment of students. To this end, the problem for this study is to determine the correlation between socioemotional variables and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the university of Uyo, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between socio-emotional learning and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, Uyo. The specific objectives include:

1. To determine the relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
2. To determine the relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
3. To determine the relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
4. To determine the relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.
5. To determine the relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered in this work:

1. What is the relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?
2. What is the relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?
3. What is the relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?
4. What is the relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?
5. What is the relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?

Research Hypotheses

H_0 1. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

H_0 2. There is no significant relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

H_0 3. There is no significant relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

H_0 4. There is no significant relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

H_0 5. There is no significant relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Research Significance

This study would be of immense significance to academic researchers, educational psychologists, undergraduate students, and the university administration. Academic researchers would benefit immensely from the findings of this study when it is published as it would provide them with empirical data for their studies. It would also allow them determine what gaps in literature exists for their work to fill. Besides the empirical support this study would provide to future research works, the findings of this study would also be of immense benefit to researchers as it would provide further insights into the subject of socioemotional learning and academic adjustment by adding to existing theoretical and conceptual literature in this area.

Educational psychologists would also find this work beneficial in various ways. One way they would benefit from this work is that they would be able to identify how socioemotional learning impacts students' academic adjustment, particularly fresh undergraduate students. Another way is that it will add to their current understanding of the concept of socioemotional learning and academic adjustment. This deepened understanding would undoubtedly guide educational psychologists on areas that merit new studies on the subject and facilitate appropriate interventions to foster students' academic adjustment.

Undergraduate students, especially the new ones, would also benefit from the findings of this study, both directly and indirectly. Direct benefits would include having a better understanding of how various aspects of socioemotional learning impacts their academic adjustment. This understanding would facilitate self-improvement in relevant areas to aid their overall adjustment

and academic success. Indirectly, the students would also benefit as the recommendations from this study when implemented by various stakeholders would facilitate their academic adjustment.

The university administration would also benefit from the findings of this study when it is made public. The study would recommend appropriate intervention programmes for fresh undergraduate students to enhance their socioemotional learning in the university environment and fast-track their academic adjustment. The university administration would also benefit from the findings of this study in that it would provide them with a scientific explanation on the factors that impact on students' academic adjustment. With this insight the university administration would be better positioned to intervene and assist these students adjust adequately for better academic outcomes.

Design of the Study

The correlational research design was adopted for this study. According to Hassan (2022), correlational research investigates the relationships between two or more measurable variables to determine if there is a relationship between these variables and the nature or quality of such relationship. In view of the foregoing, this design was deemed appropriate for the current study as the correlational design aligned with the objectives of this study.

Area of the Study

This study was carried out in the University of Uyo, Uyo. The University of Uyo, also known as UNIUYO, is a federal university located in Uyo, the capital city of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Before its establishment, the university operated as a campus of the University of Cross River State (now the University of Calabar). When Akwa Ibom State was created in 1987, the campus transformed into an autonomous university known as the University of Uyo. The university presently has 14 faculties across its three campuses namely Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Faculty of Business Administration, Faculty of Clinical Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, and the Faculty of Vocational Education, Library and Information Science (https://uniuyo.edu.ng/).

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Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all fresh undergraduate students in the university of Uyo during the 2023/2024 academic session. According to Etim (2024), there were a total of 17,550 fresh undergraduate students matriculated into the University of Uyo during this period.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 390 fresh undergraduate students was selected to participate in the study. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane formular. The sample selection was done using the muti-stage random sampling method. According to Frost (2023), this method of sample selection allowed the participants an equal opportunity of being selected to participate in the study and ensured that the sample was representative of the main population from which it was drawn.

Instrumentation

The researcher-made questionnaire entitled "Socioemotional Learning and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire" (SELAAQ) was used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire has Section A and Section B. Section A has 20 items assessing the five aspects of socioemotional learning that constitute the independent variables of this study while Section B has 10 items adopted from the Academic Adjustment Scale developed by Anderson et al. (2016). The questionnaire uses the 4-point response scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Scoring of the items would be done using the weights for the scales with Strongly Agree given 4 points, Agree - 3 points, Disagree - 2 points, and Strongly Disagree - 1 point. Any negatively worded item would be reverse-scored accordingly.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Validation of the research instrument was done by three experts. One of the experts was from Measurement and Evaluation unit while two of them were from Educational Psychology unit in the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Uyo. The experts vetted the instrument to ascertain that the items were carefully developed in line with the objectives of the study and that they were simple enough to understand by the respondents. All their recommendations were incorporated in the final version of the instrument.

