

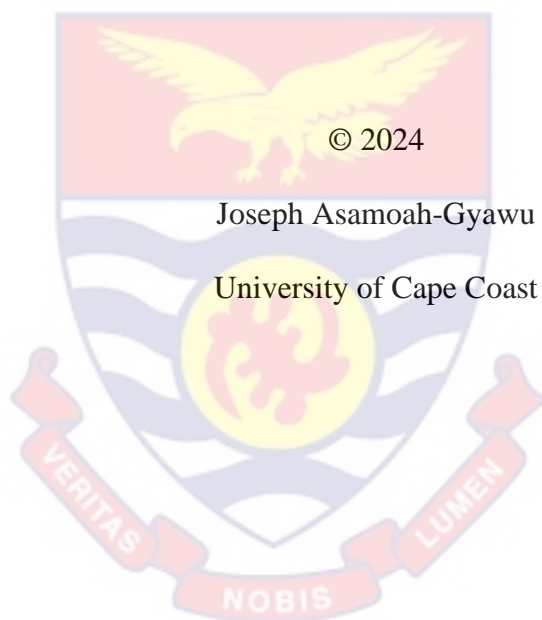
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

ADJUSTMENT LEVELS OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS IN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES IN ASHANTI REGION, GHANA



JOSEPH ASAMOAH-GYAWU

2024



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University of Cape Coast

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UNIVERSITIES IN ASHANTI REGION, GHANA

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the
Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University
of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

FEBRUARY 2024

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name:

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name:

Co-Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name:

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and its implications for counselling. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. The multistage sampling procedure was used to select 420 first year students for the study. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was adapted to collect data for the study. Data was analysed descriptively (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferentially (independent samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance). The findings showed that some of the first-year students had high academic, social and emotional adjustment while others also had low academic, social and emotional adjustment. The study revealed a statistically significant gender difference in social adjustment of the first-year students. Statistically significant differences also existed in academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students based on the university campus they studied. It was observed that significant differences existed in academic, and social adjustment of first year students based on their residential status. It was concluded that gender is a key factor when it comes to social adjustment of first year students. It was recommended that counselling departments in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED) should provide periodic academic, social and emotional adjustment counselling services to first year students to improve their adjustment on the university campus.

KEYWORDS

Adjust

Adjustment

Students

First-year

University

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Almighty God Jehovah for His loving kindness during the period of my studies. Also, I acknowledge my academic supervisors, Rev. Fr. Prof. Anthony K. Nkyi and Prof. Stephen Doh Fia for their unreserved guidance, patience, and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis.

I am grateful to my lovely wife, Jemima Asamoah-Gyawu, the pillar and support of my life together with my son, Jeffrey Asamoah-Gyawu and daughter, Judith Achiaa Asamoah-Gyawu, who have been inspirational and great contributors to this study.

To those who contributed in many ways towards my work, I say thank you.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Mrs. Jemima Asamoah-Gyawu, our children, and my late parents;

Mr. Edward Gyawu Barnieh and Mrs Juliana Adwoa Achiaa

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Early experiences in higher education, such as the first year of study, are important in determining students' success and retention. The first year of university life is often perceived as an overwhelming and stressful time in several aspects of students' adjustment (Kabtamu, 2011). First year students need to adjust quickly to the university environment since they are confronted with other issues in their pursuit of information and academic skills (Robino & Foster, 2018). Attending college or university is seen to be an intriguing experience that could give some challenges to fresh students. Many first year students encounter adjustment difficulties in their quest to settle down for rigorous academic work.

Fresh students carry responsibilities that may include academic pressure, social concerns, obligations from family and friends, and academic duties, which often contribute to stress and the inability to adjust to the university environment. The purpose of this study is to assess first year students' adjustment in public universities. It is hoped that the theoretical and practical outcome of this study would improve first year students' adjustment difficulties in public universities.

Background to the Study

The inclination to secure a better job soon encourages most senior high school students to further their education to gain more knowledge and skills. Students pursue higher education to reap benefits such as longer life expectancy, improved quality of life, better health, improved personal status and increased psychological wellbeing. In the quest for these benefits, most

students are confronted with myriad issues, notable among them is adjustment to their new environment (Al Abiky, 2021). Universities offer domestic and international students the opportunity to pursue higher education. It might be necessary for students who depend on their parents or guardians for support to prepare themselves adequately for what lies ahead of them. Some might have to exert complete control over how they meet their emotional and physical needs. This phenomenon, if not properly managed, could result in some emotional disorders, unhappiness, and difficulty adjusting to the university environment. Marella and Prasetyawati (2020) reported that, although higher numbers of students enter college in Indonesia, a sizable number of them drop out, especially during the first year, and a major contributory factor to this phenomenon is maladjustment to college. The first year is considered the base for the tertiary academic journey.

Challenges in adjustment manifest in the form of academic, social, and emotional adjustment issues that first year students are confronted with. Academic adjustment refers to how well students manage the academic demands of university life, including attending lectures, completing assignments, doing presentations, practical work, and preparing for examinations. This adjustment is critical as it directly impacts academic performance and overall success in higher education. According to Baker and Siryk (1984), academic adjustment encompasses a student's ability to cope with educational demands, their attitude toward learning, and their engagement with academic tasks. Effective academic adjustment is linked to better academic outcomes and increased student retention rates (Credé & Niehorster, 2012). For first year university students in the Ashanti Region, academic adjustment

is particularly challenging due to the differences in teaching styles, increased workload, and higher expectations as compared to senior high school. Some of the students often have difficulties with their academic work to the extent that a number of them are withdrawn from the university for poor academic performance.

Social adjustment involves the process by which students integrate into the social fabric of the university community. This includes forming new friendships, engaging in campus activities, and developing a sense of belonging. Research indicates that social adjustment is crucial for overall student well-being and satisfaction (Tinto, 1993). Students who successfully adjust socially are more likely to persist in their studies and enjoy a fulfilling university experience. In the context of public universities in the Ashanti Region, social adjustment may be influenced by cultural factors, language-range barriers, and the availability of social support networks. For instance, studies have shown that peer support and involvement in extracurricular activities significantly enhance social adjustment (Astin, 1999).

Emotional adjustment on the other hand pertains to how students manage-range the emotional stress and psychological challenges associated with university life. This includes dealing with homesickness, anxiety, depression, and the pressures of academic activities. Emotional adjustment is vital for maintaining good mental health and achieving academic success. According to Ross et al. (1999), the transition to university often triggers significant stress due to changes in the environment, social networks, and academic demands. Effective coping strategies and access to counselling services are essential for facilitating emotional adjustment and promoting

resilience among first year university students (Pancer et al., 2000).

According to research among North Jordan's first year university students, adjustment issues are 50% more common than they should be (Aderi et al., 2013). According to earlier research conducted in Asian countries, about 26% students of the University Putra Malaysia (UPM) in Malaysia (Abdallah et al., 2009) and 9% of students in various arts and science colleges in India (Devi et al., 2017) experience challenges with academic adjustment. According to a large, nationally representative study, Debre-Berhan had the highest prevalence of adjustment issues among university students in Ethiopia at 35.7% (Wubshet, 2019), Dilla University had 42.5% (Ababu et al., 2018), St. Paul Medical College had 37.8% (Gerensea et al., 2017), and Madawalabu had 30.1% (Esmael et al., 2018).

Additionally, several related literary works (e.g., Omar, 2020; Van der Zanden, et al., 2018; Belay et al., 2018) noted that the following social stressors affect the social adjustment of first year students. These are low social support, low educational status, being away from home, family, and friends, financial difficulties, difficulty adjusting to university classes and new living arrangements. The rest are student accommodation, difficulty getting emotional support, difficulty making friends, heavy academic load, family dysfunction and instability, divorce (Al Abiky, 2021).

Sahin et al. (2016) believe that students who cannot form relationships with their peers, teachers, and school administration and students with negative attitudes towards their school and programmes are likely to be absent from school and drop out. One cause of school dropouts is difficulty adjusting to the curriculum (Yin et al., 2021). Apart from stress, Páramo et al. (2015)

discovered that students with poor academic and institutional adjustment to college performed worse academically than those with intermediate and higher adjustment levels. In his research on academic adjustment and performance among Filipino fresh college students, Alipio (2020) reported that poor academic performance is caused by students' inability to adjust to the college environment. Adjusting to university life is a meaningful way to succeed in the tertiary domain (Elias et al., 2010). Elias et al. further explained that adjustment helps the fresh students to form good relationships with others in the university which eventually enhance their academic achievement. The stage-range of tertiary education is essential in a student's life because of the shift from total dependence on teachers and family to complete independence which characterise this stage-range (Greenbank, & Penketh, 2009). Most importantly, students' ability to plan, set academic goals and achieve a balance between academic and social activities plays a crucial role in their success during the first year (Secuban, 2012).

Also, Hernandez (2017) researched first year students' self-esteem and adjustment to college from selected higher education institutions in Calapan City and found that, students exhibited inadequate social adjustment. They adjust to university life quickly regarding academics and emotional attachment to their institution, but it takes them longer time to adjust socially.

Belay et al. (2018) reported that higher education institutions in the Philippines were enrolling fresh students who had just completed senior high school, an additional two years of education, following the country's adoption of international standards, namely the K-12 primary education curriculum under Section 16 of Republic Act 10533 (2013). This study adds to the

understanding of how the academic strand selected in senior high school, gender, socioeconomic status, and residence location influence the relationship between a student's adjustment to university and academic success (Ababu et al., 2018). The studies discussed the link between students' university adjustment and academic efficiency.

According to Yang (2020), there is a higher rate of school dropout due to failure to adjust to school, as it has been discovered that 60% of students who struggle to adjust to university drop out before the end of their first year. However, reluctance and nervousness on freshers' part, ranging from various biases (embedded by social, traditional, or personal influence), might stop them from seeking help and enhancing their adjustment process. With this in view, the underutilization of services provided by psychosocial support programmes is not unexpected. There is also evidence that most first year students show symptoms of mental health problems, yet only a few ever reach out to support groups. While the need for psychosocial support services (for first year students) is growing, the formal models used in tackling these needs need to be revised (Norman, 2020).

Barriers to language-range, lack of familiarity with available resources and how to access them, lack of a well-established social support system and social network exacerbate students' problems, and this might lead to depression, loneliness, and isolation (Chrysikos et al., 2017). It was necessary to assess the adjustment of first year students in Ghanaian public universities as very few studies have been done in this area.

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) reported that developing strong social ties is one of the most effective ways to adjust to university life. Joining clubs,

societies, or student organizations offers students the opportunity to meet like-minded individuals and form lasting connections (Kuh, 2009). Actively engaging in campus activities, such as orientation programs, sports, cultural events, and volunteer opportunities, helps students integrate socially (Wilkins, 2013). Further, Misra and McKean (2000) noted that effective time management is one of the most crucial coping strategies for academic success. Students who develop structured schedules, set priorities, and break tasks into manageable chunks are better equipped to handle academic pressures. Many first year students experience academic stress because of the unfamiliarity with university-level expectations. Seeking academic support through tutoring centres, writing workshops, or faculty office hours can provide students with the assistance they need to succeed (Galante, 2014). Collaborative learning through peer study groups can enhance understanding of course material and provide emotional support during stressful times. According to Hughes et al., (2015), students who participate in study groups tend to experience lower levels of stress and perform better academically. Additionally, Salovey and Mayer (1990) maintained that students with higher levels of EI tend to cope better with emotional challenges and are more resilient in the face of stress. From the views of Harris (2014) students' ability to build resilience by maintaining a positive outlook, developing problem-solving skills, and seeking support when needed could help cope with emotional adjustment. University programmes that focus on building resilience, such as workshops on stress management and emotional regulation, can help students cope with emotional difficulties. Universities should provide resources such as peer mentoring, counselling services, academic support centres, and mindfulness programs to help students adjust and

thrive in their new environment. It was essential to assess the adjustment of first year students in Ghanaian public universities as this represents a very critical and underexplored area of research.

Statement of the Problem

The transition to university life represents a critical period for students, especially first year students, who must go through academic, social, and emotional challenges as they try to adjust in the new environment. This adjustment is particularly important in the context of public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, where the unique cultural and educational landscape presents both opportunities and obstacles for students. The inability of these students to properly adjust academically often leads to the withdrawal of some students for academic non-performance. Socially and emotionally, when students find it difficult to adjust in the new environment coupled with strenuous academic demands could lead to mental health challenges such as depression. For example, a student committed suicide as a result of the difficulty in managing academic and relationship issues. in Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST (Graphic Online, 2017). Despite the significance of this transition, there is limited research focusing specifically on the adjustment experiences of first year students within this region, particularly at KNUST and (AAMUSTED). Meanwhile, there is a positive relationship between student adjustment retention and academic performance and several indicators of well-being (Ali et al., 2009).

Ali et al. (2009) further revealed extensive evidence to substantiate the notion that adaptation and adjustment play a pivotal role in influencing academic outcomes. In line with that, Jean (2010) established that successful

social adjustment influences the ability of students to earn higher grade point averages. Wolcott (2019) also believes that adjustment-induced student retention problems in universities can be adequately dealt with when universities know and understand student adjustment challenges. This would enable them to introduce appropriate intervention programmes to counter the problems. In addition, Clinciu and Cazan (2014) stated that failure to adjust academically among fresh students would result in poor mental health.

Due to the influence of adjustment on student learning outcomes, mental health and retention, a number of studies have been conducted to assess student adjustment in schools in order to put in place appropriate measures to deal with the difficulties. An example of such studies is Deggs (2019), who investigated students' adjustment to university and suggested that university counsellors develop a programme exclusively for first year students. This programme may involve seminars, lectures, workshops, psychological testing, and counselling sessions to ease their transition to college and boost their self-esteem. The study also examined first year students' personal, emotional, and psychosocial development.

A study by Ayele (2018) in Ethiopia analysed first year Wolaita Sodo University students' transition to university life, focusing on academic, social, personal-emotional, and attachment aspects. The results showed that personal-emotional adjustment was the biggest issue, with 71.2% of students being moderately adjusted. Female students were found to experience adjustment issues, but male students had better adjustment. The study also showed that academic achievement and university adjustment were positively correlated, with academic and personal-emotional adjustments being the best indicators of

success. Even though this study assessed the adjustment problems of students, there is still a paucity of studies on assessing student adjustment, despite the growing body of research on student adjustment in Africa. Further research is needed to understand students' adjustment experiences so that counsellors can develop effective interventions to address their specific needs.

Osoro and Nyamwange (2023) found that first year university students experience difficulties regarding the management of emotions such as anger, stress, mood swings, guilt, fear, and frustration; Ginty and Boland (2016) found feelings of anxiety and deep personal struggle mixed with enthusiasm and vitality as they look forward to a new start. Transitioning to university can be one of the most stressful, lonely, and disorienting experiences (Aderi, Jdaitawi, Ishak & Jdaitawi, 2013; Ginty & Boland, 2016). High stress levels may affect memory, concentration, and problem-solving ability and may compromise learning, coping, and academic performance (Ababu, Yigzaw, Besene & Alemu, 2018). As a result, it has been established that high rates of psychological morbidity are being recorded among first year university students (McDermott & Pettijohn, 2011) and higher rates of depression (Bore, Pittolo, Kirby, Dluzewska, & Marlin, 2016) than in the public. In Ghana, and in the Ashanti region to be specific, there is a dearth of studies on the emotional adjustment of first-year students in public universities.

Gender differences in the social, academic, and emotional adjustment of first-year university students have been a subject of extensive research in higher education. First year female students tend to experience social adjustment challenges related to forming meaningful friendships and balancing academic responsibilities with social life (Gordon, 2011). They often report

higher levels of stress and anxiety about fitting in (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). First year male students are more likely to engage in less social interaction compared to females, potentially due to different socialization patterns before college (Bailey & Ponder, 2020). Males may also experience difficulties in seeking social support (Harris, 2019). With respect to academic adjustment, first-year female students often perform well academically in university settings. Females are more likely to experience academic-related stress, anxiety, and perfectionism, especially in male-dominated fields (Berkowitz & Myers, 2018). Male students may experience academic adjustment by facing difficulties in adapting to the higher academic standards of university (Harris, 2019). Regarding emotional adjustment, female students are generally more likely to report experiencing higher levels of emotional during the transition to university (Wilkins, 2010). Emotional adjustment for male students may be more complicated by societal expectations of masculinity. As a result, males might be less likely to seek help for emotional difficulties and may experience higher levels of isolation and depression (Addis, 2008). Males may also be less inclined to engage in counselling or mental health services, which exacerbates emotional distress (Gonzalez et al., 2010).

A study conducted at the Catholic University College in Ghana on the adjustment of international students revealed that these students faced social, academic, and economic challenges during their first few months on campus. The researchers asserted that university administrators needed to implement more measures to improve students' adjustment on campus (Ackah & Kuranchie, 2015). Forde and Brenya (2012), also concluded that first year

students at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, faced adjustment difficulties, such as difficulty managing the academic load and lack of social interaction. The study emphasized the need to make the timetable of first year students more flexible to enable them to cope with academic pressure.

Other notable Ghanaian studies on students' adjustment are those of Kumah (2020), Kwarteng-Nantwi (2019), Akwensivie et al. (2013), and Tenkorang (2020). Kumah (2020) investigated the adjustment challenges and coping methods of College of Education students in the Eastern Region, Ghana. The three adjustment challenges that were discovered in the study were worries about finances, demanding academic workload at college than high school and difficulty being responsible for academic work. In addition, Kwarteng-Nantwi (2019), Akwensivie et al. (2013) and Ackah and Kuranchie (2015) investigated the adjustment challenges and experience of international students. All these existing studies have shed light on the adjustment experiences of first year students in various regions of Ghana. However, a focused study in the Ashanti Region is absent, and that is what this research seeks to address by delving into the adjustment conditions faced by first year students within the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

From a methodological standpoint, numerous studies have been carried out to examine the difficulties in adjusting and the impact of psychosocial factors on students' adjustment and coping strategies among Ghanaian colleges of education students (Asamoah-Gyawu, 2020; Kuma, 2020). Ndah, Agyeman, Dawson-Ahmoah, Asare, and Adu (2023) further assessed the impact of orientation programmes on fresh students in the colleges of education in Ghana. Also, Anatsui (2020) investigated the adjustment issues and their effect on

international undergraduate students in Ghana. Owusu-Afriyie (2020) sought to determine the academic adjustment challenges faced by senior high school freshmen in the eastern Ghanaian municipality of New Juaben. The gap, though, is that none of this research examined how well first year students in Ghana's Ashanti Region's public universities adjusted.

