**NIGERIAN STUDENTS’ ADJUSTMENT IN INDONESIAN UNIVERSITIES**

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**Abstract**

According to the Africa Statistical Year Book (2002), African students’ population abroad has continued to increase rapidly. It was reported that African students studying abroad have increased from 2,580 in 1970 to over 1.8 million in 2002. This study aims to explore how well adjusted Nigerian students are in Indonesian universities; the relationship between their adjustment to college and their demographic characteristics as well as their language proficiency and why only a few Nigerian students come to Indonesia to study. Participants of this study were selected by convenience sampling. A revised version of the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Gomez et al. (2014) and a 7-item questionnaire was used to measure Nigerian students’ adjustment and language proficiency respectively and some demographic data were included. Findings revealed that students’ responses to each question and adjustment sub-scales indicates a positive level of adjustment to college. Nigerian students have found a way to be well adjusted despite the language barrier.

**Keywords**: Nigerian Students, Adjustment, Language Proficiency

**INTRODUCTION**

International students represent an important and growing student population in many colleges and universities around the globe. Almost 4.5 million students were registered in universities abroad in 2012 (OECD, 2014). According to the Africa Statistical Year Book (2002), African students’ population abroad has continued to increase rapidly. It was reported that African students studying abroad have increased from 2,580 in 1970 to over 1.8 million in 2002. Indonesia is naturally attracting the interest of international students, as she is becoming an increasingly significant pillar in the global economy given its promising economic outlook, setting it on course to be the world’s 7th largest economy by 2030 and its position as by far the largest economy in ASEAN. Till date, Indonesia has less than 6,000 international students studying in local universities which is a paltry figure compared to Malaysia with 63,000 and Singapore with 52,000 (UNESCO, 2014).

Most of the existing research work on international students’ adjustment focuses on international students in the Western countries (Brunsting, et. al., 2018; Omobola, 2019). Only a few researches have focused on international student adjustments in Asian countries (Yusoff, 2011; Tsegay et. al., 2018). The research literature on Nigerian students' decisions to study as well as their adjustment in Asian countries is scarce. Although there are lots of Nigerians in Indonesia, only a few are in Indonesia for academic purposes.

The official language of Indonesia is Indonesian while the official language of Nigeria is English, hence, English speaking students studying in non-English speaking countries may face a lot of adjustment problems as a result of the language barrier. A considerable proportion of international students in Indonesia do not speak the Indonesian language as their home or first language. Also, there is no standardized Indonesian proficiency examination which students are required to take before coming to Indonesia to study unlike standardized English proficiency examinations (like TOEFL and IELTS) which students are required to take before going to English speaking countries to study. Although most scholarship programs like *the Kemitraan Negara Bekembang* (KNB) requires students to learn the Indonesian language for a year before commencing their graduate studies. Despite taking this one-year Indonesian language program, most international students, however, may still have difficulties in understanding lectures, expressing ideas, writing reports, taking notes, class presentations and reading academic literature. Most researches on the relationship between language proficiency and academic success of international students focus on English language skills (Kim, 2011; Mann, et al. 2010).

Adjusting to another country can be formidable and sometimes even an unnerving experience for students. Research shows that international students face a lot of challenges during their education abroad. These challenges include cultural norms, grasping the local languages, food tastes, living/housing environment, transportation, as well as the social shock of being away from family and friends. These challenges are severe especially for those students who are traveling to countries with different cultures. If these challenges are not dealt with properly, they can cause extreme stress, depression, and academic or other failures (Constantine, et al. 2004).

Therefore, this study aims to explore how well adjusted Nigerian students are with Indonesian universities, the relationship between their adjustment to college and their demographic characteristics as well as their language proficiency and why only a few Nigerian students come to Indonesia to study.

The following research questions have been formulated to be answered and tested in this study:

1. How well adjusted are Nigerian students with Indonesian universities?
2. What is the relationship between Nigerian students’ adjustment to college and their demographic characteristics?
3. What is the relationship between Nigerian students’ adjustment to college and their Indonesian language proficiency?
4. Why do only a few Nigerian students come to Indonesia to study?