The reliability of the research instrument was established by testing the instrument for internal consistency. This was done by administering 30 copies of the validated questionnaire to undergraduate students from a department which did was not included in the main study. The data

collected from this exercise was analysed using Cronbach's Alpha statistic. The analysis yielded an overall reliability coefficient of .83 Cronbach's Alpha. This reliability index was adequate for the instrument to be used in the study.

Method of Data Collection

Data collection was carried by the researcher in person through direct contact with the respondents at their various lecture venues. At each of the lecture venues, the researcher first solicited the assistance of the course lecturer to use a few minutes towards the end of the lecture to conduct random sampling and administer the questionnaire. Some lecturers were willing to stay in class while the students were sampled to fill out the questionnaire and only left after all those taking part in the study had returned their questionnaire. The respondents were allowed adequate time to fill out and return the questionnaire to minimise attrition. Also, sufficient guidance was given to ensure that the questionnaire was properly filled out without mistakes.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected in this study was analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic. The correlation coefficients were used to answer the research questions while the p-values were used in testing the null hypotheses. All data processing and analysis was done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to ensure accuracy of the results and minimise the chances for human errors.

Decision Rule

The decision rule which guided the analyses of the research questions was based on the Pearson correlation coefficients obtained from the data analysis. The Pearson correlation coefficient, often denoted as r, is a measure of the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. According to Schober et al. (2018), the coefficient should be interpreted thus:

i.	0.9 to 1.0 (or -0.9 to -1.0)	Very strong positive (or negative) correlation.
ii.	0.7 to 0.9 (or -0.7 to -0.9)	Strong positive (or negative) correlation.
iii.	0.5 to 0.7 (or -0.5 to -0.7)	Moderate positive (or negative) correlation.
iv.	0.3 to 0.5 (or -0.3 to -0.5)	Weak positive (or negative) correlation.
v.	0.1 to 0.3 (or -0.1 to -0.3)	Very weak positive (or negative) correlation.
vi.	0.0 to 0.1 (or -0.0 to -0.1)	No or negligible correlation.

In testing the null hypotheses in the study, the calculated p-value of the correlation statistic was the basis for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses. Thus, when the p-value was less than or equal to .05 level, the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise the null hypothesis was retained.

Results

Research question 1: What is the relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?

Table 1: Relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Self-awareness
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.231
	N	390	390
Self-awareness	Pearson Correlation	.231	1
	N	390	390

The summary of statistical analysis of the research data presented in Table 1 answers the first research question. It can be observed that the correlation between academic adjustment and self-awareness of the students yielded a correlation coefficient of .231. This suggests that self-awareness has a very weak positive correlation with the academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Research question 2: What is the relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?

Table 2: Relationship between self-management and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Self-management
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.703
	N	390	390
Self-management	Pearson Correlation	.703	1
	N	390	390

In Table 2, the summary of statistical analysis of the research data to answer the second research question is presented. It can be observed that the correlation between academic adjustment and self-management among the students yielded a correlation coefficient of .703. This

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indicates that a strong positive relationship exists between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Research question 3: What is the relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?

Table 3: Relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Social Awareness
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.609
	N	390	390
Social Awareness	Pearson Correlation	-.609	1
	N	390	390

The summary of statistical analysis of the research data presented in Table 3 answers the third research question in this research work. It would be noted in the table that the correlation between academic adjustment and social awareness of the students yielded a coefficient of -.609. This suggests that social awareness had a moderate negative correlation with the academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Research question 4: What is the relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?