This study aimed at bridging the gap in literature by assessing the adjustment of first year university students in Ghana with a specific focus on students in public universities in the Ashanti Region. This is because none of the aforementioned Ghanaian studies assessed the adjustment levels of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana specifically (KNUST) and (AAMUSTED). The findings would inform interventions aimed at improving student adjustment in the university setting. Consequently, student learning outcomes, retention and mental health would significantly improve.

Purpose of the Study

The study's primary purpose was to assess the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of academic adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,
2. Determine the level of social adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,
3. Determine the level of emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,
4. Investigate the gender differences in the academic adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region

5. Investigate the gender differences in the social adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,
6. Investigate the gender differences in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their age-range,
7. Determine the differences in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their age-range,
8. Determine the differences in the social adjustment of first year students based on their age-range,
9. Determine the differences in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on university campus,
10. Determine the differences in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their university campus,
11. Determine the differences in the social adjustment of first year students based on their university campus,
12. Determine the differences in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.
13. Explore the differences in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.
14. Determine the differences in social adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.
15. Determine the differences in emotional adjustment of first year student based on their residential status.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of academic adjustment of first year students in the

public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

2. What is the level of social adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?
3. What is the level of emotional adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of this study.

H_{01} : There is no statistically significant gender difference in the academic adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{11} : There is a statistically significant gender difference in the academic adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{02} : There is no statistically significant gender difference in the social adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{12} : There is a statistically significant gender difference in the social adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{03} : There is no statistically significant gender difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{13} : There is a statistically significant gender difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students in the public universities in the

Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H₀₄: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their age-range. -

H₁₄: There is a statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their age-range. -

H₀₅: There is no statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on their age-range. -

H₁₅: There is a statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on their age-range. -

H₀₆: There is no statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their age-range. -

H₁₆: There is a statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their age-range. -

H₀₇: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their university campus. -

H₁₇: There is a statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their university campus. -

H₀₈: There is no statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on their university campus. -

H₁₈: There is a statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on their university campus. -

H₀₉: There is no statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their university campus. -

H₁₉: There is a statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their university campus. -

H_{o10}: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.

H₁₁₀: There is a statistically significant difference in academic adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.

H_{o11}: There is no statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on their-residential status.

H₁₁₁: There is statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.

H_{o12}: There is no statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.

H₁₁₂: There is a statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students based on their residential status.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would inform policymakers and university management to design and implement effective policies regarding student adjustment on university campuses. This study would shed light on areas of student low and high academic, social, and emotional adjustment. This would enable counsellors to design appropriate interventions to enhance their adjustment on university campuses. The study would serve as related literature to future researchers investigating issues relating to student adjustment in schools.

The findings of the study would also reveal the gender differences in the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students in the universities. It is expected that counsellors would use these findings to develop training programmes and seminars which should be tailored to the

adjustment needs of males and female first year students in the universities.

Students who develop emotional coping skills are often better at recognizing when they need help and are more likely to seek out appropriate support services. This is beneficial for guidance and counselling programmes, as it allows for more effective interventions at earlier stages, preventing issues from escalating into more severe emotional distress.

Emotionally adjusted students are more likely to engage in peer support and mentorship, contributing to a positive, supportive campus culture. Counsellors who foster emotional adjustment create a ripple effect where students, feeling supported and resilient, help other students cope with their own challenges.

Delimitations

The study was delimited geographically to the two public universities in the Ashanti region of Ghana. These were KNUST and AAMUSTED. The study was also delimited to first year regular students and excluded sandwich and post-graduate students of the two public universities in the region. In terms of variables, only academic, social, and emotional adjustment were examined among the students. Methodologically, the study made use of the descriptive survey design, sampled only first year students for the study, and utilized a questionnaire as the data collection instrument but not an interview.

Limitations

The study utilized a close-ended questionnaire for data collection, which constrained respondents to a set of pre-determined options. This method may have limited the depth and comprehensiveness of the responses. Additionally, the study's scope was restricted to two public universities within the Ashanti

Region, excluding other public universities in Ghana. Therefore, any attempt to generalize the findings beyond these two institutions should be approached with caution.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms in the study are defined in the context used.

Adjustment: The ability to adapt to one's surroundings. This means a person has the necessary internal systems to feel good, fit in, react appropriately to external pressures, and accomplish his or her goals.

High Adjustment: It refers to the ability of individuals to maintain a reasonable balance between their needs and that of the environment. A score of 2.5 or above on the research instrument implies high adjustment.

Low Adjustment: It refers to the inability of individuals to maintain a reasonable balance between their needs and that of the environment. Thus, a score below 2.5 on the research instrument is indicative of low adjustment.

Academic Adjustment: Academic adjustment refers to the extent to which first year students are able to meet the academic demands of their university courses.

Social Adjustment: Social adjustment pertains to how well first year students integrate into the university community and develop social relationships. It includes their ability to form friendships, participate in social activities, and feel a sense of belonging within the university environment.

Emotional Adjustment: Emotional adjustment involves the ability of first-year students to manage-range stress, cope with homesickness, and maintain emotional well-being while adapting to university life.

Regular First year student: First year student refers to any undergraduate student in a public university in Ghana. They exclude sandwich students and

post-graduates.

Freshmen: The term "freshmen" was used in the current study to refer to new students, both male and female, who are starting their first year of college and have no prior affiliation with the institution.

Public university: A public university is a university or college that is owned by the state and receives significant funding from the government.

Organisation of the Study

The study was structured into five chapters. Chapter One focused on the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter Two dealt with the literature review. The section consisted of three main divisions: the theoretical framework, conceptual review, and empirical review.

Chapter Three presented the research methods of the study. It covered the philosophical basis of the study, the research approach, the research design, the study area, the population, the sample and sampling procedure, the data collection instrument, the data collection procedure, and data processing and analysis.

Chapter Four presented the results and discussion of the study. The demographic data were analyzed descriptively. Frequencies and percentage ranges were used to present the demographic characteristics of respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data to answer research questions and test hypotheses respectively.

Chapter Five focused on the summary of the study, conclusions, and

recommendations. Implications for counselling and suggestions for further research were also provided.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to assess the academic, social and emotional adjustment of first year students in the two public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. This chapter outlines existing theories, concepts, and perspectives that are fundamental to the goals of this study. It also reviews what other researchers have written on the topic. This literature review consists of three main parts: theoretical framework, conceptual review and empirical review.

Theoretical Framework

According to Jacobs (2016), a theoretical framework is an approach to a study that includes a perspective, a prospect, or a set of lenses. Therefore, it can be viewed as a step in the explanation process of research. Theoretical framework sharpens the study's emphasis, as a result, making the research problem more distinct. Varpio et al. (2020) also explain that, a theoretical framework compiles linked concepts (or variables) and definitions to create propositions or hypotheses that explain the differences between the constructs. Three theories that underpinned this study are; "Social Identity Theory", "Transition Theory" and the Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) W-curve Model of Adjustment.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory is a classic social psychological theory that attempts to explain intergroup conflict as a function of group-based self-definitions. Henri Tajfel's early research, which sought to apply cognitive

grouping and gestalt phenomena to social groups, was the foundation for Social Identity Theory (Hogg & Williams, 2000).

According to the foundational idea of Social Identity Theory, people establish their own identities concerning social groupings, and these identifications serve to support and safeguard self-identity. Both categorising one's "in-group" in relation to an "out-group" and the propensity to perceive one's own group with a positive bias toward the out-group are necessary for the formation of group identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As a result, people begin to identify with a collective, depersonalised identity based on group membership and endowed with positive traits (Turner et al., 1987).

Tajfel et al. (1971) used a minimal group paradigm to test this judgmental accentuation. Judgmental accentuation is a process in which cognitive grouping emphasizes traits that distinguish one category from another. This idea, when applied to social groups, might be used to explain skewed and exaggerated perceptions of group differences. For the test, they split people into two groups based on arbitrary criteria and demonstrated that even this "minimal" division into groups caused people to establish psychological divisions, emphasizing the positive aspects of one's own group while magnifying the bad aspects of the out-group.

A variety of socially significant phenomena, such as negative assessments of the out-group (Dovidio et al., 1998), stereotyping and failure to provide resources to out-group members (Sidanius et al., 1994), have been attempted to be shown in subsequent studies. However, more recent studies have questioned whether social identification causes out-group degradation and have found that out-group degradation is less important than high in-group

respect (e.g., Reynolds et al., 2000).

According to Social Identity Theory, a person can define themselves as both an individual, such as "I" or "me," and a member of a social group, such as "we" or "us." When people define or categorize themselves with a social identity, they accept the numerous characteristics and traits that characterize that group and the other group members (Rees et al., 2015).

The Social Identity Theory places more emphasis on intergroup ties and group behavior. The theory has focused on the reasons and effects of connecting with a social group or category to solve difficulties relating to group relations. Social Identity Theory holds that individuals derive a portion of their identity, or social identity, from the organizations to which they belong (for instance, an identity as a "student," "woman," "left-hander," or "Chelsea supporter"). Social identities vary in power and substance. The strength component is conceptualized in terms of social identification (for example, "I strongly identify with Europeans"), whereas the content of social identity is determined by the group's characteristics (for example, the colors associated with a soccer team) and norms (for instance, "real men do not cry"). Social identity influences one's feelings (such as depression after a team loss) and actions (such as prejudice against outsiders or work on behalf of one's in-group; (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). However, the focus of social identity theorists has generally not been on these roles.

The Social Identity Theory assumes that first year students are likely to feel part of the university environment and feel good about themselves which eventually leads to a positive self-image-range. The theory emphasizes the influence of strong ties and collectiveness on the self-esteem of members. First

year students can improve their image-range as a group member by ensuring that the in- group can be positively distinguished from the out-group. In order to make the in-group distinctive favorably, group members frequently compete without- groups in social situations. The theory assumes that first year students who identify themselves as group members have a higher chance of boosting their self-esteem and enhancing their adjustment to the university environment.

Transition Theory

Schlossberg introduced the Transition Theory in 1981. In 1984, she continued to investigate the theory. The theory offered a framework to help comprehend adults going through a transition and point them toward the support they require to deal with routine and extraordinary living processes (Evans, et al., 2010).

Schlossberg makes a distinction between transition and adaptation. According to Schlossberg (1981), the process of adaptation is one in which a person shifts from being focused on the transformation to incorporating it into his or her life. On the other hand, a transition is any occurrence or absence of an event that alters a set of connections, practices, presumptions, or responsibilities (Schlossberg, 1981). A transition is therefore an occurrence or non-occurrence that a person notices and modifies their usual pattern of behavior.

Reactions to change can be intrapersonal or interpersonal and might vary. Different people respond to change differently; the same person responds differently to different changes; and the same person may respond differently to the same change depending on other factors in their life (Schlossberg, 1981). How people view their balance of resources to deficits affects how they

adapt, which is how they respond to and navigate the change brought on by the transition. This theory assumes that first year students' adjustment is based on several factors and different students may respond differently to adjustment.

Schlossberg (1981) categorized the factors that influence adaptation to transition into three main areas. The areas include the characteristics of the particular transition, transition environments, and the individual. Later, Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) developed a paradigm called the Four S's, or factors, that affect adaptation to transition. This framework was designed to assist people in identifying their resources as they get closer to a change and a new environment. This process of "taking stock" and identifying resources for "your situation, yourself, your supporters, and your tactics" was described by Chickering and Schlossberg (p. 49). A breakdown of the Four S's are as follows:

Situation

The individual's perception influences how they deem the situation and assess their resources. Some of the key factors to consider in the situation are:

- a) Trigger: To do this, one must identify the change's initiator. In other words, what caused the change or transition.
- b) Timing: This requires determining whether the change is taking place at a time that one perceives as favourable.
- c) Control: This entails considering what one has control over or can control.
- d) Role change: Finding out whether any role changes were viewed as positive or unfavourable changes is important.
- e) Duration: This entails determining if the change is temporary, ongoing,

or permanent.

- f) Concurrent stress: Finding out what other stresses are presently occurring is also of importance.
- g) Previous experience: determining if the transition-related experience in the past was positive or negative; and
- h) Assessment: This involves finding out who or what is responsible for the transition.

Self

Personal, demographic, and psychological resources constitute the self-factor. This indicates a person's assets and liabilities at a transitional phase. Gender, socioeconomic standing, health, and age range are personal and demographic traits. Psychological resources could include optimism, self-efficacy, values, coping mechanisms or tactics, and so on. The inference is that for example, first year students at KNUST would be better equipped to adjust if their psychological and personal resources could match the demands of the academic and social environment of the university. A freshman's capacity to deal with the pressures of the university environment would be stronger, for example, if he is in good health and has a high level of self-efficacy and vice versa.

Support

Support entails recognising the impact of networks and relationships on a person's capacity to adjust to the change of environment. These effects could be positive or negative. Positive means they improve or develop a person's capacity for adjustment, while negative means impede or weaken adjustment to the change. Family, friends, coworkers, the community, fellow

students and other organisations or networks with whom the student identifies themselves can all affect their adjustment to the university environment.

Strategies

Coping Strategies, the final 'S', talks about how people handle the changes they go through during a transition. In other words, coping strategies are the behaviours, thoughts, and emotions that you use to adjust to the changes that occur in your life. There are many coping styles that people use, and some may prove more effective than others, depending on the nature of the stressful situation and the person who is employing them. The four strategies often employed, or the approaches are information seeking, direct action, action inhibition, and intrapsychic behaviour.

The transition theory discusses that first-year students can adjust or adapt to the change or transition of attending university by carefully evaluating their circumstances, self-factors, social support, and coping mechanisms. The well-considered transition theory perspective could aid first year students at universities in their adjustment process. This is because a student can successfully deal with the challenges, they would encounter by accurately diagnosing an adjustment situation, identifying the existence of personal factors, and developing superior coping mechanisms. This makes Schlossberg's view on adjustment very relevant to this study.

W-curve Model of Adjustment

The Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) W-curve Model of Adjustment is a predictable pattern of stage ranges which occurs when a person experiences culture shock. This is based on research done with students studying abroad. Zeller and Mosier (1993) found that the W-Curve could also be applied to first

year college students and the phases they go through in adapting to a new culture. It's normal to have the ups and downs of the W-Curve, and knowing about this may help make the transition easier. At the first signs of culture shock, some first-year students may think this means they have made a mistake about going to college or that they have chosen the wrong school. If they see that this is just part of a journey that everyone goes through, they may be better able to take it all in stride.

Lysgaard's (1955) U-curve was expanded in the Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) W-curve correction model. According to Lysgaard (1955), who interviewed 200 Norwegians who had lived in the United States for various amounts of time, adjustment was a process that took time. According to Lysgaard's U-curve hypothesis, adjustment tends to progress in a U-shaped pattern, with good adjustment occurring during the first six months, an adjustment crisis occurring between six and eighteen months, and good adjustment occurring after eighteen months. Gullahorn and Gullahorn expanded the U-curve to the W-curve in 1963. The curve is shown in Figure 1.

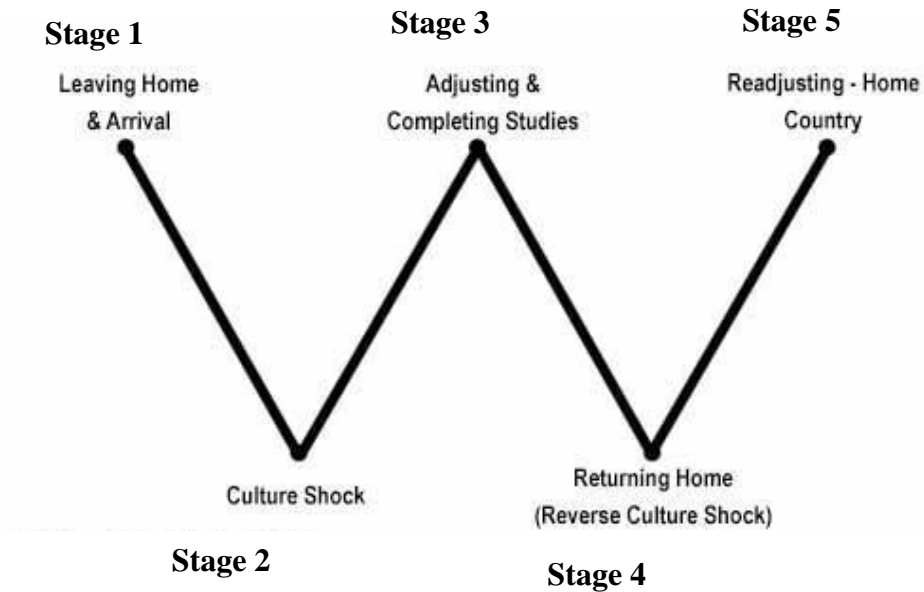


Figure 1: Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) W-curve model of adjustment

The W-curve suggests that students go through a five-stage-range process before they are fully integrated into the University community. These stage-ranges are explained below.

Stage 1: Honeymoon

Before a first- year student even gets to school, this phase begins and lasts for the first few days. This phase may start for some students when they get their university admission letter. It can be quite enticing to be independent and start over at a new school. The prospective freshman is optimistic, eager-ranger to make new friends, exercise more autonomy, and looking forward to the upcoming academic year. They have already begun their orientation and believe they understand the surroundings well. Homesickness results after this period.

Stage 2: Culture shock

The fresh student must constantly become used to new physical circumstances, including a roommate, navigating a new building, finding classrooms, the cafeteria, and may start consuming different foods. Unlike orientation, which is over after a few days, these activities continue. They feel more permanent to be here "full-time," especially since they cannot return home every day after school.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) assert that adjustment to new social environments also occurs. There may be either too many or too few persons present (often affected by the size of the community the student is from). Additionally, the student could feel like a "small fish in a big pond" who is no longer the "smartest child in the class" and under much more academic pressure. After the novelty of attending the university wears off, the student could start to experience overwhelming feelings and withdraw. Now, homesickness might get worse.