**METHOD**

1. **Participants**

Participants in this study were all from Nigeria. This study employed a descriptive survey design approach. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling; that is, any Nigerian student in Indonesian universities who was available to fill the online questionnaire were included in the research. It covered Nigerian students studying in different universities and provinces in Indonesia. Participants for this study were reached through social media (Nigerian students WhatsApp group page). Out of 15 students who were sent the online questionnaire, only 11 filled the questionnaire.

1. **Measures**

For this study, data was collected with the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises of a demographic section, language proficiency section and a revised version of the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Gomez et al. (2014).

1. **Demographic Data**

The demographic section of the questionnaire was built to collect information such as the participants’ institution, level of education, study program, semester, gender, age, marital status, length of stay and province of residence.

1. **Indonesian Language Proficiency**

A language proficiency questionnaire was designed by the researcher to measure the Indonesian language skills of the participant. The questionnaire consisted of 7 items. The instrument proved to be internally consistent at Cronbach’s alpha .85

1. **Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ)**

The adjustment to the college of Nigerian students was assessed using a revised version of the Student Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Gomez et al. (2014). This revised version (International Student Adjustment to College Scale) consisted of five sub-scales including 23 items rated on a 9-point Likert scale. The SACQ sub-scales are academic motivation, academic environment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and institutional attachment. All four sub-scales of the instrument proved to be internally consistent in several studies (Cronbach’s alpha >.80; Baker & Siryk 1989).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Guided by the research questions of this study, the collected data were statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20) computer software. The statistical techniques used were independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA.

1. **Research question 1:** how well are Nigerian students adjusted to college?

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the respondents to the ISAQ

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Q | ITEMS | N | MEAN | SD |
| Personal-Emotional Adjustment (PERSEMO) | | | | |
| SACQ 31 | I've given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the Psychological Counseling Center or a psychologist outside of college | 11 | 8.91 | 0.30 |
| SACQ 38 | I have been getting angry too easily lately | 11 | 8.55 | 1.04 |
| SACQ 39 | Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study | 11 | 7.18 | 2.52 |
| SACQ 40 | I haven’t been sleeping very well | 11 | 6.45 | 2.62 |
| SACQ 41 | I am not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in | 11 | 7.18 | 2.14 |
| SACQ 45 | Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily | 11 | 7.73 | 2.45 |
| SACQ 52 | I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments | 11 | 6.73 | 2.76 |
| SACQ 64 | I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stress imposed upon me in college | 11 | 6.55 | 2.50 |
| Personal-Emotional sub-scale | | 11 | 7.41 | 0.89 |
| Social-Adjustment (SOCADJ) | | | | |
| SACQ8 | I am very involved with social activities in college | 11 | 4.18 | 1.94 |
| SACQ18 | I have several close social ties at colleges | 11 | 5.45 | 1.97 |
| SACQ46 | I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities in college | 11 | 4.82 | 2.32 |
| SACQ65 | I am quite satisfied with my social life at college | 11 | 4.45 | 2.30 |
| Social Adjustment sub-scale | | 11 | 4.73 | 0.20 |
| Academic motivation (ACADMTVN) | | | | |
| SACQ3 | I have been keeping up to date on my academic work | 11 | 2.55 | 1.69 |
| SACQ5 | I know why I am in college and what I want out of it | 11 | 2.64 | 2.46 |
| SACQ19 | My academic goals and purposes are well defined | 11 | 2.55 | 2.50 |
| SACQ23 | Getting a college degree is very important to me | 11 | 2.64 | 2.46 |
| Academic motivation sub-scale | | 11 | 2.59 | 0.39 |
| Academic Environment (ACADENV) | | | | |
| SACQ36 | I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at college | 11 | 3.91 | 2.55 |
| SACQ43 | I am satisfied with the quality or the caliber of courses available at college | 11 | 3.45 | 2.58 |
| SACQ54 | I am satisfied with my program of courses for this semester/quarter | 11 | 3.45 | 2.58 |
| SACQ62 | I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses | 11 | 4.00 | 2.90 |
| Academic Environment sub-scale | | 11 | 3.70 | 0.16 |
| Institutional Attachment (ATTACH) | | | | |
| SACQ16 | I am pleased now about my decision to attend this college in particular | 11  4.27 | | 2.87 |
| SACQ34 | I wish I were at another college or university (reverse coded) | 11 | 5.45 | 3.42 |
| SACQ59 | Lately, I have been giving a lot of thought about transferring to another college (reverse coded) | 11 | 7.45 | 2.30 |
| Institutional Attachment subscale | | 11 | 5.73 | 0.56 |