Table 4: Correlation between relationship skills and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Relationship Skills
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.482
	N	390	390
Relationship Skills	Pearson Correlation	.482	1
	N	390	390

In Table 4, the summary of statistical analysis of the data collected to answer the fourth research question is presented. It would be observed in the table that the correlation between academic adjustment and relationship skills of the students yielded a correlation coefficient of -.482. This answers the fourth research question by indicating that a weak positive relationship exists between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

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Research question 5: What is the relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo?

Table 5: Relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Responsible Decision Making
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	-.024
	N	390	390
Responsible Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	-.024	1
	N	390	390

The summary of statistical analysis of the research data presented in Table 5 answers the fifth research question in this study. It could be observed in the table that the correlation between academic adjustment and responsible decision making yielded a correlation coefficient of -.024. This suggests that responsible decision making has a very weak negative correlation with the academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Hypotheses Testing

H_0 1. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Table 6: Test for significant relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Self-awareness
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.231
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001*
	N	390	390
Self-awareness	Pearson Correlation	.231	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001*	
	N	390	390

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data presented in Table 6 gives a summary of the test for significance of the PPMC between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. The p-value (.001) of the correlation analysis is less than the alpha value (.05) at 389 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in

the University of Uyo was rejected. From the result presented in Table 6, it is evident that self-awareness has a significant relationship with academic adjustment of the sample in this study.

H_0 2. There is no significant relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Table 7: Test for significant relationship between self-management and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Self-management
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.703
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000*
	N	390	390
Self-management	Pearson Correlation	.703	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*	
	N	390	390

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data presented in Table 7 gives a summary of the test for significance of the PPMC between self-awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. The p-value (.000) of the correlation analysis is less than the alpha value (.05) at 389 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo was rejected. From the result presented in Table 7, it is evident that self-management has a significant relationship with academic adjustment of the students.

H_0 3. There is no significant relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Table 8: Test for significant relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Social Awareness
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.609
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000*
	N	390	390
Social Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.609	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000*	
	N	390	390

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*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The summary of the correlation analysis presented in Table 8 shows that the p-value (.000) of the correlation analysis is less than the alpha value (.05) at 389 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo was rejected. The result of data analysis presented in Table 8 gives empirical evidence that a significant relationship exists between social awareness and academic adjustment of the population under investigation.

H_0 4. There is no significant relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Table 9: Test for significant relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Relationship Skills
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.482
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001*
	N	390	390
Relationship Skills	Pearson Correlation	.482	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001*	
	N	390	390

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The data presented in Table 9 gives a summary of the test for significance of the correlation analysis between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. The p-value (.001) of the correlation analysis is less than the alpha value (.05) at 389 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo was rejected. From the result presented in Table 9, it is evident that relationship skills significantly correlated with academic adjustment of the students.

H_0 5. There is no significant relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo.

Table 10: Test for significant relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment

Correlations

		Academic Adjustment	Responsible Decision Making
Academic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	1	.024
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.632
	N	390	390
Responsible Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	.024	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.632	
	N	390	390

The summary of the correlation analysis presented in Table 10 shows that the p-value (.632) of the correlation analysis is greater than the alpha value (.05) at 389 degrees of freedom. Based on this result, the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo was retained. This means any observed correlation between the two variables would have only occurred by chance.

Discussion of Findings

This research work was designed to determine the relationship between variables of socio-emotional and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the university of Uyo, Nigeria. The first of the findings from this study was that self-awareness has a very weak positive correlation with the academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. This suggested that even though the academic adjustment of these students was observed to increase slightly in tandem with their self-awareness, such correlation was not largely due to the increase in self-awareness alone. The test of the null hypothesis on this objective indicated that the observed correlation was statistically significant at .05 alpha level and 389 degrees of freedom. This finding is slightly different from that obtained by Jones and Bouffard (2021) which showed that students lacking self-awareness may have difficulty in their academic and overall adjustment. In another related study, Ogunyemi (2014) found a significant influence of self-awareness on students' academic outcomes. These previous studies along with the result from the present study suggest that students' self-awareness is a significant factor in their academic adjustment.