Stage 3: Initial adjustment

The physical surroundings have been adjusted to at this point. The student is more at ease on campus, has a better sense of direction, and has favorite hangout spots and friends. According to Owusu, Tawiah et al. (2014), outgoing students get to this stage-range more quickly than introverted students because they converse with their peers about their feelings. Additionally, the student starts to feel as though they have established a personal pattern, and university starts to resemble their home away from home. They can restore some control and normality in their lives with orientation.

Stage 4: Mental Isolation

The student could start to feel alone, no one else understands how they feel, and it is hard to make friends here. The subsequent experience is one of loneliness and homesickness. This is a crucial time for most students because a "crisis of confidence" could develop due to a real or imagined sense of intellectual inadequacy. Consequently, one feels a loss of prestige as a result. There are phrases like "I do not know if I can keep up" and "Maybe I am not as smart as I thought." This results in a higher level of stress, which disrupts one's sleep and eating schedules. When students discuss their thoughts with friends, parents, or counsellors, they find it easier to get through this stage-range. Fresh students must work to overcome this second culture shock, get over their loneliness, and integrate into their new campus communities. This necessitates merging their cultural values and beliefs with the surroundings of the new university environment.

Stage 5: Acceptance and integration

Fresh students, at this point, begin to feel better about themselves and rekindle their self-confidence. The realization that there are more similarities than distinctions among their classmates enhances their adjustment to the new university environment. The student starts to feel more at home physically, socially, and intellectually as they feel like they have a role to play in this new setting. As a result, they begin to exhibit their unique personalities, feel more equal among their peers, and stop feeling singled out as unusual. They have a readily available support system, interests, activities, favorite classes, and teachers they are familiar with. When students effectively adjust to their new learning environment, there is a genuine sense of acceptance and integration.

The Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) W-curve model of adjustment

emphasizes that one of the best remedies for managing culture shock starts with an understanding that culture shock exists. Therefore, the W-curve model perspective could help first year students at universities in their adjustment process. This is because with the requisite knowledge, first year students can successfully deal with the problems they would encounter by accurately identifying a cultural shock-adjustment situation, learning about, and getting acquainted with the new campus environment, developing friendships and setting out a routine they can aid their adjustment process.

Deductions from the theory reveal that first-year students undergo five stage-ranges before they can feel fully accepted and integrated into the university environment. Transition through these stage-ranges takes time since they embattle challenges of academic, social and financial nature. Most fresh students also face accommodation and emotional challenges and need to go through these five stage-ranges before their adjustment process can successfully complete.

The three theories reviewed in this section all offer frameworks that help explain the experiences of individuals navigating new environments. Each of these theories emphasizes different aspects of adjustment, but together they provide a comprehensive understanding of the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of adjustment and transition. Social Identity Theory helps explain why individuals experience culture shock and the emotional challenges that arise from moving to a new environment. The theory provides insight into how cultural differences impact the individual's sense of belonging, which is critical to understanding the adjustment process of students. Transition Theory complements this by providing a broader framework for understanding how

individuals cope with and adjust to new environment. While Social Identity Theory focuses on the internal struggle between old and new identities, Transition Theory looks at the stage-ranges and processes of adjustment over time, offering practical insights into the emotional ups and downs students undergo during cross-cultural transitions. The W-Curve Model focuses on the cyclical nature of adjustment, accounting for the emotional highs and lows individuals experience. It integrates both Social Identity Theory and Transition Theory by showing how cultural shock and adjustment occur over time. The model's recognition of both initial excitement and later frustration captures the transitional phases described in Transition Theory and the identity challenges identified in Social Identity Theory. Together, these theories provide a holistic understanding of transition, emphasizing both the psychological and social dimensions of the adjustment process.

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review of this work covered the concept of adjustment, academic adjustment, social adjustment, and emotional adjustment.

Concept of Adjustment

Balancing one's needs and difficulties in their surroundings is called an adjustment, which comes from the Latin word *adjustare*. Initially, the concept of adjustment was taken from biology. It was designed after the biology concept of "adaptation," which describes an organism's response to environmental change. Adjustment is frequently used interchangeably with accommodations and adaptations (Asare, 2020).

Adjustment also refers to the dynamic processes that, at the end, could result in the realization of a good fit between the individual and the

environment. The term refers to the outcomes of equilibrium, which may be impacted by either of these processes in its strictest sense. It can be used to highlight how hard it is for a person to survive in both their physical and social environment (Ramsay et al., 2007).

These definitions offer more extensive interpretations of adjustment that consider all facets of human existence. According to Knight (2011), the complementary processes of dissocializing and socialization are necessary for transitioning to university life. Desocialization is altering one's essential values, beliefs, and personality traits due to the university experience.

Adjustment is transitioning over time as a university student acclimatizes to the university environment (Bhat & Basu, 2021). The term “adjustment” in this study specifically tackles the issues that university students face as they try to handle the stress related to their studies in the new cultural and academic setting. Sociocultural adjustment describes how well the student can fit into the new cultural setting, whereas psychological adjustment deals with the student’s emotional well-being in the new environment.

Adjustment studies on this niche of students can help identify effective ways of handling the acculturation process they experience. This study generally attempts to analyze the adjustment of first year university students, comparing correlations between different factors that affect the student’s ability to adapt to the new environment. From a social lens, research since the 1980s has focused on acculturation and its related stress and how students cope with it in a new environment (Mukhroni, 2021). According to Bergin and Jimmieson, (2017) recent researches have, however, been geared toward studying how international students adjust to their new environments to relieve them of the

associated stressors and adjustment difficulties and increase their focus on the positive aspects of their travelling experience.

Adjustment to University and Academic Performance

Experiencing the new university environment can be exciting and challenging for first year students. Different individuals react differently to this new experience (Singh, 2012). The university environment drastically differs from that of the high school system. Anxiety might arise when students try to adapt to the social, academic, personal and lifestyle scenarios that come with the university education (Petersen et al., 2019). It is a widespread belief nowadays that graduation from the high school level needs to be improved to prepare students for the independent experience that a university education presents.

Since university adjustments have been directly linked to university outcomes, this trend has been very worrying (Petersen et al., 2019). The feeling of inadequacy and ill-preparedness on the part of students can quickly develop into depression or anxiety. The rates of psychological morbidity have been increasing on university campuses, especially among first year students worldwide (Norman, 2020). The first-year student may need clarification on the discourse of academic disciplines in advanced education. The confusion worsens if the students' cultural and language-range backgrounds differ from the university campus's dominant identity. In the academic sense, the demand increases, as well as forging new social relations in the university (Sadoughi & Hesampour, 2016). There is an uncertainty that students feel about themselves being able to meet such demands. Independent pursuit of an academic course can prove very troubling for students who are mainly accustomed to depending

on the teacher as the absolute authority in their various courses (Alkorashy, 2020).

Researchers (Bruffaerts et al., 2018; Credé, & Niehorster 2012) have presented materials to show that poor university adjustment correlates with poor academic performance, decreased graduation rates and diminished chances of success in later life. Many high school graduates have difficulties, academically and socially, that tend to slow down their adaptation to the new environment presented by the university (Gerdes, & Mallinckrodt 1994). The inability to successfully meet the requirements and challenges the university environment presents can negatively impact students' learning (Fleming, 2012).

Adjustment was viewed by Belay et al. (2018), as individuals' attempt to handle the problems they encounter in their environment. The environment tertiary students find themselves in becomes their learning institution. Terrazas-Carrillo, Hong and Pace (2014) considered adjustment as a process that involves the relationship between an individual and his environment and an attempt to maintain a reasonable balance between the individual's wants and that of the environment. The outcome of the relationship may negatively or positively influence that relationship. Asare (2020) and Swail (2014) conceded to the impact of adjustment of higher education settings on the retention, completion and general well-being of students in tertiary institutions. Manyanga et al. (2017) emphasized the consensus on social, emotional and academic performance and its impact on the retention of students in schools. He argued that despite different criteria and approaches for developing student adjustment models, they all still arrive at the same elements of impact mentioned above.

The Inspectorate of Education conducted research in 2016 and revealed that in Dutch universities, first years have the highest dropout rate. This is significantly in line with the findings of Gerodetti and Nixon (2019) in a similar study conducted in universities in Britain. O'Donnell et al. (2018) considered academic adjustment as the most relevant form of adjustment because of the role of adaptability to academic affairs' role in retention. Holliman et al. (2018) argue that academic adjustment greatly influences academic performance. Crede and Niehorster (2012) believed otherwise and argued that social adjustment holds equal importance with academic adjustment. Crede and Niehorster (2012) described it as the primary influence on student's social life, ranging from their ability to make friends to their integration into halls of residence.

Cuseo (2019) posited that past problems with the transition from high school could negatively influence the emotional adjustment of students in universities. Students with past experiences of not receiving help from their old institutions could project their negative experiences to their new institution of study. Students' ability to be retained in school is influenced by their dedication to graduation and study institution (Cuseo, 2019).

The adjustment of students throughout their university experience could be predicted by what goes on during the transition to the university; the transition, therefore, can be measured by the ability of students to adjust. This was confirmed by research conducted by Urquhart and Pooley (2007) when they concluded that students who encounter many personal, academic, and social problems during the transition are pressured into making major decisions that may later harm them. Adewole (2019), however, highlighted the

advantages of promoting independence, building the tenacity of students, and forming relationships. The presence of the advantage-ranges still needs to eliminate the disadvantage-ranges of the transition to the university.

Improving adjustment to university and retention

Mettler et al. (2017) believe that the problem of student adjustment in universities can be adequately dealt with only when universities get to know and understand the challenges students face in adjustment. This would enable them to institute appropriate intervention programmes to counter the problem. The findings of Kural and Özyurt (2020) are evidential to this claim because after conducting research among six British universities, they concluded that it was more successful in having individually tailored solutions to adjustment problems at the entry-level than that of a blanket one. The findings proved that there was a direct relationship between the retention of students and their ability to graduate as compared to previous years when such individual-tailored interventions were not available. Wolcott (2019) believes that adjustment-induced student retention problems in universities can be adequately dealt with only when universities know and understand students' adjustment challenges. This would enable them to release appropriate intervention programmes to counter the problem.

Academic Adjustment

Academic Adjustment refers to fulfilling various tasks related to educational demands, such as focusing on studying and keeping track of their academic work. Academic Adjustment comprises attitudes toward academic goals and work, course of study, and academic performance (Credéi & Niehorster 2012). Throughout their academic careers, students are exposed to

a variety of situations. They encounter numerous challenges when transitioning from high school to higher education, or when transitioning to graduating level. Students are sometimes compelled or choose to leave their nation to further their education to accomplish their future aspirations. Some factors influencing first-year students' academic success include motivation, capabilities, ability to implement plans, ability to identify and join a working study group, ability to perform well in examinations and quizzes, and satisfaction with their chosen universities (Rivas- Drake, 2010). Students pay close attention to international ranking lists when choosing a higher educational programme for universities. It has been discovered that academic suitable protection of universities and appropriate facilities of institutes can increase students' academic performance (Russell et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008).

Research indicates that the adjustment of students happens to be difficult and this may negatively affect students' learning and academic standings. This would mostly mean that students would not satisfy higher education demands because students are not adequately familiarized with the university requirements (Raskin, 2017). Academic adjustment influences academic accomplishment, according to prior studies (Bailey & Phillips 2016; Rienties et al., 2012).

The concept of academic adjustment can be used to describe how successfully a first year student interacts with the academic requirements and demands of the university setting.

Aspelmeier et al. (2012), Rienties et al. (2012), and Wintre et al. (2011) repeatedly demonstrated the importance of academic adjustment in predicting

achievement in higher education. One of the longstanding and permanent challenge of university education is the issue of academic adjustment. Researchers (Duraku, 2017; Semer and Harmening, 2015) in the field have identified the magnitude of factors affecting academic adjustment to give students an idea of what they might do to adjust academically and implicitly be in good academic standings in their new universities. Although defining academic adjustment is challenging, it is mainly viewed as an integrating construct (Rivas-Drake, 2010).

According to Cemakilar and Falbo (2008), reasonable academic adjustment was related to lesser self-reported class skipping. In other words, a student with high academic adjustment levels is interested in attending classes because, besides understanding and enjoying lectures, the student interacts well with colleagues and faculty and performs well academically. First year students who adjusted academically to the university environment are more likely to complete their tertiary education than first year students who find this adjustment difficult.

Asare (2020) stated that being anxious, angry, stressed, depressed, vulnerable, moody, and mentally unstable are some of the effects of the inability of students to adjust academically. Awabil (2013) highlighted that study skills, time management, and academic performance are very necessary for the academic adjustment of students.

Study Skills

Study skills are the various learning strategies that aid students in organizing, processing and utilizing information effectively. Awabil (2013) identified four main groupings of study skills that are needed for students in

their bid to pursue academic success. The groupings are: Repetition strategies, Procedural strategies, Cognitive-based skills and Meta-cognitive- based skills.

Repetition or Rehearsal-based Study Strategies

One of the most fundamental study strategies is repetition, re-reading or rehearsing information. This strategy is vital when keeping small amounts of information or information used for a short term or used frequently. Due to how easy the rehearsal study strategies tend to be, they are part of the strategies taught to young children. Teachers at the preschool level may utilize repetition strategies to aid the learners in attaining essential reading and mathematics skills. An instance is the use of flashcards, which are primarily used in aiding children in learning spelling, vocabulary and some mathematics content (Manivannan, 2018).

Procedural or Organisational-based Study Strategies

These types of study skills aid the student in fully utilizing their study time. Many different skill sets combine to achieve procedural study skills, including managing time, organizing materials, and developing schedules to achieve consistency during study periods (Manivannan, 2018). Personalization of the organizational routines maximizes its benefits; students draw up their own monthly, weekly, and daily plans for their studies (Szabo, 2017).

Cognitive-Based Study Skills

This type of study strategy is to aid the student embark on proper thinking routines about the information they are supposed to learn. The information processing theory suggests that more excellent knowledge about a particular content increases the likelihood of students thinking about, understanding, and remembering it (Szabo, 2017). An enhancement is achieved

when new material is meaningful to learners and fused with existing knowledge. The schemata, information kept as a connected network of facts and concepts, are more easily learned and remembered by students. The generation of questions and summarizing are cognitive-based study skills that aid students in revisiting and making connections with previous knowledge (Gralewski, 2019).

Meta-cognitive-based Study Skills

The level to which learners can implement study skills when mainly needed depends on their respective metadata capacity, which is their ability to analyze the need for studying and plan and evaluate their various study approaches. A significant difference between cognitive-based study skills and meta-cognitive-based study is the former's focus on processing information. In contrast, the latter focuses on the ability of students to evaluate and adopt strategies to their benefit (Lou, 2017). For a successful studying life, meta-cognitive-based study is crucial. It enables the learners to flexibly adopt a studying system dependent on the changing task demands. Mastering this skill is associated with effective studying as the learners understand the strategies to adopt, evaluate their learning, and appropriately allocate their time. They then become familiar with the various cognitive strategies that prove helpful to them and control the use of such strategies in their study lives (Gralewski, 2019). From the deliberations it can be seen that study skills are the various strategies that help learners navigate the academic challenges of university life, and these comprise many aspects, including time management, test-taking, concentration, note-taking, and reading.

Time Management

A set of skills in managing, planning, and using time appropriately is referred to as time management (Ubsdell, 2015). The right investment and appropriate distribution of time are critical in a student's life. The required study time of individuals concerns the speed and efficiency students use for a particular task assigned to them and how easily they can adapt to the challenges these tasks posit. To ensure proper time management, planning and organizing to curtail interruptions with regular studies are relevant (Aeon & Panaccio, 2018).

Test-taking

Some students' anxiety before and during tests and their emotional experiences have always been a dicey issue for counsellors, researchers and authorities. These problems may hurt the student's academic success and general well-being of the student (Salehi, 2011). Test anxiety can be minimized by giving students study skill training and test-taking seminars to prepare them for tests adequately.

Concentration

One major factor that can inhibit the successful academic pursuits of students is the presence of unwanted distractions during class sessions, finishing assignments and studying (Al Fraidan, 2019). Focusing and attention for desired periods are crucial for learning, especially in an organized setting. Concentration difficulty may result from irregular sleep patterns (Walker, 2017), exercise (Ratey & Loehr, 2011) and eating habits (Fernandez-Garcia et al., 2020). Notwithstanding, students may not readily establish the link between proper physical health and intellectual activities.

Note-taking

The integral nature of taking and reviewing notes in the university academic system has informed the researcher to research on how students undertake note-taking and review their notes and how to ensure improvements. According to Kiewra (2015), tertiary students firmly believe that note taking assists them in attending lectures, understanding the course materials, and remembering the course content. The note taking activity was shown to have relevant effects on students' academic achievements (Korsgaard, 2020). This research buttresses the view that note-taking is essential to students' academic performance.

Reading

Reading comprehension is the complex cognitive process of integrating text information with an individual's existing knowledge and producing a mental representation of the content. Akkakoson (2013) posits that successful reading skills in the early stage-ranges of an individual's life may result in a desirable progression in terms of academic and psychosocial development, while the opposite may result in undesirable results in the academic aspect of a person's life. University students can achieve an effective reading process if they adopt the appropriate reading comprehension skills. These skills can help students recall main points, differentiate between vital and unnecessary information, and critically analyze and comment on the subject where necessary (Wang et al., 2018).

Social Adjustment

The degree to which students can adapt to the social aspect of their educational life is known as social adjustment. The factors influencing students'

social adaptation are the university's reputation and participation in certain social activities. It also includes social communities present, the students' social relations with peers and friends and the student's awareness of their own social integration life (Sarimski, 2018).

A study in a public university in Malaysia, identified that although academic adjustment was the most critical indicator of a student's achievements, it had no significant ties with their social adjustment or their social attachment to the university. The suggestion has therefore been that the transition into a university environment must involve a much larger and impersonal structure that focuses most on the assessment and achievements of students (Meadows, 2014).

Social adjustment involves adapting to interpersonal-societal demands of the university experience, such as making friends, involving in social activities, being away from home and satisfying the university's social environment requirements (Malau-Aduli et al., 2021).