Table 1 shows that the overall mean for personal-emotional adjustment sub-scale is 7.41. The scoring for personal-emotional sub-scale is different from other sub-scales. For this sub-scale, a closer score to 9 (which implies it does not apply to me at all) indicates a better adjustment level. For the social adjustment sub-scale, a mean closer to 1 shows better adjustment and a mean closer to 9 shows less adjustment. The overall mean for this sub-scale is 4.73. The social adjustment sub-scale mean shows that, in general, the level of social adjustment among international students is close to the mid-point. The overall mean for academic motivation sub-scale is 2.59. This mean score is close to 1 than to 9. For this sub-scale, like the social adjustment sub-scale, a closer mean to 1 shows a better adjustment level. The mean for overall academic environment sub-scale is also lower than 5. Table 1 shows that the overall mean for this subscale is 3.70, while, mean for overall institutional attachment sub-scale is 5.73.

The analysis of the students’ responses to each question and adjustment sub-scales revealed that all of the means were closer to the point that indicates a positive level of adjustment to college. The mean scores also revealed that none of the responses were at the extreme ends of the 9-point Likers scale. The analysis of the means for each sub-scales also showed that the academic motivation has the lowest (best) mean among all of the adjustment sub-scales examined in this study (M=2.6, SD=0.39). It indicated that Nigerian students in Indonesia are highly academically motivated (compared to other adjustment sub-scales). The mean score of the other sub-scales ranged between 3.70 and 7.41.

1. **Research question 2:**What is the relationship between Nigerian students' adjustment to college and their demographic characteristics?

TABLE 2: Relationship between demographic Characteristics, language proficiency and Adjustment to College

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Demographic Variables | Personal-Emotional Adjustment | Social Adjustment | Academic Motivation | Academic  Environment | Institutional  Adjustment | Overall  Adjustment |
| Age | F(4.46)=  0.698 | F(4.46)=  0.302 | F(4.46)=  1.255 | F(4.46)=  1.957 | F(4.46)=  1.225 | F(4.46)=  0.746 |
| Gender | T(11)=  1.788\* | T(11)=  -0.448 | T(11)=  0.821\* | T(11)=-0.285 | T(11)=  -0.554 | T(11)=  0.926\* |
| Semester | F(4.53)=  2.903 | F(4.53)=  2.145 | F(4.53)=  0.572 | F(4.53)=  1.380 | F(4.53)=  2.150 | F(4.53)=  0.179 |
| length of stay in Indonesia | F(4.53)=  2.079 | F(4.53)=  1.779 | F(4.53)=  0.698 | F(4.53)=  2.624 | F(4.53)=  3.082 | F(4.53)=  0.628 |
| Language proficiency | F(4.46)=  4.320 | F(4.46)=  0.914 | F(4.46)=  1.001 | F(4.46)=  0.797 | F(4.46)=  0.270 | F(4.46)=  0.770 |
| Marital status | T(11)=  0.642\* | T(11)=  1.641\* | T(11)=  0.926\* | T(11)= -0.171 | T(11)=  0.157 | T(11)=  1.375 |

The results of the one-way ANOVA test indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students' age, semester, duration of stay and all the adjustment sub-scales. The findings of this study revealed that Nigerian students' adjustment to college is related to several personal (gender) and social (marital status) characteristics that international students may bring to college.