The second objective of this study was to determine the relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. Data collected and analysed in this research work indicated that there was a strong positive relationship between self-management and academic adjustment of the students. The hypothesis test revealed that this correlation was statistically significant. This means that students with higher level of self-management had better academic adjustment. This result is similar to that obtained by Oluwatayo and Adeleke (2019) who reported that higher levels of socioemotional learning skills, which include self-management, facilitated higher levels of academic motivation in their population and significantly influenced their academic adjustment. This result is also similar to the findings of Adeyemo (2017) who reported a significant positive correlation between socioemotional learning skills and students' academic adjustment. These previous studies give credence to the result of the present research work and reinforce the fact that self-management is crucial for students' academic adjustment in the University.

The third objective in this study was to determine the relationship between social awareness and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. the result of data analysis carried out in this study reveals that social awareness had a moderate negative correlation with academic adjustment of the students. This implies that the higher the level of social awareness of the students, the lower their level of academic adjustment. The hypothesis test indicated that this observed negative correlation was statistically significant. It is likely that this negative trend in the correlation between social awareness and academic adjustment derives from the possibility that students who focused more on the social aspects of the university environment easily get distracted from their academic engagement and therefore incur negative scholastic outcomes. Those who tended not to be socially inclined were able to focus on their academic demands and meet them with more success. This finding is contrary to the findings of Bassey (2021) who reported a positive association between academic and social performance of students vis-à-vis the impact of socio-emotional learning. In another related study, however, Durlak et al. (2015) showed that students social and academic outcomes can be significantly improved over time through school-based socioemotional learning interventions. Hence, the present study supports the position that socioemotional learning skills are crucial for students' academic as well as social adjustment.

The fourth objective of this study was to find out the relationship between relationship skills and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. The data collected and analysed in this study revealed that relationship skills had a weak positive relationship with the academic adjustment of the students. The test of hypothesis further revealed that the observed moderate positive correlation was significant at .05 level. This implies that to some extent, students' relationship skills contributed positively to their academic adjustment. This is in agreement with the findings from similar previous studies. For instance, Omoniyi (2016) found that socioemotional learning skills which involve relationship skills, significantly influenced the academic success of students. Also, Oluwatayo and Adeleke (2019) reported based on their study that students with higher skills also reported higher levels of academic adjustment. These previous studies along with the result of the present study highlight the importance of relationship skills in the academic adjustment of university students, especially the freshers who need the support of peers to navigate successfully the new school environment and related academic demands.

The last objective of this study was to determine the relationship between responsible decision making and academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. It was found that responsible decision making has a very weak negative correlation with the academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo. This observed correlation was found not significant in the hypothesis test, indicating that any change in students' academic adjustment was not attributable to their responsible decision-making capabilities. This finding differs from that obtained by Ogunyemi (2014) which suggested that socioemotional learning skills like critical thinking which are components of responsible decision making significantly influenced their respondents' academic adjustment. It appears therefore that it is needful to more clearly specify what constitutes responsible decision making in order to be able to correctly examine its impact on students' academic adjustment.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between socioemotional learning academic adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, Nigeria. Data collected from a sample of this population and analysed in this research work has provided empirical evidence to conclude that various socioemotional learning variables including self-

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awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills are significant correlates of students' academic adjustment. This study also reaches the conclusion that responsible decision making does not significantly relate with students' academic adjustment in the University of Uyo, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The university administration should avail fresh students of necessary orientation to facilitate increased self-awareness to help hem settle in to their new school routine and academic environment.

2. Fresh undergraduate students should be allowed adequate time from academic engagement to utilise counselling and other available psychological services that would help them develop better self-management skills. This study has shown that these skills are important for their academic adjustment.

3. The university administration should provide carefully curated social activities for freshly admitted students. This form of structured social engagement would assist them have adequate extracurricular and social activities without being distracted from their academic activities. This could effectively ameliorate the negative impact of social engagements on their academic adjustment.

4. Undergraduate students should identify areas they are lacking when it comes to relationship skills and pursue self-development in these areas through behaviour modification, psychoeducational coaching and counselling. This study has shown that having better relationship skills is crucial for their academic development.

5. Finally, it is recommended that students acquire and improve their skills for responsible decision making. The no significant corelation result from this study does not suggest that this is not vital for their academic success. Every student would at some point in their study need to make critical decisions for their overall academic success.

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