Social adjustment involves the adaptation to the social domain of their educational life (Rienties et al., 2012). Social adjustment relates to concerns about how the demands of the university setting affect a student. The social adjustment refers explicitly to how well students have assimilated into the university's social scene. This covers relationships issues and social activities organized by the university. Relationship quality is positively related to all aspects of adjustment to university (Swenson et al., 2008). According to Inman (2017), gender has an impact on how well university students acclimatize and view their mental health. Winga et al. (2011) in Kenya, however, found no evidence of gender effects on pupils' academic adjustment. Similarly, Al-Qaisy

(2010) claimed that whereas female students find it difficult to adjust socially, male students exhibit superior adjustment. According to Nidhi and Kermane (2015) in a related study, neither gender is superior to the other when it comes to how college students of both genders adjust. Conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness may increase the likelihood of a greater university adjustment because social skills and established relationships foster successful integration into the university social environment, which is a major predictor of students' persistence at the institution (Braxton et al., 2014; Gray et al., 2013).

Furthermore, Clinciu (2014) uncovered that whereas females adjust well academically but have poor social adjustment levels, males adjust well socially but are poor academically. Bhagat (2016) also noted that there are gender differences in student adjustment, with females scoring higher on intellectual and emotional adaptations while males scoring higher on social adjustments. In agreement, Panth et al. (2015) noted that boys of comparable age-range groups had lower emotional adaptations than girls. As Mtshweni (2021) noted, gender has a key role in determining adjustment among university students, which has an impact on dropout rates as more girls' experience adjustment difficulties than boys.

An association of friends usually provides a context within which a first year student can truly express him or herself, feel comfortable and have positive experiences on campus. Ultimately, this will serve as a cushion against loneliness and the presence of positive experiences (Phillips & Schweisfurth, 2013). Regarding interpersonal activities, some studies have found that first year students who adjusted well to the university environment spend more time

socializing with friends (Gargono, 2012), and these students show signs of happiness in their platonic and romantic social relationships (Dacosta, 2010). According to Rienties et al. (2012), social adjustment can be influenced by the university's reputation in social activities, students' participation in social communities, social relations of students with their friends in the same social networks and students' perception of their own social integration.

An essential area of social adjustment is involvement in university social activities. Studies have shown that interaction with fellow students through leisure, extracurricular activities and socialization through clubs and associations has a positive effect on students' academic performance beyond the classroom. For instance, Jean (2010) established that successful social adjustment ultimately influences the ability of students to earn higher grade point average ranges. Similarly, in their study, Gómez et al. (2014) showed that social networks developed through sports and leisure positively correlated to the social adjustment levels of first year students. They further argued that students' interpersonal relationships and study groups are crucial in affecting the social adjustment of first year students.

Student Interpersonal Relationships

Research has established that the ability of students to adjust to the university environment correlates with their ability to establish relationships with their peers (Farajollahi & Moenikia, 2010). The involvement with an ethnic community by forming strong ties with other cultures and identities was deemed the most critical parameter that influences the adjustment process of international students (Çoban, 2020). Teachers who can employ interpersonal

skills competently and efficiently in the delivery of educational services are more likely to foster friendship among students and hence affect favorable attitudes about their learning settings. Schools encourage-range the value of achievement by encouraging students to strive for high levels of academic attainment and rewarding those who succeed (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Additionally, there should be a reasonably sized cultural community for the student. When students become overly integrated into other ethnic communities, it creates problems that could negatively affect their self-esteem. Also, including fresh students in the more robust social networks of the continuing students was found to improve the adjustment process of the fresh students. The world region international students hail from determines their likelihood of interacting with American students, as pointed out by a study in the USA designed by Karimovna (2021) to analyze the level to which these interactions inform the socialization patterns of the student. Students from the Western parts of Europe and good English fluency were more likely to interact with American students. According to a study by Poyrazli and Grahame (2007), the interaction of international students with Americans needed to be improved.

Academic growth and interpersonal relationships with peers are strongly correlated (Juvonen et al., 2012). Numerous studies demonstrating the advantage-ranges of positive peer relationships for young people's academic and extracurricular functioning are based on these relationships (Martin & Dowson, 2009; Wentzel, 2010). For instance, research on motivation and engagement has found that adolescents who participate in constructive peer interactions are more motivated, show greater engagement, and perform better academically (Liem & Martin, 2011).

Interpersonal relationships have been advocated as a defense against risk and stress, a tool for task completion, emotional support in daily life, a company in shared interests, and a foundation for social and emotional growth (Martin et al., 2009). Relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, for instance, promote healthy social, emotional, and intellectual functioning and positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem in students (Martin & Dowson, 2009).

Study Groups

A group of students working together to complete desired tasks is considered a study group. In addition to academic benefits, it is believed to have social and economic ones. The provision of explanations to group members by other groups encourage-ranges the exchange of ideas and the identification of underlying principles. Students have the ability to identify, make clear, rearrange, and solve content, leading to the creation of fresh insights through the process of explanation. Furthermore, students can enhance their comprehension and definition of information by engaging in the process of receiving explanations (Kirschner et al., 2009).

The learning method known as a study group involves two or more students cooperating to achieve a common learning objective. It can be an effective strategy for addressing the higher enrolment growth in higher education, especially in cutting down on the amount of time needed for doing assignment (Davies et al, 2009).

Also known as cooperative learning, a study group, as defined by Gomleksiz (2007), is when students collaborate to accomplish learning objectives. Various studies have offered various theories regarding how

groups are formed. Others used ability rankings because they believed that grouping intelligent students with less intelligent ones would enable the latter to observe and learn from the former, ultimately leading to improved performance, (Nihalani et al., 2010).

In her investigation of the impact of cooperative learning on students' English reading skills, Wichadee (2005) reports a more thorough definition of cooperative learning. According to Wichadee, cooperative learning is a pedagogical strategy that promotes student-student interaction by having students work in small groups to accelerate their learning and accomplish their goals. According to research, cooperative learning boosts student relationships and achievement. Working in groups is also influenced by the students' attitudes (Wichadee, 2005).

The learning method known as group work involves two or more students cooperating to achieve a common objective. It can be an effective strategy for addressing the higher enrolment growth in higher education, specially in cutting down on the amount of time needed for doing assignment. (Davies et al., 2009).

Loneliness

According to Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010), loneliness is the perception that one's social needs are not met by their current social connections. It is well known that this feeling is more than just a result of having few social interactions. One of the most effective predictors of loneliness is poor social interaction quality or the absence of meaningful interactions (Lee & Ko, 2017). Students frequently experience loneliness, which can affect their ability to focus in class, their social skills, and their chances of making friends.

Additionally, it has been associated to psychological illnesses like alcoholism, suicidal thoughts, sadness, anxiety, addiction, low self-esteem, false positives, delinquency, and poor academic performance. When kids are isolated from their loved ones and friends, it can be challenging for them to build positive social connections. This premise implies that fostering more profound and meaningful social interactions can lessen loneliness by reducing existing loneliness (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). Due to their use of coping mechanisms, students reported that loneliness had adverse biopsychosocial, spiritual, economic effects (Tanhan, 2020).

Families and friends should encourage-range students to form close friendships with new people they meet on campus-to prevent loneliness. The difference between a person's ideals and their actual interpersonal interaction success is what causes loneliness. On the other hand, attachment anxiety is associated with significant distress in reaction to stressors and a propensity for negative assessments (Altan et al., 2019), which may lead to unfavourable expectations for and concern with university life. Indeed, high levels of attachment anxiety have been linked to dysfunctional coping methods, increased maladjustment, and lower levels of well-being throughout the university transition (Berry & Kingswell, 2012). When compared to their peers, very anxious pupils report higher levels of loneliness and worse levels of integration (Carr et al., 2013). Furthermore, highly anxious people perceive their daily person-environment transactions with more negative affect and subjective stress (Sheinbaum et al., 2015), demonstrating that people's instantaneous affective states and cognitive evaluations differ depending on their attachment type. There are conflicting data on the association between

attachment avoidance and university adjustment; there appears to be either a negative or no relationship between these two variables (Berry & Kingswell, 2012; Galatzer-Levy & Bonanno, 2012). People who lack the required social skills and have unfavorable expectations are more prone to feel lonely.

According to research, adolescent students are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of loneliness. In a UK survey, 34% of students between age-ranges 18 and 24 reported feeling lonely. One of the factors contributing to poor mental health in higher education has been identified as feelings of social isolation and loneliness (Danneel et al., 2018). With 94% of universities reporting an increase in the demand for counselling services, more than 15,000 students disclosed mental health conditions to their universities in 2015–16, a fivefold increase from 2006–07 (Thorley, 2017).

Emotional Adjustment

Emotional adjustment describes the state of psychological well-being and sense of physical well-being. According to Canagarajah (2013), parents may make it difficult for first year students to make emotional adjustments. University students rank family expectations and disagreements as the second most stressful events that can happen to them. These stressful events could be made worse by problems like stress, anxiety, and/or insomnia. Students that showed emotional stability displayed higher test scores for overall excellent mental health and lower test scores for both general and particular components of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders. Students who do better on the SACQ (emotional adjustment) also perform better on tests of general physical health, report experiencing fewer physical symptoms, go to the health center less frequently for medical visits, and miss fewer classes as a

result of good health. According to Rienties et al. (2011), the degree of a student's adaptability to the personal and emotional demands of their educational life is known as their emotional adjustment. Physical abuse of a person's body leads directly to his mental, emotional, psychological, and personal feelings (Keating et al., 2010). As a result, students' physical health can play an important role in their emotional adjustment. According to Keating et al. (2010), having a good physical condition and engaging in regular physical activity helps college students' morale and mental health.

Emotional adjustment is deemed a critical area of adaptation for students (Eftekhari, 2021). The degree to which students can adapt to the personal and emotional demands of their educational life is the emotional adjustment (Thorlacius & Gudmundsson, 2014). Regular physical activities and proper physical conditions were crucial and improved students' intellect and emotional adjustment prowess in the new university environment. Stress, personality stress, resilience, homesickness and loneliness are important deciders in the emotional adjustment of students (Eftekhari, 2021). These elements are reviewed below.

Stress

A condition caused by an individual's interaction with the environment leading to a perception of a painful offset, which may be real or imaginary, between what is demanded of them and the available resources (socially, biologically and psychologically) is termed Stress (Setterlind & Larsson, 2015). Past research, examined adult attachment and felt stress as two potential indicators of how well students will adjust to university life. Individuals react differently to stressful situations cognitively, and they are more likely to rely

on habitual coping mechanisms that they learned earlier in life. There are different ways in which individuals react to stressful situations, partly due to how they perceive a situation. Herman (2017) indicated that individuals perceiving a scenario as harmful would most likely react distressed, making them feel oppressed, out of control and overpowered. Distress is the most relatable and common form of Stress. Conversely, eustress is the positive perception of a scenario and is deemed chiefly good stress (Yu, 2016).

To some extent, every individual experience stress and its accompanying physiological impacts. It can cause the individual to experience increased blood pressure, headaches, insomnia and weakened immunity, thereby negatively impacting their general well-being (Mullan, 2014). The sources of stress for the fresh student can range from anywhere between inter and intrapersonal relationships as well as academic and environmental contexts. Research by Milliner (2020), with 124 respondents, 50.8% indicated that they are always stressed with things like their academic work, time management, planning and sleep pattern, which happened to be the most reported source of stress. It was also realized that students who reported higher stress levels led unhealthy lifestyles regarding eating and sleeping patterns. Students who slept for less than seven hours a night reported higher stress levels than those who had more than seven hours sleep at night (Milliner & Donnellan, 2020). The sentiments and ideas that a person has regarding the level of stress they are currently experiencing or throughout the course of time are considered to be perceived stress in the current study. Individuals who are avoidantly attached, tend to deny attachment demands, conceal emotions, and diminish close relationships (Gillath et al., 2019; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019; Nolte et

al., 2011). Although anxious and avoidant patterns may be useful for survival in infancy and childhood, the affect regulation strategies that accompany them have a negative impact on an individual's cognitive, emotional, and social development, as well as their mental health in adulthood (Adshead, 2018).

One of the established effects of stress on university students is depression. The overall mental health strain is one of the constraints associated with stress in students, notably freshers and international students. In (Sprung and Rogers, 2021), when asked, “What is stress?” some of the responses students gave were “feeling much tension at a given time,” “when you are frustrated about doing poorly on a test,” and “the reaction you get when things are not working for you” among others. The most common type of stress that affects fresh students is acculturative stress.

Acculturative Stress

The stress that students go through when they start schooling in a new university (Rimawi & Rimawi, 2020) is known as acculturative stress. Acculturative stress poses substantial potential risks to the health of many first year students who are yet to adjust to their university's new cultural environment. Acculturative stress is the anxiety people feel as they adjust to a new culture, particularly when they are in intercultural contact. In addition to pressures relating to language-range proficiency, norm compliance, and assimilation to the dominant culture, this pressure involves the perceived disparity between cultural demands and available resources. A risk factor for poor mental health outcomes, including depression, is acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is measured by the Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (MASI), which evaluates stresses from mainstream American and

Latino cultures. In an environment where acculturation puts pressure on people, maintaining important aspects of traditional Latino culture may guard against mild depression. Research on 900 students in American universities indicated that 41% faced substantial stress levels in the first year (Malhotra, 2020). The language-range barrier was deemed the most influential factor inducing stress and preventing an easy adjustment for international students in the given university. A similar study showed that international first year students with limited English fluency had fewer chances of integrating into peer groups and subsequently experienced limited academic success in school (Behera et al., 2018).

Students possess varied personal values, diverse approaches to perceiving and assimilating information, distinct sets of personality traits, and consequently, exhibit varying degrees of comprehension. The contention often put forth is that achieving success in one's profession and even education necessitates a blend of personality attributes. Specific features of each personality traits contribute to emotional adjustment (Klimstra et al., 2018; Tamannaefar & Shahmirzaei, 2019).

Personality Traits

Each student has a unique perspective on their identity, highlighted by their personality traits (Mcleod, 2017). Knowing the student's personality type is crucial because it will enable him or her to communicate and aid his or her adjustment. Personality helps people in navigating their way through a world that is constantly changing. The behavior and mindset an individual develop and exhibits towards others is called a personality trait. Personality is one's conception of who they are; it is their awareness of how certain behaviors are

perceived and demonstrated in their environment (Cherry, 2022).

Studies have proposed that agreeable people use problem-solving coping styles and seek social support that makes them handle the stressor well when in stressful situations (Fornes-Vives et al., 2016). Only openness to experience has not revealed any significant results (Ebstrup et al., 2011; Saklofske et al., 2012). Extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism are the only personality dimensions that have been showing robust results with stress perception in many studies (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Kim et al., 2017).

Furthermore, because stressful life events generate depressive episodes and high neuroticism is one of the significant stress susceptibility characteristics (Hasel et al., 2011), neuroticism may interfere with the adjustment process by increasing the chance of depression. Similarly, negative valence is associated with low levels of self-worth and reliance on others (Genc, & Oncu, 2012), which may reduce the likelihood of creating a social group. Because the first year of university is demanding and requires social support networks to turn in when needed, negative valence may have a negative impact on university adjustment. In contrast to the previously listed personality traits, openness to experience is a feature that has little or no link with the majority of the adjustment-related factors (Mousavi, 2017). Contrarily, neuroticism is primarily associated with high levels of stress sensitivity and threat assessments, which could obstruct the adjustment process (Howe et al., 2017; Knapp, 2018; Lehto et al., 2016; Morales et al., 2019). Individuals with a high level of neuroticism are more likely to engage-range in unpleasant relationships and are less likely to engage-range in adaptive behaviors such as mutual

problem-solving (Woszidlo & Segrin, 2013). If the individual considers the circumstance to be personally significant and upsetting, it is regarded as a loss, a threat, or a challenge. A threat is a circumstance in which the individual considers their ability to cope with stress to be insufficient. Perceived stress is defined as an individual's feelings and thoughts about the level of stress they are currently experiencing or have experienced over a period of time (Phillips, 2013), whereas university fresh students are defined as incoming students who begin their first year at university with no prior connection to the university. Indeed, personality is an important topic in discussions of stress because it impacts how individuals view a situation as a threat, a challenge, or a damage-range (Leger et al., 2016).

In order to successfully adapt to the new environment of the university, the importance of resilience cannot be overstated (Eisenberg et al., 2016). Resilience has been shown to help fresh students to cope in the face of academic challenges and also help to limit the risk of distress, and manage-range the demands presented by the school system (Brewer et al., 2019).

Resilience

Resilience is understood as referring to positive adaptation, or the ability to maintain or regain mental health, despite experiencing adversity (Hermann et al., 2011) Students who are resilient depend on this strength as a central determinant of mental health. Resilience allows people to maintain or recover good mental health in the face of adversity. Resilience is also an important determinant of academic performance; it allows students to persist through and bounce back from academic challenges, such as failing an exam (Leary & DeRosier, 2012).

A student's lack of resilience can increase his chance of experiencing psychological distress and his propensity for adjustment problems. The focus of researchers on resilience has always been on first year students with long and short-term problems like signing up for classes, finishing assignments and experiencing academic and environmental stress (Chadwick, 2019). Studies have proven that resilience positively correlates with better mental health and a smooth adjustment process, and this means that first-year students ought to be very resilient if they want to be successful in their new university environment (Rosenbaum & Weatherford, 2017).

Homesickness

Homesickness is defined by Poyrazli and Lopez (2007) in their exploratory study conducted in the US as the response displayed by people when their familiar surroundings or people are absent. Additionally, they point out that an international student's adjustment process may be hampered by homesickness, resulting in sadness and loneliness. They contend that homesickness impacts an international student's behavior, physical health, and psychological well-being. Similar observations were made by Thurber and Walton (2012), who noted that being away from home in an unfamiliar environment could cause stress and anxiety in students.

They went on to say that physical and psychological effects of stress could occasionally lead to people quitting their studies. Not only that but research by Poyrazli and Lopez, (2007) and Tochkov et al. (2010) has shown that students' academic performance can be impacted by homesickness. These studies have highlighted the need to establish preventative strategies for a better emotional adjustment of students in a new host environment, given the

detrimental effects of homesickness on a sojourner.