***The relationship between gender and Nigerian students’ adjustment to college.*** An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine the relationship between Nigerian students’ gender and adjustment sub-scales. The results of the t-test indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students’ gender and various adjustment sub-scales. According to the t-test results, Nigerian males *(M=7.88, SD=0.83)* showed better personal-emotional adjustment comparing to their female peers *(M=6.17, SD=2.57), t (11) =1.788, p < .05, two-tailed.* Nigerian males also *(M=2.93, SD=2.56)* showed better academic motivation comparing to their female peers *(M=1.67, SD=0.76), t (11) =0.821, p < .05, two-tailed.* Similarly, while considering an overall adjustment to college, male Nigerian students *(M=5.40, SD=0.92),* also showed a better level of adjustment to college comparing to female Nigerian students *(M=4.82, SD=0.88), t (11) =0.926, p < .05, two-tailed*. Moreover, the t-test results showed no statistically significant difference between male and female Nigerian students in regards to other adjustment sub-scales. Descriptive data for each of the sub-scales are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Descriptive Statistics of gender and personal-emotional, academic motivation and overall adjustment to college

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Personal-Emotional Adjustment | Male | 8 | 7.8775 | .82830 | .29285 |
| Female | 3 | 6.1667 | 2.56580 | 1.48137 |
| Academic Motivation | Male | 8 | 2.9375 | 2.55912 | .90479 |
| Female | 3 | 1.6667 | .76376 | .44096 |
| Overall Adjustment | Male | 8 | 5.3962 | .92318 | .32639 |
| Female | 3 | 4.8233 | .88286 | .50972 |

The results of this study found a statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students’ gender and various aspects of adjustment to college. Specifically, Nigerian males showed a better level of adjustment in personal-emotional adjustment sub-scale, academic motivation and overall adjustment to college compared to their female peers. Findings of this research are similar to Suthar’s findings. Suthar (2015) findings show that there is no significant mean difference in Social Adjustment of male and female college students and there is a significant mean difference in Emotional Adjustment of the college students with their gender. On the other hand, the findings of this study contradict with Enochs & Roland (2006) study, which showed that when freshmen males and females in the FYE halls were compared there was no significant difference in their levels of overall adjustment.

***The relationship between marital status and Nigerian students’ adjustment to college.*** The results of the t-test indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students’ marital status and three adjustment sub-scales. The t-test results showed a statistically significant relationship between personal-emotional sub-scale of adjustment to college and Nigerian students’ marital status, *t (11) =0.642, p < .05, two-tailed*. The t-test results indicated that single Nigerian students *(M=7.56, SD=1.59)* showed a significantly better level of personal-emotional adjustment to college than the married students did *(M=6.75, SD=1.77).* Single Nigerian students also *(M=5.14, SD=1.82)* showed better social adjustment comparing to married students *(M=2.88, SD=1.24), t (11) =1.641, p < .05, two-tailed*. Single Nigerian students also *(M=2.88, SD=2.40)* showed better academic motivation comparing to married students *(M=1.25, SD=0.35), t (11) =0.926, p < .05, two-tailed*. The t-test results also showed no statistically significant relationship between international student marital status and other adjustment subscales to college. Descriptive data for each of the sub-scales are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Descriptive Statistics of marital status and personal-emotional, Social Adjustment and academic motivation sub-scale

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Marital status | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Personal-Emotional Adjustment | Single | 9 | 7.5578 | 1.58755 | .52918 |
| Married | 2 | 6.7500 | 1.76777 | 1.25000 |
| Social Adjustment | Single | 9 | 5.1389 | 1.82050 | .60683 |
| Married | 2 | 2.8750 | 1.23744 | .87500 |
| Academic Motivation | Single | 9 | 2.8889 | 2.39828 | .79943 |
| Married | 2 | 1.2500 | .35355 | .25000 |

This study found a statistically significant relationship between Nigerian student adjustment to college and their marital status. According to the findings of this study, single Nigerian students showed a significantly higher level of personal-emotional adjustment, social adjustment and academic motivation to college than married Nigerian students did. Although the review of existing literature on the effect of marital status on adjustment to college found conflicting results, findings of this research are similar to Ahmadi (2016) study. Ahmadi (2016) study revealed that single international students have a higher level of personal-emotional adjustment to college than married international students. On the other hand, the findings of this study contradict with Wang's (2003) study. Wang's (2003) study showed that adjustment problem areas were not related (among other variables) with international students’ marital status.

1. **Research question 3:**What are the relationship between Nigerian students' adjustment to college (as measured by Gomez et al.'s (2014) ISAQ) and their Indonesian language proficiency?