Empirical Review

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the adjustment of first year students in KNUST and AAMUSTED. Because of its link to strong academic achievement and a decrease in the dropout rate of students, particularly first year students, research on student adjustment has increased from the past 20 years.

A study of the literature suggests that after enrolling in a university, students go through an adjustment phase. In terms of experiences like creating and upholding objectives, expectations, identities, roles, and social networks, as well as student attrition, student adjustment comprises academic, social, and emotional adjustment (Baker & Syrik, 1999). The university's atmosphere is recognized as the finest venue to develop students' beliefs, behaviors, and resilience in confronting life obstacles (Siah & Tan, 2015). Schultz (2008) in his study of fresh students at the University of Alaska claims that when faced with difficulties in their new surroundings, fresh students use a variety of coping techniques, including self-effort, establishing friends, social networking, and religious practices. These methods are intended to aid first year students in adjusting to the academic setting (Salami, 2011) in order to promote overall progress (Malinga-Musamba, 2014). Students who transfer from secondary schools to universities are likely to suffer adjustment issues as a result of being exposed to different environments.

The majority of first year students generally agree that adjusting to university is the most difficult period of their university life. The degree of

adjustment among first year students has also been supported and studied by a number of studies, which found that many students had difficulties making the transition from high school to university (Thurber & Walton, 2012; Abdallah, et al., 2009). In a study by Abdallah et al. (2009) that involved first-year students of the Qassim university in Malaysia discovered that some of the students had low and moderate levels of adjustment, which prevented them from continuing on to the second year of their university education. Academic, social support, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, university services offered to students in their transition, as well as student characteristics, are significant aspects pertaining to transition adjustment. Lack of mastery, trouble analyzing subjects, difficulty constructing social identities, research and application difficulties, and poor sentence building are difficulties in academic writing. In South African higher education, these problems are caused by students' language-range and general literacy backgrounds, attitudes, and middle-class literacy habits. Articles recommend incorporating academic literacies, encouraging multimodal instruction and evaluation, teaming up language-range lecturers with course specialists, holding intensive reading and writing workshops, and providing more formative input to address these challenges.

Many students who are making the move to college still struggle with issues linked to their personal, interpersonal, and academic concerns. Yet, it is commonly accepted that adjusting to university life may be difficult, much like adjusting to a new environment or a new culture. Because of this, many first-year students struggle to quickly and adequately adapt to their new environments and living arrangements. In other words, they lack the skills

necessary to successfully complete academic activities, live the lives of students, and establish learning habits in a new academic setting (Smith & Renk, 2007).

Along similar lines, researchers are interested in learning about the variables that affect students' adjustment to university as well as the variables that cause some students to drop out before their second year. For instance, according to McGhee and Mangrum (2007), social, emotional, and anxiety issues throughout the teenage-range era may result in adjustment problems. Also, it has been discovered that elements such as creativity, critical thinking, and decision-making, as well as personal and social aspects, have a direct and indirect impact on effective student adjustment (Mavroveli, et al., 2009). Moreover, studies (Abdallah et al., 2009) discovered differences between genders in student's adjustment and discovered that male students had higher levels of adjustment than female students. Moreover, Grebennikov and Skaines (2009) argue that there are disparities in student adjustment based on age-range; older students adjust less as compared to younger students, which makes age-range another crucial element for effective student adjustment.

A report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2003) observed that a student faces important challenges due to increased independence and responsibilities. For students leaving home for the first-time life is difficult. It involves separation from family and friends, adjusting to a new environment, a need to face new responsibilities and an uncertain future. Similar reports have been made by other researchers.

According to Bunn et al. 2007, college students, especially freshers, are prone to more stress due to their transition from home to college life. Most

students are stressed due to compulsory adjustments such as being away from home for the first time, maintaining high academic achievement, and adjusting to a new social environment. Besides these, a student also encounters a pressure to earn good grades.

Excessive and difficult assignments, uncomfortable classrooms, assessment deadlines, relations with faculty members, and time pressures are stressors that can affect first year students. Financial pressures, relationship with peers, opposite sex, family and friends, new eating and sleeping habits, loneliness and bleak future career prospects are other stressors identified by researchers. An issue associated with study load-related stress is the fear of failure. Gender differences surface quite naturally in the area of stress.

Students might struggle to learn because their minds are cluttered with irrelevant memories and thoughts, according to DeCapua and Wintergerst (2004). In order to better understand depression, anxiety, and stress in first year tertiary education students in Hong Kong, Wong et al. (2006) conducted a web-based survey. Their findings showed that moderate severity levels of depression, anxiety, and stress were present in 27.5% of the sample of 7915 students. Similar to this, Canales-Gonzales (2008) assessed the stress levels of students enrolled on pharmacy curriculums. A personal interview that included demographic and stress questionnaires was used to gather the data. The findings showed that students rated their level of stress as average-range or above average-range, with a mean score of 3.8 out of a possible 5.

According to a study by Landow (2006), poor university adjustment also contributed to depressive, OCD, stress-related, and anxiety-related emotional states. Yau et al. (2012) also found that depression was caused by a lack of

social adjustment, which supported Landow's findings. Several studies, including that of Kaur (2012), who discovered a strong correlation between adjustment and negative emotions, have supported the claims of a link between adjustment and emotional reactions.

Academic Adjustment of students

For the majority of university students, adjusting to their academic routines and expectations is necessary for success in the university. To develop better study habits, first year students frequently must work harder. There may be more students in the class, various approaches to teaching used by the teachers, longer assignments, and higher expectations. Priorities must be balanced and established by first year students. The aforementioned justifications were provided by Mutambara and Bhebe (2012). Rice et al. (2009) noted that first year students may find the discourses of academic fields in higher education to be perplexing and incomprehensible. Sometimes, it will instill unfounded pressure in students' minds that college is more cognitively challenging than high school. Students with cultural and linguistic backgrounds that differ from those supporting the prevailing beliefs of higher education institutions may experience bewilderment which is especially severe (Mutambara & Bhebe, 2012). Social support is critical in academic adjustment. Students who have strong social support systems, such as their family and friends, typically adjust to school better and are happier in their lives (Friedlander et al., 2007)

Kokemuller (2020) asserts that university is more challenging than high school. To comprehend the course material and do well on projects and examinations, students frequently need to work more and maintain greater

concentration. As students advance through their college studies, the intellectual complexity of the coursework increases. Students will struggle to grasp what they are taught in junior and senior levels of a degree program if they do not learn the content covered in freshman and the sophomore-level classes. This will make it challenging to adjust to new teaching and learning.

- Lu et al. (2014) conducted a study to investigate instructional flexibility, preferred teaching technique, and learning interest: data from fresh students at Sichuan University, China. In their 2014 study, Lu et al. estimated an Ordered Response Model to experimentally analyze the link between students' motivation in learning, their preference for the professor's teaching style, and their capacity to adjust to college teaching and learning. Their findings revealed that a big percentage-range of students lack reading desire and that more than a third of students struggle to adjust to college teaching and learning styles. Other findings include how well students recognize professors' teaching methods and what causes them to struggle. The choice of a course and the level of focus in class both significantly influence students' enthusiasm in learning. Although a previous study found that most students struggle to adjust to college teaching and learning, the same cannot be stated of the present survey because it is being conducted in a different environment.

Momoh, as mentioned in Akungu (2014), carried out a study on how pupils performed in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) in relation to the influence of instructional materials. The instructional tools that were accessible had an impact on students' performance in the WASSCE. Since they make it easier for students to absorb abstract ideas and concepts and inhibit rote learning, he came to the conclusion that material

resources had a substantial impact on students' success. Education is put at risk when Teaching and Learning Resources are insufficient, which is shown in poor academic performance, high dropout rates, problem behaviors, low teacher motivation and missed educational objectives. The lack of study resources at colleges will also have an impact on students' academic performance, which will further contribute to academic maladjustment.

Cazan and Stan (2015) analyzed the relationships between academic adjustment, self-directed learning and learning engagement. The researchers used the following scales: The Academic Adjustment Questionnaire, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and the Self-Rating Scale of Self-Directed Learning. The Pearson correlation coefficients between the dimensions included in the study were significant. The results indicated that self-directed learning and learning engagement could efficiently predict academic adjustment at the university level. The ability of a student to become a self-directed learner implies the development of their metacognitive skills, the ability to monitor and evaluate their own learning strategies, and the ability to manage-range their interpersonal relationship. Thus, a self-directed learner is a successful student.

Van Rooij et al. (2018) investigated how intrinsic motivation, academic self-efficacy, self-regulated study behavior and satisfaction with the chosen degree programme influenced academic adjustment in the university and how these variables and adjustment affected three important indicators of student success: Grade Point Average-range (GPA), attained number of credits (ECTS) and intention to persist. The sample consisted of 243 first year university students in the Netherlands. Structural equation modelling

showed that academic adjustment was influenced by intrinsic motivation, self-regulated study behavior and degree programme satisfaction, which together explained 72% of the variance in adjustment. Motivational and behavioral variables did not influence GPA and credits directly but through academic adjustment. Furthermore, only satisfaction with the degree programme predicted intention to persist. These results point to the importance of academic adjustment in predicting university GPA and credits and the pivotal role of satisfaction with the degree programme in predicting intention to persist. Universities could integrate the development of self-regulated study skills which is the biggest contributor to academic adjustment in the first-year programme. Moreover, looking at the importance of students' satisfaction with the programmes, communication and collaboration between secondary schools and universities should be enhanced to help students to choose a university degree programme that matches their abilities, interests and values.

Study skills training is a major factor in improving the adjustment of students in the university. It is anticipated that the findings of the current study would reflect the importance of study skills training patronage-range by students on their adjustment in universities.

Hendry et al. (2005) conducted a study with 24 first year dental programme students on helping students understand their learning styles looking at study self-efficacy, preference for group work and group climate. They interviewed the respondents and concluded that training in learning styles does not lead to students gaining greater confidence in their study strategies. According to Hendry et al. (2005), students also concluded that they achieve

greater understanding and make them more accepting of others' behavior in their study and tutorial groups.

Badache (2011) observed 36 first year English students at Batna University in Algeria who were divided into two groups, control and experimental, taught by the same teacher, to compare the efficacy of group work as a technique to individual learning. Both groups participated in the exact same activities. While the control group carried out the tasks alone, the experimental group did so in groups. Students' opinions about working in groups were gathered through a survey, and their group behavior was noted on an observation sheet. The experimental group demonstrated greater engagement, motivation, and teamwork. Both their critical and speaking skills were said to have improved by the students.

Arumugam et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between group work and university students' writing skills. They conducted interviews, pre- and post-tests, and a questionnaire to gather data. The scores between the pre- and post-tests showed a significant improvement, according to the results. Students believed that working in groups gave them the opportunity to learn and develop their English language-range abilities. They believed that group discussion improved their understanding of concepts and that working in groups helped them cultivate more optimistic attitudes.

A study conducted by Taqi and Al-Nouh (2014) indicates that group work improved learning with certain social and academic groups only. These groups were between age-ranges 24-29 and highest GPAs. Respondents also indicated that their communication skills had improved as a results of group study. Respondents also claimed that they felt more receptive to criticism

and were improved listeners as a result of group study. A significant benefit of group study was also discovered to be the acquisition of new social skills. At the end of the semester, students discovered that they had made new friends and enjoyed being around other students. The studies reported on academic adjustment imply that fresh students in universities encounter academic adjustment issues. This must be reduced to assist these students perform academically by using counselling approaches.

Social Adjustment of Students

Relationships with parents and other relatives change as first year students gain greater independence and responsibilities. Parents and fresh students may worry about losing some facets of their connection. Fresh students frequently phone home, particularly during their first few months away at college (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). At the end of a holiday or semester break, saying goodbye could be quite difficult. Readjusting to household standards like curfews, chores, or duties for younger siblings may also be challenging (Beyers & Goossens, 2002). It is crucial to emphasize that parents must also make adjustments at this time. They must deal with the fact that although their child is becoming autonomous, they still depend on them (Brown & Klute, 2003; Chipuer, 2001).

According to Sax (2001), the majority (roughly 69%) of fresh students at four-year colleges in the United States are 18 years old or younger and have thus only recently left their home and high school environment. This is true even though undergraduates increasingly consist of older students. The majority of first year students may seem to adjust to the new university environment successfully; yet, the proportion of students reporting mental health issues is

rising (Benton et al., 2003).

A study was conducted by Hannum and Dawn (2004) on the impact of family structure, family conflict, and attachment to the father on psychological distress and social adjustment of first year students. The study involved 102 male and female first year students of the Midwestern University, USA. The study concluded that family conflict was found to moderate the relationship between parental attachment and psychological distress and social adjustment. The study also highlighted the importance of attachment security, representing the continuum from secure to all forms of insecure attachment, as a significant dimension in understanding adult attachment.

The study emphasizes that family attachment as well as family conflicts play a role in the social adjustment of students in their first year in the university. Specific findings of the study were that attachment to mother predicted less psychological distress and attachment to father and structure predicted better social adjustment. Overall, the findings suggest that family dynamics, particularly family conflict and attachment to parents, play a significant role in the psychological and social adjustment of university students. The study acknowledges that there are other personal and social variables that contribute to student adjustment, such as resilience, self-efficacy, extended family relationships, ethnicity and economic background. The study is based on a convenience sample and may not be generalizable to students in other settings. The sample was mostly white and female students, collected entirely from classes in educational psychology, which may affect attitudes and attentiveness toward personal and family relationships.

A study conducted by Yang et al. (2013) on the associations between

patterns of Facebook activity, motives for using Facebook and students' social adjustment to university revealed that motives for using Facebook and patterns of Facebook activity were directly associated with late adolescents' social adjustment. The association between one specific activity, status updating, and social adjustment was moderated by the motive of relationship maintenance and social adaptation. The study collected anonymous self-report survey data from 193 mostly European American students attending Midwestern University, USA. Respondents were recruited from several large courses at the university. The study also revealed that females had a significantly larger Facebook friend list than males, and students spent an average-range of 3.6 hours per week on Facebook. Additionally, the research indicated that home visits were infrequent for college students, with less than 20% going home more than once a month, and a relatively small percentage-range of respondents' friends at college were peers they had known prior to college.

Overall, the study emphasized the direct association between social adjustment and the use of Facebook by university students. The study also highlighted the importance of understanding how different motives and activities on Facebook can either foster or inhibit social adjustment among university students. The findings suggest that relationship maintenance as a motive for status updating on Facebook can have a positive impact on social adjustment, highlighting the importance of nurturing and maintaining relationships in the university environment. The major limitation of this study was that the sample for the study was derived from a single context, a large state university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other university settings.

In the study by Arjanggih et al. (2016) on the role of social anxiety on first year students' adjustment to college, the study found that social anxiety affects the ability of first year college students to adjust to college life. Fear of negative evaluation has an effect on academic adjustment and emotional-personal adjustment, but not on social adjustment and institutional adjustment. Social avoidance and distress have an effect on all four dependent variables. The study recommends appropriate interventions to tackle student distress during their first year and suggests that institutions of higher education should prepare students for campus life, academic tasks, and how to get along with faculty and fellow college students. The paper also suggests further research to examine several variables that are not included in this study, such as a pattern of ethnic identification, a source of social support, psychologically self-reliance, gender, and parenting.

The sample used 436 first year college psychology students (93 males and 343 females) from five universities in Central Java, Indonesia. The respondents completed a questionnaire about student adjustment to college and a social anxiety scale. Canonical correlation was conducted to analyze the data. The study used correlation and regression analysis to determine the relationship between social anxiety and college adjustment. For limitations, the study may not have considered all the factors that could affect college adjustment and social anxiety. Additionally, the study was conducted in Indonesia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural contexts.

A study conducted by Buote et al. (2007) examined the relationship between the quality of new friendships and adjustment among first year university students. The study found a significant positive association between

the quality of new friendships and social adjustment to university, with a stronger effect observed for students living in campus residences. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a subsample of students to gain insight into the processes through which the relationship between friendship quality and social adjustment. The interviews revealed that friends played a crucial role in helping first year students socially adjust to university by providing a sympathetic ear and listening to their problems. Openness to new friendships were positively associated with social adjustment to university, with the quality of new friendships mediating this relationship. Overall, the study provides insights into the importance of new friendships and their role in facilitating social adjustment to university life. Inferring from the studies reported above, it is clear that first year students in universities and colleges have social adjustment issues.

Emotional Adjustment of students

According to the stage-range-environment fit theory of Eccles et al. (1993), emotional maladjustment of students might result from a lack of fit between adolescents' developmental needs and their environment. Similarly, the self- system model of motivational development (Connell & Wellborn, 1991) postulates that certain aspects of the school context, such as students' relationships with their teachers, differentially provide students with opportunities to fulfil their basic psychological needs, such as relatedness, competence, and autonomy. These experiences shape students' internal self-systems and their reactions to stressful situations, which provide a motivational basis for their engagement, burnout, and achievement in school. For example, transitioning into school environments characterized by greater teacher control

and a decrease in teacher-student relationship quality can hamper academic engagement and achievement, and stimulate behavioral problems and school-related stress (Eccles et al., 1991; Engels et al., 2016; Roeser & Eccles, 1998). In turn, students' school-related emotions and behaviors may shape their relationship with their teacher as well. By exhibiting pro- or anti-school emotions and behaviors, students may receive teacher behavior that matches their motivation for school (Skinner & Belmont, 1993).

Devi and Mayuri (2003) reported a study of family and school factors that affect the academic achievement of residential school children studying in IX and X classes. The result indicated that girls were superior to boys. Family factors like parental aspiration and socio-economic status significantly contributed to academic achievement. Kimberley et al. (2010) made a study on shyness, teacher-student relationships and socioemotional adjustment in grade I. The goal of the study was to explore the moderating role to teacher-child relationships in the relation between shyness and socio-emotional difficulties, whereas close teacher-student relationships were associated with indices of positive adjustment.

Rahamtulla (2007) made a study on adjustment problems among university students. Researcher examined the influence of demographic variables and influence on the student's adjustment problems in school. The major findings of the study have shown that adjustment of school children is primarily dependent on the school variables like the class in which they are studying the medium of instruction present in the school and the type of management of the school. Parental education and occupation of the school children also significantly influenced adjustment. All the studies

reported here is an indication that university students have some challenges in terms of emotional adjustment.

Gender and Adjustment of students

The literature on gender differences and adjustment levels have been consistent. The idea that there are gender differences has persisted in literature. There is evidence to support the claim that male students adjust to their new university environment better than their female counterparts, according to Enochs and Roland, who were cited in Mudhovozi (2012).

study conducted by Aderi et al. 2013, on the influence of demographic characteristics on students' adjustment revealed that despite signs that some students struggle with social and academic aspects, university students typically have a reasonable level of adjustment. Moreover, majority of the students, according to the results, had low to moderate levels of social adjustment (82.37%), low to moderate levels of academic adjustment (84.89%), and low to moderate levels of both (84.89%). These findings are in line with other research on the difficulties first year university students have adjusting to their universities (Abdallah., 2009). In his research of 204 university students, Jemal (2012) discovered that 50% of first year students had adjustment problems.

The findings of Aderi et al. (2013) also indicated that demographic factors and university adjustment are related, although contrary to other studies (Abdallah et al., 2009), no significant differences in adjustment levels between male and female students were discovered. This small conclusion may be explained by the shifting roles of women in society and the increased chances for leadership that women currently have throughout the years.

Awabil (2013) investigated the effects of study and self-reward skills

counselling on the study behavior of students in Ghanaian public universities. Using a sample size of 60 in a quasi-experiment, research respondents who received study skills counselling showed an improvement in their study behavior. A similar study conducted by Ohanaka and Ofuani (2010) revealed that both male and female respondent in the experimental group experienced higher improvements in their study behavior than their counterparts in the control group.

The findings of Nyarko-Sampson (2017) indicated that no significant differences exist between the study habits of males and females. In addition, no significant differences existed between the study habits of Senior Secondary School forms one and form three students. They recommended the need to teach study skills to senior secondary school students to cultivate good and effective study habits.

Hassanbeigi et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between various study skills and academic performance of university students. A total of 179 male and female junior and senior medical and dental students participated in the study. The instrument was "Study Skills Assessment Questionnaire" taken from counselling services of Houston University. The content validity of this questionnaire was approved by ten psychologists and faculty members of Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences. Data was collected and analyzed using Kruskal-Wallis test. The results showed that the study skills scores of university students with a grade point average-range (GPA) of 15 or more (out of 20), were statistically higher than that of those students with a GPA of less than 15 in all of the 7 skills of time management and procrastination

($P < .01$), concentration and memory ($P < .01$), study aids and note taking ($P < .02$), test strategies and test anxiety ($P < .01$), organizing and processing information ($P < .01$), motivation and attitude ($P < .04$), and reading and selecting the main idea ($P < .0001$). The researchers concluded that teaching of study skills to university students can play an important role in the improvement of students' academic performance.

Other research has shown that women reported higher levels of stress and adjustment needs than men did (Zhang & Rienties, 2016) and, females evaluated their requirements for stress and adjustment more negatively than males (Zhang & Goodson, 2011), and thus women were more likely to characterize their needs as unsatisfactory (Ellis-Bosold, & Thornton- Orr, 2013). In support of these findings, Roy et al. (2010) found that female students were better adjusted than male students but Raju and Rahamtullah (2007) claimed that men are much better adjusted than women in the emotional adjustment domain. This suggests that there are conflicting results on which gender is better adjusted than the other. Similarly, Abdallah (2009) discovered a notable sex difference in the severity of the adjustment difficulties faced by students in the university.

Several research have found that there are no such disparities, in contrast to those studies that claimed there were differences between the adjustment demands of male and female students. The results of Al-khatib, Awamleh, and Samawi's (2012) investigation into how well students at Albalqa Applied University adapted to college life revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the means of responses from male and female students on the scale's domains attributed to adjustment. As a result, students'

adjustment needs were not impacted by their gender. In a similar vein, a study by Wu and Guzman (2015) found no statistically significant differences between male and female students' adjustment requirements. This supported Neuman et al. (2012) findings, which showed that there were no appreciable gender differences in overall adjustment. Likewise, Kaur (2012) found no variations in the demands for adjustment between male and female college students.

This argument was further supported by the results of Nyamayaro and Saravanan (2013), which showed that there were no significant differences in the overall adjustment between male and female students with the following summary results: males ($M = 380.35$, $SD = 61.12$), and females ($M = 387.45$, $SD = 59.85$), $t(97) = -.58$, $p = 0.57$. Mahmondi (2010) revealed that gender had no difference impact on adjustment scores in the home, health, emotional, and social areas, supporting the argument made by Nyamayaro and Saravanan (2013).

Similarly, Chauhan (2013) acknowledged that gender plays a significant impact in adjustment since female learners adjust better than male learners. In another South African study, De Waal et al. (2018) found that boys had worse literacy and numeracy skills, significantly lower physical dexterity and balancing skills, and statistically and practically significantly lower mid-year grade point average-ranges than girls. Mann (2018) discovered a substantial difference between gender groups for social adjustment in another study in South Africa, with males having a higher mean score than females. According to Petersen (2006), in South Africa, the considerable difference in adjustment between males and females implies that adjustment was an important

predictor of academic achievement for males but not for females. According to Clinciu (2014), when the adjustment of specific dimensions is considered, males are socially, mentally, and emotionally well-adjusted, whereas females have better academic adaptations. Similarly, Mann (2018) found that male students are more adjusted socially than females of similar age-ranges in colleges in South Africa. Furthermore, Olasupo et al. (2018) revealed that gender variations in adjustment and social functions exist among university students. However, the study found no evidence of a substantial gender difference in adjustments to social and academic characteristics among university students.

Al-Qaisy, (2010), conducted a study on the adjustment of college freshmen and the importance of gender and place of residence in this adjustment. The study was conducted on a sample of 117 freshmen in Tafila Technical University in Jordan. The study highlights the challenges that freshmen face when transitioning to college and the factors that may contribute to better adjustment in the first year of college. The constructs of university belonging and the quality of friendships are considered as potential factors that may promote positive adjustment in college students during their first year. The paper emphasizes the importance of gaining a better understanding of what factors may promote positive adjustment in the first year of college, as approximately one-third of students entering college leave higher education without obtaining a degree, and most do so during their first year. The study made use of a survey of 117 freshmen students from Tafila Technical University in Jordan, used a measurement of college adjustment consisting of 36 items distributed on four dimensions and analyzed the data using means

and standard deviations and T-tests were deployed to determine significant differences between place of residence and level of adaptation.

The conclusions drawn from the paper are that male students are more inclined to adjust than females, and students coming from other cities may face difficulties in adapting to university life due to the difference in the built environment and the sense of alienation from family and friends. The location of the university, its small size, and lack of student services and entertainment may also contribute to students leaving the university or transferring to other institutions. The study also suggests that males may have an advantage-range in adjusting to college life due to their ability to form social relations more easily than females, who may be limited by group residences and university regulations.

Notable limitations found in the study of Al-Qaisy (2010) are the sample size is relatively small, consisting of only 117 freshmen students from one university in Jordan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations. Again, the study only considers the effect of gender and place of residence on adjustment, and does not explore other potential factors that may impact adjustment, such as socioeconomic status or prior academic achievement.

Yau and Cheng (2014) demonstrated that there are significant gender effects on academic adjustment as females adjusted more than their male counterparts in another study involving first year undergraduate students. Furthermore, Makwana and Kaji (2014) discovered gender disparities in social adjustment, with male students having larger adjustments than females. Inferring from the studies reported above, males adjust better than females in

terms of academic, social, and emotional issues.

Age-range and Adjustment of students

According to a study conducted by Grebennikov and Skaines (2009), younger students are shown to have higher degrees of adjustment than mature students. Consequently, the fact that younger students perform better than mature students is related to the fact that mature students typically struggle to make friends and get active in campus life. Adjustment to university is defined as a person's relationship with their environment and includes academic progress, personal growth, and achievements outside the classroom such as in art, music, creativity, and leadership (Abdallah et al., 2009). Thus, adjustment causes unsettling concerns, including early dropout, trouble managing stress and coping with academic expectations, decreased motivation to study, and poor academic performance (Reddy et al., 2018).

According to research by Urquhart and Pooley (2007), a students' adjustments depended first on whether they were a young or mature student. They discovered that mature students' adjustment needs included giving up a full-time job, providing for a family, and reintegrating into an academic context, whereas young students reported struggles with social pressures and coping with other people's expectations.

In addition, Urquhart and Pooley (2007) asserted that the experiences of school leavers and mature entry students in terms of adjusting to university are different. According to Urquhart and Pooley (2007), school leavers and mature entrance students have different transitional experiences to university. In contrast to these studies, Raju and Rahamtulla (2007) found that age-range did not significantly affect the adjustment requires of students from urban and rural

schools in the Visakhapatnam area of India. They discovered no appreciable differences in any of the adjustment variables between the age-range groups in their investigation. From the above, it could be seen that age-range has some amount of influence on students' academic, social, and emotional adjustment. Additionally, there seems to be the scarcity of literature that deals with age-range and adjustment and the current-study hopes to fill this gap.

University campus and adjustment of students

The environment in which a student sees himself or herself is crucial for his or her academic, social, and emotional adjustment. Some university environments are very conducive or could lead to easy adjustment academically, socially, and emotionally. However, if the environment is not conducive with modern facilities, it might be difficult for students to adjust academically, socially, and emotionally.

Tenkorang et al. (2020), made use of 355 students to conduct a study aimed at investigating the common adjustment challenges of fresh students in the University of Cape Coast experience during their first year in school, and the coping strategies they used in response to the adjustment challenges. To conduct the study, a mixed model research design was employed. The 355 fresh students were sampled via purposive and stratified random sampling techniques and were made up of 235 males and 120 females. These students were drawn from four colleges out of the five colleges in the UCC.

According to the study, fresh students at the University of Cape Coast faced difficulties adjusting, such as trouble managing academic pressure and a lack of participation in social activities. With coping strategies to the adjustment challenges, the majority of respondents used Planful Problem

Solving coping mechanisms, which included organizing, focusing, and acting to overcome problems. It was suggested that fresh students' timetables be made more flexible by management to help them with the pressure of their academic workload.

Their work was carried out only at the University of Cape Coast. This could hinder the generalization of the study. Also, only 355 first year students were used for study. This number does not represent the total number of fresh students in the university. The type of fresh students used for the study was also unknown being it regular students, postgraduate or distance learning students. Similarly, the study accounted for only academic adjustment problems and personal social adjustment of fresh students leaving out emotional, financial and students' accommodation-related issues. This does not fully represent the adjustment situation in the study area. The current study investigates the academic, social and emotional adjustment levels of first year students.

A study was carried out by Ackah and Kuranchie (2015) in Catholic University College of Ghana to understand the experiences foreign students went through in the early days of their university education. Twenty- six-foreign students from five different nations who were enrolled in undergraduate programmes at the Catholic University College of Ghana were participated in the qualitative study.

The study revealed that the university's international students face certain initial social, academic, and financial difficulties. The study has shown the insufficiency of the procedures put in place by the authorities to improve the international students' integration on campus. To lessen, if not eliminate, the difficulties that new international students experience when they are

admitted and begin their studies, the university administration has to provide particular and thorough orientation. For tertiary institutions to create effective orientation strategies for universities that admit international students, the knowledge collected from the study is essential.

The research of Ackah and Kuranchie (2015) only focuses on international students studying in the Catholic University College of Ghana. This study does not show the full representation of adjustment in the local context. The study failed to talk about first year students in Ghana but rather all the international students in the university. The studies above are an indication that empirical literature on the nature of campus is lacking and this study hopes to add to the dearth of literature in this context.

Residential status and Adjustment

Students adjusting academically, socially, and emotionally could be traced to their residential status whether off-campus or on-campus. For example, Van Viet (2021) conducted a study to investigate the adjustment patterns of first year students at Nong Lam University, focusing on the influence of residential status on various facets of student adaptation. The research explored correlations between residential backgrounds and students' personal-emotional, social, and academic adjustments, aiming to discern the significance of residential status in shaping the initial adaptation experiences of incoming university students. Utilizing a quantitative approach and a descriptive-correlational survey design, this study recruited a sample of first year students enrolled at Nong Lam University. The respondents were selected through cluster sampling, ensuring representation across various faculties and residential backgrounds. The survey instrument was used to assess personal-

emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and academic adjustment using established scales. Demographic information, including residential status, were also collected.

Van Viet (2021) employed statistical analyses such as t-tests and ANOVA to determine correlations between residential status and the different dimensions of student adjustment. Specifically, correlations between urban, rural, and other residential categories and adjustment variables were explored. The study also investigated potential interactions between residential status and other demographic factors like gender. The results revealed that there was significant correlation between place of permanent residence and Personal-Emotional Adjustment, between place of permanent residence and Social Adjustment. There was a significant correlation between overall adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, and goal commitment/institutional attachment with place of residence. There was also a significant correlation between gender and personal emotional adjustment. There was no significant correlation between place of residence and Academic Adjustment, between place of residence and Goal commitment/ Institutional Attachment.

Another study by Melendez (2019) examined the influence of commuting on the adjustment to college. The study utilized Residential status, race or ethnicity, and gender as predictors of college adjustment for 359, 204 (57%) female and 155 (43%) male college freshmen attending four diverse urban universities. Respondents were randomly selected for inclusion and recruitment was arranged through the offices of Freshmen Services and through. First year Experience programmes at each respondent university. All the respondents had self-identified as full-time students and had completed

between 0 and 16 credits at the time they participated in this study.

Melendez (2019) used a packet of measures consisting of a demographics questionnaire and the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). Packets were completed independently and were returned to the principal investigator. Data were analyzed in three distinct steps. First, descriptive statistics were calculated for the key variables. Second, an inter-correlation matrix was computed for all variables of interest. Finally, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was calculated, utilizing the four subscales of the SACQ as outcome variables, to determine the best predictive model of college adjustment among the predictor variables discussed. The study found that residential status was inversely correlated with Social Adjustment and Institutional Attachment. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was also conducted to test the prediction that residential status combined with the other variables of interest. No significant findings were revealed for residential status on the Academic Adjustment scale. More also, white students, and residential students (housed in dormitories) reported higher scores on institutional attachment than their peers. No significant findings were revealed for the personal-emotional. The above studies conducted indicate that the residential status of students has some effect on their academic, social, and emotional adjustment.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is defined as the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that provides assistance and information on a particular study (Robinson, 2011). Also, Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a conceptual framework as a visual diagram; one that explains,

either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables- and the supposed relationships between them. In this study, it was hypothesized that each of the independent variables influences each of the dimensions of adjustment as depicted below.

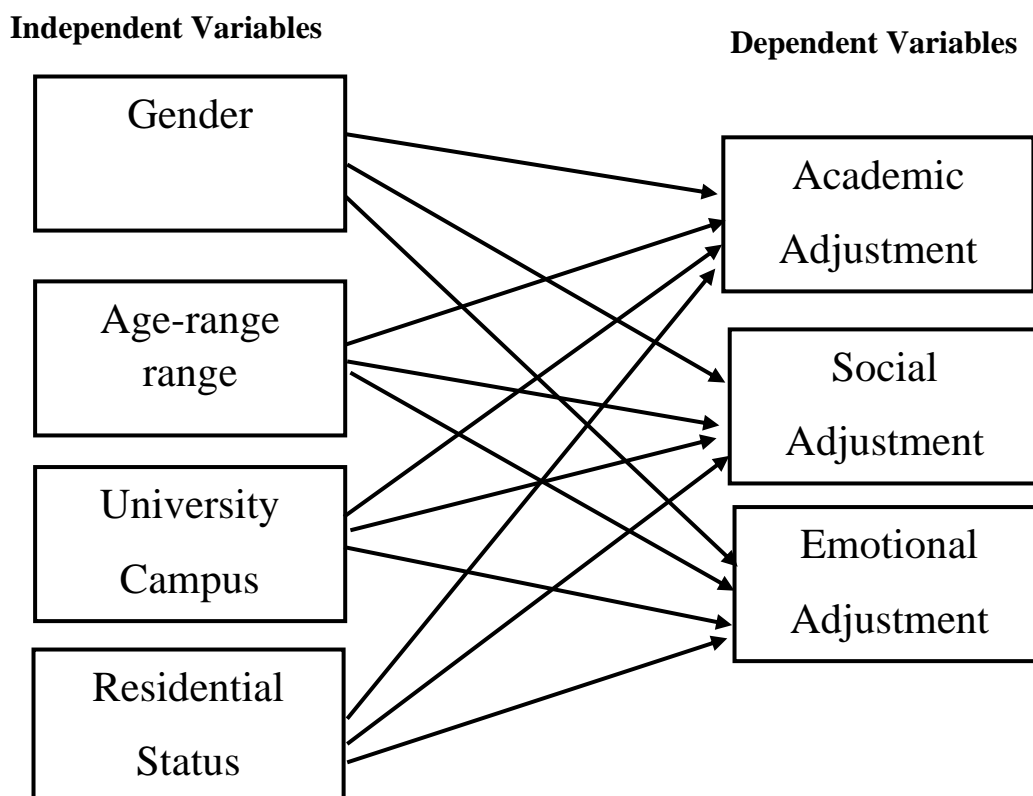


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework for the study.

Source: Researcher's Own Construct (Age Range)

The purpose of the study was to assess first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In this study the independent variables were gender, age-range range, university campus and residential status. The dependent variables, on the other hand, were academic adjustment, social adjustment, and emotional adjustment. The purpose of the conceptual framework was to assess the level of adjustment based on each of the independent variables on each of the dependent variables.