***The relationship between Nigerian students’ adjustment to college (as measured by Gomez et al.’s (2014) ISAQ) and their Indonesian language proficiency.***The results of the one-way ANOVA test (as revealed in Table 2) indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students’ language proficiency in Indonesian language and all the adjustment sub-scales.

This study also found out that there was no statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students' language proficiency in Indonesian language and all the adjustment sub-scales. The level of Indonesian language proficiency (whether high, moderate or low) of Nigerian students does not affect their adjustment to college. Although most Nigerian students do not understand all that is taught in class nor participate in classroom discussions, they seem to be well adjusted. This could be because despite the medium of instruction in Indonesian universities is in the Indonesian language, Nigerian students do class presentations, write examinations and assignments in the English language. Most of the students agreed that they could have better grades if the medium of instruction were to be in English. On the other hand, the findings of this study contradict with Kuo (2011), Swagler and Ellis’s (2003), Poyrazli and Kavanaugh’s (2006) findings. Kuo’s (2011) study showed that language proficiency not only affects international graduate students academically, but also contributed to their social, cultural, and personal adjustment. Similarly, Poyrazli and Kavanaugh’s (2006) study showed that language proficiency significantly affected the level of student sojourners’ academic adjustment. Swagler and Ellis’s (2003) study, in turn, revealed that apprehension about speaking English affected the adjustment of Taiwanese students.

1. **Research question 4:** Why do only a few Nigerian students come to Indonesia to study?

The students were asked to respond to this question in the form of a short answer. The summary of their response was centered on the language barrier, unpopularity of the country, distance, personal preference, and limited study grants or scholarships by the Indonesian government. Some students felt that the impression of Indonesia in the minds of Nigerians is not high, as most Nigerians do not consider Indonesia as a country having a well-developed educational system.

This study also found out that although there are a lot of Nigerians living in Indonesia only a few are in Indonesia for academic purposes. Currently, we have less than 16 Nigerian students studying in Indonesia, most of which came in through *the Kemitraan Negara Bekembang* (KNB) Scholarship which was first introduced by Ministry of Education and Culture in 1992. Another scholarship open to Nigerian students is the Darmasiswa scholarship. However, findings in this study revealed that language barrier, the unpopularity of the country, distance, personal preference, and limited study grants or scholarships by the Indonesian government are various factors that prevent degree-seeking Nigerians from coming to Indonesia to study. Also, the impression of Indonesia in the minds of Nigerians is not high, as most Nigerians do not consider Indonesia as a country having a well-developed educational system thus most of them prefer to go to countries like USA, UK, Malaysia, Canada, South Africa, and Russia.

**CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study is to explore how well adjusted Nigerian students are with Indonesian universities, the relationship between their adjustment to college and their demographic characteristics as well as their language proficiency and why only a few Nigerian students come to Indonesia to study. Findings revealed that students' responses to each question and adjustment sub-scales indicates a positive level of adjustment to college. Nigerian students' adjustment to college is related to several personal (gender) and social (marital status) characteristics that Nigerian students may bring to college. However, this study found no relationships between Nigerian student's age, semester and length of stay in Indonesia with adjustment to college. There was no statistically significant relationship between Nigerian students' language proficiency in Indonesian language and all the adjustment sub-scales. An intervention that can be used to resolve the issue of Nigerian students’ adjustment is group guidance (Hernandez, 2017). According to Rusmana (2009) group guidance can be defined as a process of providing assistance to individuals through a group atmosphere that allows each member to learn to actively, participate and share experiences in an effort to develop insights, attitudes or skills needed in an effort to prevent problems or in an effort to enhance personal development. The purpose of group guidance is to help individuals to be more competent, not to produce a better group.

One important limitation of this study is the classification of Nigerian students as a homogenous group. Nigerian students in Indonesian universities are from diverse cultures, ethnic groups, and academic backgrounds, hence their adjustments should be explored differently based on these characteristics in future research. Another limitation is that the sample size for this study was very small, for future research, it is recommended that African students should be the focus to have a larger sample size. This study would be beneficial in creating awareness to Nigerian students that the language barrier does not affect their adjustment in Indonesian universities. Similarly, this study can assist lecturers, counselors, and administrators by providing a clearer understanding of Nigerian students' experiences which may allow school staff to intervene or encourage in a more meaningful and effective manner.

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