Similarities Among Academic, Social and Emotional Adjustment of Students

The social, academic, and emotional adjustments that first-year university students experience is interconnected and share several common elements. Although each area presents distinct challenges, they often overlap

and influence one another in ways that contribute to the overall adjustment process. Understanding these similarities can help counsellors, educators, and university administrators support students more effectively. The similarities between these three domains of adjustment are (a) interpersonal and social support systems. Considering the three types of adjustment; social, academic, and emotional it seems they all rely heavily on the development and use of interpersonal relationships and social support networks. The quality and availability of social support are critical to navigating challenges in each of these domains. In a study by Terenzini (1994), social adjustment focuses on students' ability to make friends, integrate into the university culture, and develop a sense of belonging. Building positive relationships with peers, faculty, and staff is essential for students to feel supported and connected to their new environment. Furthermore, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) noted that academic success is influenced by social support as well. Students who build strong relationships with peers and faculty are more likely to succeed academically. Also, emotional well-being is heavily influenced by the social support students receive. Positive relationships with friends, family, and university staff can buffer students from stress and emotional distress. According to Misra and McKean (2000), the similarity among social, academic, and emotional adjustment is dependent on social support. Across all three adjustments, social support, whether from friends, peers, or mentors, plays a significant role in helping students cope with challenges and thrive. Social networks are crucial for emotional resilience, academic motivation, and a sense of belonging.

The similarity among the three variables could further be investigated

in line with coping strategies and problem-solving skills. The coping strategies and problem-solving skills that students develop while navigating social, academic, and emotional challenges often overlap. In social contexts, coping strategies often involve seeking out new relationships, adjusting to cultural norms, and negotiating conflicts. Students might use active problem-solving, such as engaging in social clubs or counselling, to improve their social networks and reduce feelings of loneliness (Buchanan, 2009). Academic coping strategies often involve managing time, setting goals, and using resources such as lecturers or study groups to handle academic stress (Misra & McKean, 2000). Many of the same coping strategies used in social contexts, such as seeking help and asking questions, are useful in academic settings as well. Emotional coping strategies, such as mindfulness, seeking emotional support from others, and practicing stress management techniques, overlap with the coping strategies used in academic and social domains. Emotional regulation and resilience are fundamental to overcoming setbacks in any area of university life (Gonzalez, 2010). In all three domains, coping involves problem-solving skills, resilience, and a proactive approach to seeking support. Successful adjustment in one domain (e.g., academic) often strengthens students' ability to cope with challenges in other areas (Harris, 2014).

Additionally, the impact of stress and anxiety could also help to appreciate the similarity among the social, academic, and emotional adjustment of first-year students. Stress and anxiety are common experiences in the transition to university life and affect social, academic, and emotional adjustment in similar ways. These stressors can stem from academic pressures, social isolation, or emotional distress. Social adjustment challenges often come

with feelings of loneliness, homesickness, or anxiety about fitting in. Social stressors such as difficulty making friends or dealing with group dynamics can contribute to emotional distress (Valliant, 2013). Academic stress is a significant factor in students' first-year experiences. Many students struggle with the increased academic workload, new learning environments, and performance expectations, which can lead to anxiety, procrastination, or burnout (Misra & McKean, 2000). Emotional stress is often triggered by a range of factors, including academic pressures, social isolation, and personal challenges. Emotional adjustment difficulties, such as managing anxiety and depression, are common in the first year of university (Benton, 2003). Academic pressures, social challenges, and emotional distress are interrelated sources of stress. Counselling services that address these stressors holistically are often more effective than those targeting just one aspect of adjustment (Buchanan, 2009).

Indeed, the similarities among social, academic, and emotional adjustment in first-year university students are marked by their reliance on social support and coping strategies of students. The gap, therefore, is whether first-year university students can rely on social support and to adopt coping strategies to go through their academic work smoothly given their novice nature on campus. The development and maintenance of effective coping mechanisms, resilience, and support networks are crucial to successful adjustment in all three areas. Counsellors and educators who adopt a holistic approach to supporting students can help foster positive outcomes across these domains, ultimately leading to a more successful and fulfilling university experience for first-year students.

The empirical review explored various factors influencing the adjustment of first year university students, highlighting the roles of gender, age-range, residential status, and the university environment. The adjustment process encompasses academic, social, and emotional dimensions, each affected by different demographic and situational variables.

The review presented mixed findings regarding gender differences in student adjustment. Enochs and Roland (in Mudhovozi, 2012) suggest that male students generally adjust better to university life compared to their female counterparts. Studies by Aderi et al. (2013) and Jemal (2012) indicate that first year students often face significant adjustment challenges, with no substantial gender differences in overall adjustment levels. However, other research shows conflicting results: some studies, such as those by Zhang and Rienties (2016) and Chauhan (2013), indicate that females experience higher stress and adjustment needs, while others, like Nyamayaro and Saravanan (2013), found no significant gender differences.

Age-range was shown to play a crucial role in student adjustment, with younger students generally adjusting better than mature students. Grebennikov and Skaines (2009) found that younger students perform better due to their ease in making friends and engaging in campus activities. In contrast, mature students face challenges related to balancing academic responsibilities with work and family commitments (Urquhart and Pooley, 2007). Despite these findings, some studies, like Raju and Rahamtulla (2007), found no significant age-range-related differences in adjustment.

Residential status was also revealed as a factor that significantly affects students' social and emotional adjustment. Van Viet (2021) and Melendez

(2019) found that on-campus students typically exhibit better social integration and institutional attachment than their off-campus counterparts. However, academic adjustment appears less influenced by residential status, suggesting other factors like personal motivation and support services play more critical roles. Tenkorang et al. (2020) highlighted that conducive university environments facilitate better academic, social, and emotional adjustment. Ackah and Kuranchie (2015) emphasized the need for a comprehensive orientation programme to help international students adjust, indicating that institutional support is crucial for smooth transitions.

The current study aims to fill gaps in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of the adjustment experiences of first year students, considering the interplay of gender, age-range, residential status, and university environment. Previous studies have often focused on isolated factors or specific demographics, limiting the generalizability of their findings. By adopting a holistic approach – assessing various aspects of students’ adjustment – this study will offer deeper insights into the multifaceted nature of student adjustment and identify key areas for intervention.

Relationship Between Social, Academic, and Emotional Adjustment of Students

The relationship between social, academic, and emotional adjustment of first-year university students is complex and multifaceted. These three domains of adjustment are deeply interconnected, with changes or challenges in one area often affecting the others. Together, they shape the overall experience of first-year students, influencing their well-being, academic performance, and long-term success. This section discusses how the domains are interrelated.

To begin with is social adjustment and academic adjustment. Social adjustment refers to how well students integrate into the campus environment, form friendships, and develop a sense of belonging, while academic adjustment involves adapting to the academic demands of university life. The two are closely linked because the quality of students' social experiences can directly affect their academic performance, and vice versa. Positive social support for academic success includes peer support, which essentially deals with study groups, peer mentoring, and emotional support from friends. Peer support can provide practical help with academic tasks, reduce stress, and increase motivation. Students with positive social experiences often have better academic outcomes because they feel more engaged and supported (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Also, a sense of belonging on campus is crucial for academic success. When students feel connected to their peers and the university community, they are more likely to engage in academic activities, attend classes, and participate in extracurricular activities that enhance learning (Tinto, 1993).

However, academic challenges such as time and stress constraints can affect first-year students' social adjustment on campus. Struggling academically can interfere with students' social lives. High academic demands often leave little time for social interaction, leading to isolation or decreased opportunities to form meaningful relationships (Misra & McKean, 2000). Academic stress can also contribute to feelings of inadequacy, which may make students less likely to engage socially.

Further, social adjustment of students can affect their emotional adjustment. Social adjustment involves navigating social relationships, whereas

emotional adjustment involves managing emotional responses to university life, including stress, anxiety, homesickness, and mental health challenges. Both are interdependent, with emotional well-being influencing social interactions and social integration impacting emotional health. Social support as a buffer for emotional stress includes buffer against emotional distress: Positive social connections act as a buffer against emotional distress. A strong sense of social support can help students manage negative emotions and provide a sense of security during stressful academic periods. Social isolation and emotional struggles: On the other hand, students who face difficulties in making friends or who feel socially isolated are more prone to emotional difficulties, such as anxiety and depression. Lack of social support can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and helplessness, contributing to poor emotional adjustment (Buchanan, 2009).

Additionally, emotional adjustment supporting social integration would include emotional regulation whereby students who have developed strong emotional regulation skills tend to be more confident in social situations, helping them form friendships and integrate into university life more easily. Emotional adjustment, such as managing feelings of anxiety or homesickness, can foster better social interactions by enabling students to be more open and socially engaged (Gross, 2002). Also, the impact of emotional struggles on social life deals with emotional difficulties, such as depression or anxiety, which often result in withdrawal from social activities and decreased motivation to engage with others. This, in turn, can make it more difficult to form new social connections, creating a vicious cycle that negatively affects both emotional and social adjustment (Gonzalez, 2010).

Academic adjustment and emotional adjustment. Academic adjustment involves adapting to university-level academic challenges, while emotional adjustment involves managing emotional responses such as stress, anxiety, and depression. These two areas are closely tied, as academic pressures can lead to emotional distress, and emotional well-being can influence students' academic performance. Academic pressure as a source of emotional distress has to do with challenges for first-year students managing the pressure to succeed academically. High expectations, workload, and performance anxiety can lead to stress, burnout, and even depression (Misra & McKean, 2000). Students who struggle with academic adjustment are more likely to experience emotional difficulties, which can further undermine their academic performance.

The relationship between social, academic, and emotional adjustment in first-year university students is deeply interwoven, with each area influencing and being influenced by the others. Social support, emotional regulation, and effective coping strategies are critical in helping students manage the demands of university life. The ability to adjust academically is often linked to emotional well-being and social connectedness, while struggles in one area can exacerbate difficulties in the others. By adopting a holistic approach to student support, universities can help students navigate these interconnected domains, improving their overall success and well-being.

Chapter Summary

This chapter covered four main areas namely theoretical framework, conceptual review, empirical review as well as the conceptual framework for the study. The unique thing about this study is that it assesses the influence of

demographic variables such as gender, age-range range, university campus, and residential status of first year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discussed the research methods that was adopted for the study. These include the research paradigm, research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations.

Philosophical Basis of the Study

A paradigm is a way of seeing the world, which frames a research topic and influences the way researchers think about the topic (Hughes, 2010). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) asserted the importance of paradigms because they influence what should be studied, how it should be studied, and how the results of the study should be interpreted. Khatri (2020) noted that all research is required to be based on some underlying philosophical assumptions about what constitutes valid research.

The positivism research paradigm which most likely use quantitative methods in research was employed for the study. Typically, positivists propose a hypothesis that can be proved or disproved using statistical data analysis and investigate the existence of a relationship between two variables (Cohen et al., 2018). The positivism research paradigm enabled the researcher to assess the first-year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. This helped the researcher to collect quantitative data on the academic, social and emotional adjustment of first year students in the two public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Research Approach

The quantitative approach was employed for the study. The researcher used numbers or statistical information in the assessment of students' adjustment on university campuses. This helped to quantify and generalize the results from the sample to the population of interest. It also checked the incidence of the various views and opinions in the chosen sample. The ultimate concern was the fact that the measurement should be reliable, valid and generalizable. The quantitative method helps researchers to obtain reliability and objectivity, which helps in minimizing subjectivity to the lowest level (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Additionally, with this strategy, the researcher addressed larger concerns, allowing for a more extended and creative approach to assess the adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The study specifically used the survey design which is a type of descriptive survey research design for the study. The method uses questionnaires to collect information from subjects. It is useful when the researcher is interested in perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, or opinions of persons. This enabled the researcher to collect information on the current state of first year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Descriptive survey design seeks to explore and describe events as they are. The researcher wanted to know from respondents their adjustment in university.

The descriptive survey research design was deemed best for the study

because, according to Cohen et al. (2018), in descriptive survey design, researchers gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared. As recommended by Leedy and Ormrod (2019), this method is suitable for purposes of making generalizations from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about the characteristics, opinions, attitudes, and past experiences of the population. So, the design was appropriate for the researcher to elicit information from respondents about the determinants of their adjustment on campuses. The descriptive survey design aided the researcher in exploring respondents the determinants of their adjustment on the university campus.

Irrespective of the strengths of the descriptive survey mentioned above, Fraenkel et al. (2020) identified the weaknesses of the descriptive survey as (1) difficulty in ensuring that the questions to be answered are clear and not misleading, (2) getting respondents to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly is a setback, and (3) getting a sufficient number of questionnaires completed and returned so that meaningful analysis can be made is also a setback.

Notwithstanding the difficulties and setbacks of the descriptive survey design indicated above, it was still deemed most appropriate and applicable for the study. It helped the researcher to gather accurate data on first year undergraduate students regarding their adjustment on campus.

Study Area

The study area is the Kumasi Metropolis of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. It has two public universities, namely KNUST, and the AAMUSTED.

KNUST is a public university in Ghana that emphasizes science and technology. It is the first public university in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and Kumasi Metropolis. The university is specifically located at Ayigya in the Oforikrom Municipality in the Ashanti Region, Kumasi. KNUST was originally established as Kumasi College of Technology by a Government Ordinance in 1951 and was transformed into a full-fledged university in 1952. The university uses 2,512.96 acres of land. The latitude of KNUST is 6.673175, and the longitude is -1.565423. KNUST is located at coordinates of 6° 40' 23.4300" N and 1° 33' 55.5228" (Dzisi, 2016).

AAMUSTED was established on August 27, 2020, under Act 1026 of 2020 of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana. AAMUSTED was formed from the College of Technology Education, Kumasi (COLTEK) and the College of Agriculture Education (CAGRIC), Asante- Mampong, which were campuses of the University of Education, Winneba. The main AAMUSTED campus is in Kumasi, the second-largest city in Ghana and seat of the Asante Kingdom, off the Kumasi-Sunyani Highway. It is about 280 kilometers northwest of Accra. The Asante-Mampong Campus is 63 kilometers from the main campus. Graphic Online(<https://aamusted.edu.gh/about/>).

Population

Population refers to the group that interests the researcher (Kothari, 2023). It is the units for which the survey's results are most likely to be generalized. The target population for this study comprised all regular first year students registered in the two public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana with a total of 18,470 for KNUST and 5,338 for AAMUSTED, making a total of 23,808. The accessible population for the study would comprise only

undergraduate students from the two universities. In all there was a total of 16,470 students for KNUST and 5,038) students for AAMUSTED in the 2022/2023 academic year (Quality Assurance and Planning Offices, KNUST & AAMUSTED, 2023).

Sampling Procedure

Generally, a sample is noted as a portion of the population of interest selected to participate in the study (Cash et al., 2022). This implies that the sample is a subset of the population, in which there are enough properties of such sample to represent the whole population. In this study, the researcher expanded the study sample from 393 to 420 respondents to increase the reliability and generalisability of the research findings. In view of that, 21 respondents were added to the KNUST's sample size to make 322 respondents, whereas 7 respondents were added to the AAMUSTED's sample size to make 98 respondents in proportion to the numerical strength of the two universities. The purpose of the increment was to achieve a more robust and representative sample, reduce sample bias, and enhance the accuracy of the statistical analysis. It was also done to improve the confidence in the researcher's conclusions and increase the external validity, making up for lost or unretrieved questionnaires. This is in line with recommendations by Kumar et al. (2022) and Amedahe (2002).

Several researchers share the perspective that the specification and position of estimation of the desired sample are fundamental to the validity of the research (Ludwig et al., 2022). In this study, the sample size was calculated using Slovin's formula. This formula has the potential to insuring position in the estimation of the desired population. Slovin's formula has been tested in a

wide array of studies and is suitable and ideal for most surveys and case studies.

The Slovin's (1960) Formula is given as follows:

Formula to calculate Sample size if population Size is finite and known (Slovin's Formula)

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

- n = Sample Size
- N = Population Size
- e = Margin of error

Formulated by Slovin (1960)

Slovin's formula was applied in estimating the sample size given the target population at a 95 percent confidence interval (Thus, a margin of error of 0.05).

$$n = \frac{21508}{1 + 21508(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{21508}{54.77}$$

$$n = 392.7$$

$$n \approx 393$$

Sample size is approximately 393 students. For this study, first year students were selected using a multistage-range sampling procedure. It was prudent to employ multistage-range sampling since the study's population was made up of students from different public universities who were enrolled in different programmes. Multistage-range sampling is a sampling technique in which the selection of respondents is carried out in stage-ranges, with successively smaller sampling units. In a four-stage-range sampling design, respondents were selected for the study.

At the first stage, the purposive sampling procedure was used to select the two public universities in the Ashanti Region for the study. These schools were selected because KNUST and AAMUSTED possess unique academic orientations and specialisations that provide a broad spectrum of student experiences. KNUST, as a leading institution in science and technology, attracts a diverse student body with varying academic demands and stressors associated with rigorous Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programmes. In contrast, AAMUSTED focuses on skills training and entrepreneurial development, catering for students who might have different academic and social adjustment experiences. This diversity in academic focus allows the study to capture a wide range of adjustment issues faced by students in different educational settings (Creswell, 2014).

At the second stage, the purposive sampling procedure was used to select regular and registered first year students from the two universities for the study. The reason for selecting first year students was because they are the most affected group of students when it comes to adjustment challenges as they are new in the university environment. This is primarily because they are transitioning from a more structured and familiar high school environment to the relatively unstructured and demanding university setting. The abrupt change in academic rigor, social dynamics, and personal independence can pose significant challenges (Perry et al., 2001).

At the third stage, the proportionate sampling procedure was used to sample respondents based on the numerical strength of the university. Proportionate sampling requires that the size of each stratum (sub-population) is proportionate to the total population size of the strata (Stat Trek, 2020). This

means that each stratum (sub-population) has the same sampling fraction. This approach maintains the proportionality of the sample size relative to the populations of the two universities. Calculating the proportionate sample of the university:

$$\text{Proportion for KNUST} = \left(\frac{\text{Population of KNUST}}{\text{Total Population}} \right) \times \text{Sample Size}$$

$$\text{Proportion for KNUST} = \left(\frac{16,470}{21,508} \right) \times 393$$

$$\text{Proportion for KNUST} \approx 301$$

$$\text{AAMUSTED} = \left(\frac{\text{Population of AAMUSTED}}{\text{Total Population}} \right) \times \text{Sample Size}$$

$$\text{Proportion for AAMUSTED} = \left(\frac{5,038}{21,508} \right) \times 393$$

$$\text{Proportion for AAMUSTED} \approx 92$$

This implied that the sample of 301 respondents should be selected from KNUST and a sample of 92 also selected from AAMUSTED.

Table 1 presents a tabular representation of the distribution of the sample across the two universities.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample by University

University	Population	Sample
KNUST	16,470	322
AAMUSTED	5,038	98
TOTAL	21, 508	420

Source: Field Data (2023)

At the fourth stage-range, the simple random sampling procedure was employed to select study respondents from the two universities for the study. With simple random sampling, each regular undergraduate first year student in KNUST and AAMUSTED had an equal chance of being selected for the study. A list of all regular undergraduate first year students were obtained from the

administrative offices of both KNUST and AAMUSTED. These lists included the names and student identification numbers of all eligible students.

The lists were verified and cross-checked to ensure they were up-to-date and included only registered first year students. The verified lists of students were entered into Statistical Package-range for the Social Sciences (SPSS), ensuring accurate data entry and avoiding duplication. Each student on the list was assigned a unique identification (ID) number within the database. This facilitated easy referencing and ensured clarity during the selection process. SPSS's computation module was used to generate random numbers between 0 and 1 for each person with 1 representing a potential respondent and 0 representing exclusion from the study. The first 301 students in KNUST were selected and the first 92 students from AAMUSTED were also selected. To cater for attrition of participants the 301 KNUST participants was increased to 322 while that of AAMUSTED was moved to 98 making a total of 420 participants.

Data Collection Instrument

A questionnaire was utilised as the tool for gathering data during the conduct of this study. A questionnaire is a research tool used to gather self-reported responses about broad and individualized problems (Gravetter & Forzano, 2020). This was due to Punch's (2009) argument that it is reasonable to employ an existing instrument if one is available while studying a complicated and multidimensional variable. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk (1999) was adapted to collect data for the study.

The SACQ has four subscales namely, academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment and institutional attachment. The academic

adjustment subscale measures a student's capacity to meet the various academic requirements and college experiences (such as motivation, academic achievement, and contentment with the academic environment provided in the university). The social adjustment subscale evaluates a student's capacity to manage-range the interpersonal and societal demands that are a part of college or university experiences (such as involvement in social activities and relationships with other people on campus, as well as satisfaction with the social facets of the college environment). The students' emotional adjustment reflects their intrapsychic state or the level of overall psychological anguish and bodily distress symptoms they are experiencing, and this is measured using the emotional adjustment subscale. However, the fourth layer of the SACQ which is called the institutional attachment subscale was not utilised in the current study.

The SACQ consists of 67 self-rating items that ask respondents to assess how they feel they have adjusted to university life. The SACQ produces a full-scale score that represents the overall level of adjustment to university and scores for each of the four subscales that represent the degree to which each adjustment dimension has been met. The lower the score, the greater the difficulty being reported. The SACQ has been determined to be reliable. For academic adjustment, social adjustment, emotional adjustment, institutional attachment, and overall scale adjustment, the alpha coefficients range from 0.81 to 0.90, 0.83 to 0.91, 82 to 90, and 0.77 to 0.86 respectively (Baker & Siryk, 1999).

The items on academic, emotional, and social adjustment, however, were not utilised without appropriate review and evaluation. Some of the

elements were changed to fit the current research, while others were utilized exactly as they were in the authors' original writing. The Institutional Attachment subscale was not utilised for this study. The questionnaire for the current study has four sections. Demographic background information of the respondents included gender, age-range, university campus, and residential status.

There were 10 items in the demographic information. Academic adjustment subscale was featured in Section B of the questionnaire from item 11 – 25. Information on the Social Adjustment of respondent was solicited in Section C of the questionnaire from items 26 – 39. Section D dwelt with the emotional adjustment of respondents and this spans from item 40 – 54. The original scale has 67 items.

A four-point Likert-type scale with the following scores was used: "strongly agree - 4," "agree - 3," "disagree -2," and "strongly disagree - 1". Higher scores (above 2.5) represent high adjustment and low scores (below 2.50) mean low adjustment. To enhance the effectiveness and accuracy of results negative worded items were reverse scored during the data coding process. Reversed items on the academic adjustment questionnaire were 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, and 22. Reverse scored items on social adjustment questionnaire were 29, 35, 36 and 37. Items 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54 on the emotional adjustment scale were also reverse scored. Thus, only item 45 on the emotional adjustment scale was not reverse scored. The total number of items on the adapted scale is 54.

Pilot testing of the Instrument

A pilot test of the instrument was conducted to ascertain any need for

revisions. Pilot testing of the instrument was carried out at the University of Energy and Natural Resources in the Bono Region of Ghana. A total of 50 respondents were used for pilot testing the instrument. This is in line with Van Belle (2008) assertion that, sample sizes ranging between 30 and 50 respondents are often sufficient to estimate parameters like standard deviations or test preliminary hypotheses in pilot testing. On the average, it took the respondents two – four weeks to return answered questionnaire. Also, some respondents suggested the revision of the wordings of some of the items to make it clearer.

This university was selected because it has similar characteristics of the study area. Some of these similar characteristics are the administrative structure, programmes of study, examination procedures and architectural similarities. The aim of the pilot testing was to determine and improve the construct validity and reliability of the adapted instrument. Furthermore, the respondents of the pilot test were asked to complete the questionnaire and to provide comments or suggestions for revising any ambiguous items. They were also told to discuss openly with the researcher any ambiguity, incoherence or incomprehension that they experienced about any aspect of the drafted questionnaire. The students made suggestions on the choice of some jargons for example, some participants suggested the use of respondents instead of participants. The final instrument for the study was produced after subsequent revisions in the wording and design of the instrument.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To enhance the validity of the study, the questionnaire was given to my supervisors in the Department of Guidance and Counselling in the University of Cape Coast (UCC) for their expert judgement and assessment. This was to

ensure content validity of the items. The items were examined to see whether they were related to the research questions and comprehensively cover the details of the study. Based on their comments and suggestions, the questionnaire was fine-tuned to achieve the purpose of the study.

The reliability (internal consistency) of the items for the main study was estimated using Cronbach's co-efficient alpha. According to Cronbach (as cited in Ebel and Frisbie, 1991), co-efficient alpha can provide a reliability estimate for a measure composed of items of varying point values such as essays or attitude scales that provide responses such as strongly agree and strongly disagree with intermediate response options. To obtain the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's co-efficient alpha was used to estimate the internal consistency. Table 2 provides the summary of the reliability coefficient obtained for each of the subscales and overall index of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Summary of the Reliability Coefficient of the Items

Item Sections	R. Coefficient	No. of Items
Academic adjustment	0.73	15
Social adjustment	0.76	14
Emotional adjustment	0.74	15
Overall index	0.71	44

Source: Field Data (2023)

To generate Cronbach's Alpha coefficients in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for the item sections, the following steps were carried out:

Step 1: Open Your Data

1. The researcher opened the dataset in SPSS where the items for which he wanted to calculate the Cronbach's Alpha was.

Step 2: Go to Reliability Analysis

2. From the top menu, he clicked on Analyze > Scale > Reliability Analysis.

Step 3: Select Variables

3. In the Reliability Analysis window, a box on the left side that lists all items were displayed.
 - The researcher selected the items (variables) that he wanted to include in the reliability analysis and moved them to the Items box on the right using the arrow button.

Step 4: Choose the Model

4. In the Model section (under the “Statistics” button), the default is Alpha, which is Cronbach’s Alpha. The researcher left this as it was since he was interested in calculating Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient.
 - Optionally, the researcher clicked on Statistics since he was interested in assessing the relationship of individual items with the overall scale.

Step 5: Run the Analysis

5. After he selected his options, he clicked OK to run the analysis.

Step 6: Interpret Results

6. In the output window, he looked for the Cronbach's Alpha value. A Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.7 or higher is often considered acceptable, though this can vary based on context.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2020), the reliability coefficient should be at least 0.70 and preferably higher. This means that the reliability

indices obtained for the various sections of the instrument are appropriate for the study. The overall reliability index of the questionnaire is 0.71. Therefore, the reliability obtained is justifiable for the study.

Data Collection Procedure

An introductory letter was taken from the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the Faculty of Educational Foundations, in the College of Education University of Cape Coast. The researcher also received from the College of Education Studies' Ethical Review Board, an ethical clearance letter. Both letters were given to the various Directors of Students' Affairs Directorates of the two universities. All the directors gave a convenient time (meeting days, days of electing their leaders or any other day deemed appropriate) which enabled me to get the respondents easily to respond to the questionnaire.

Each respondent used averagely fifteen to twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire. With support from one field assistant, the researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents. This field assistant had previously worked as a research assistant at various universities; thus, was familiar with the data collection procedure. The field assistant was oriented and briefed about the study, making it easier for him to administer the questionnaires. The training curriculum for the field assistants covered the study's objectives, how to find and approach respondents and data management.

The data collection methods were carried out in two stage-ranges. The first stage-range required distributing the questionnaire while the second stage-range involved recovering the questionnaire that had been distributed. The field assistant and researcher visited the respondents to administer the questionnaire.

The second phase was devoted to collecting the questionnaires that had been distributed. The questionnaire administration and collection lasted for three weeks. Data entered into a software (SPSS, version 25) had password access only. The questionnaire and all other research materials are locked in a cabinet for at least five years. All these measures were taken to safeguard respondents' confidentiality and anonymities as discussed in the consent process.

Ethical Considerations

The University of Cape Coast's Ethical Review Board issued me an ethical clearance to enable me go to the field to gather my data. Consent was required from respondents before data collection proceeded. The respondents were informed about the study so that they know exactly what they will be asked to do. This was done by providing the consent information on the first page-range of the questionnaire. Respondents' autonomy was ensured so they were not forced to answer the questionnaire in a way desired by the researcher. There was a good amount of personal space to avoid respondent contamination. Consideration was given for anonymity and confidentiality on the questionnaire. With anonymity, the questionnaire did not require the names of respondents and their exact age-ranges. However, pieces of information like the gender and age-range range of respondents were required because they were needed for the analysis of the research questions and hypotheses. In the case of confidentiality, the privacy of the data collected was ensured. In addition, the information that was provided by the respondents were not shared with other people but was used solely for the academic work as it was intended for.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis is the process of combining, condensing, and interpreting

data to create an idea. It is an approach taken to address research questions (Merriam, 2019). The quantitative data was sorted, coded, and analysed with SPSS Version 25. Before inputting the data to the computer, the researcher read and searched through the completed questionnaires to ensure that there were no incomplete responses. The researcher entered the data into the software's data display to complete the keying-in procedure. Descriptive statistical and inferential analysis techniques were used to analyse the data. Frequencies and percentage-ranges were used to analyse the demographic data of respondents.

Data on research questions one, two and three were analysed using means and standard deviations. Independent Sample t-test was used to test hypotheses one, two and three. Hypotheses four, five, and six were tested using One-way analysis of variance. Hypotheses seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve were tested with independent samples t-test. All tests were performed at 0.05 level of significance.

Chapter Summary

Chapter three presented the methodology of the study. It covered areas such as the philosophical basis of the study, the research approach, the research design, the study area, population, sample, and sampling procedure as well as the instruments that were used, the data collection procedure, and how data were analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess first year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and isolate its implications for counselling. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. An adapted Student Adaptation Questionnaire was used to collect data from 322 level 100 students at KNUST and 98 level 100 students at AAMUSTED. Frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, one-way analysis of variance, and t-tests were the statistical tools employed in the study at a significance level of 0.05.

This section is divided into three parts, namely: section A: demographic information of respondents, section B: analysis of main data, and section C: discussion of the results/findings of the study.

Section A: Demographic Information of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in Tables 3 to 6.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Table 3 presents the gender distribution of respondents involved in the study.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Freq.	Percent (%)
Male	230	54.8
Female	190	45.2
Total	420	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

It is shown in Table 3 that (n=230, 54.8%) were males and (n=190, 45.2%) were females. It could be observed that the majority of the study respondents were males.

Distribution of Respondents by Age-range

Table 4 presents the age distribution of respondents involved in the study.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Age-range

Age	Freq	Percent
15-19	197	46.9
20-24	161	38.3
25-29	26	6.2
Above 29	36	8.6
Total	420	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results from Table 4 reveal that the majority (n=197, 46.9%) respondents were between 15 -19 years. Those from the age- range of 20-24 years followed (n=161, 38.3%). The least (n=26, 6.2%) were between the age-range of 25-29 years.

Name of University

Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents by university.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by University

University	Freq.	Percent (%)
KNUST	322	76.7
AAMUSTED	98	23.3
Total	420	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 5 shows that (n=322, 76.7%) of the respondents attended KNUST and (n=98, 23.3%) attended AAMUSTED. It could be concluded that the majority of the study respondents attended KNUST.

Residential Status of Respondents

Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents by residential status.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Residential Status

Residential status	Freq.	Percentage (%)
On-campus	223	53.1
Off-campus	197	46.9
Total	420	100.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

It is seen from Table 6 shows that (n=223, 53.1%) of the respondents resides on campus and (n=197, 46.9%) resides off campus. Thus, the majority of the respondents reside on the university's campus.

Section B: Analysis of the Main Data

Research Question One

What is the level of academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

The purpose of research question one was to investigate the level of academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Respondents were requested to respond to 15 items. The items were scored on a four-point Likert-type scale dubbed: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. To understand the mean scores of the results, items on the Likert-type scale that scored a mean of 0.00 to 2.49 was regarded as disagree and those items that scored a mean from 2.50 to 4.00 was regarded as agree. The criterion value of 2.50 was established for the scale. To obtain the

criterion value (CV=2.50), the scores were added together and divided by the number scale ($4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50$). Table 7 presents the results of the data analysis.

Table 7: Level of Academic Adjustment of First Year Students (N=420)

Items	M	SD	Remarks
1. Getting a university degree is very important for me	3.66	.67	High
2. I am attending classes regularly	3.58	.71	High
3. I have been keeping up to date with my academic work	3.22	.65	High
4. I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses	3.03	.85	High
5. I am enjoying my academic work at university	2.98	.83	High
6. I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university	2.87	.89	High
7. Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study	2.75	1.34	High
8. I have not been very efficient in the use of study time lately	2.71	.86	High
9. I really have not had much motivation for studying lately	2.65	.90	High
10. I am not working as hard as I should at my course work	2.56	.91	High
11. I am finding academic work at university difficult	2.55	.83	High
12. I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically	2.54	.88	High
13. I am not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in	2.48	.87	Low
14. I have not been performing well during examinations	2.13	1.29	Low
15. I am not really smart enough for academic work I am expected to be doing now	1.95	.91	Low
Mean of Means/Standard deviations	2.77	.89	

Source: Field Data (2023)

Key-M=Means, SD=Standard Deviations, n=Sample size

The results from Table 7 show that respondents generally agreed that their academic adjustment in the university was high (MM=2.77, SD=.89). It

was found that participants agreed that areas of their high academic adjustment in the university included: (a) getting university degree was very important to them ($M=3.66$, $SD=.67$), (b) they attended classes regularly ($M=3.58$, $SD=.71$), (c) they kept up to date with their academic work ($M=3.22$, $SD=.65$), (d) they were very satisfied with the professors they had in their courses ($M=3.03$, $SD=.85$), (e) they enjoyed their academic work at university ($M=2.98$, $SD=.83$), (f) they were satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university ($M=2.87$, $SD=.89$) and (g) they recently had trouble concentrating when they tried to study ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.34$).

The study results, however, showed areas of low academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana were: (a) participants not doing well enough academically for the amount of work they put in ($M=2.48$, $SD=.87$), (b) participants not performing well during examinations ($M=2.13$, $SD=1.29$) and (c) participants not really smart enough for academic work they are expected to be doing ($M=1.95$, $SD=.91$). It could be concluded that first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana are academically well-adjusted.

Research Question Two

What is the level of social adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

This research question sought to determine the level of social adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. respondents were requested to provide responses to fourteen (14) items. The items were scored on a four-point Likert-type scale dubbed: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. To understand the mean scores of the

results, items on the Likert-type scale that scored a mean of 0.00 to 2.49 was regarded as disagree and those items that scored a mean from 2.50 to 4.00 was regarded as agree. The criterion value of 2.50 was established for the scale. To obtain the criterion value (CV=2.50), the scores were added together and divided by the number scale ($4+3+2+1=10/4=2.50$). Table 8 presents the results of the data analysis.

Table 8: Level of Social Adjustment of First Year Students (N=420)

Items	M	SD	Remarks
1. I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment	3.28	.73	High
2. Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy	3.05	.91	High
3. I am getting along very well with my roommate (s) at university	2.98	.94	High
4. I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university	2.97	.90	High
5. I am quite satisfied with my social life at university	2.91	.88	High
6. I feel that I have enough skills to get along well in the university setting	2.88	.80	High
7. I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have	2.78	.97	High
8. I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university	2.70	.86	High
9. I have not been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately	2.56	.95	High
10. I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university	2.47	1.70	Low
11. I am very involved with social activities in university	2.47	.87	Low
12. I have several close social ties at university	2.30	.79	Low
13. I have had informal personal contacts with university professors	2.02	.86	Low
14. Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university	1.89	1.00	Low
Mean of means/Standard deviations	2.66	0.94	

Source: Field Data (2023)

Key-M=Means, SD=Standard Deviation, n=Sample size

Table 8 shows that respondents generally agreed that their social adjustment in the university was quite high ($MM=2.66$, $SD=0.94$). It was found that respondents agreed that the major areas of high social adjustment included; (a) they felt that they fitted in well as part of the university environment ($M=3.28$, $SD=.73$), (b) they being on their own, taking responsibility for themselves, had not been easy ($M=3.05$, $SD=.91$), (c) they were getting along very well with their roommate (s) at university ($M=2.98$, $SD=.94$), (d) they were meeting as many people, and making as many friends as they would like at university ($M=2.97$, $SD=.90$), (e) they were quite satisfied with their social life at university ($M=2.91$, $SD=.88$), (f) they felt that they had enough skills to get along well in the university setting ($M=2.88$, $SD=.80$), (g) they had some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom they talked about any problems they had ($M=2.78$, $SD=.97$), (h) they were satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university ($M=2.70$, $SD=.86$) and (i) they had not been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately ($M=2.56$, $SD=.95$).

The findings revealed that the respondents agreed that components of their low social adjustment included (a) they having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university ($M=2.47$, $SD=1.70$), (b) they being very involved with social activities in university ($M=2.47$, $SD=.87$), (c) they having several close social ties at university ($M=2.30$, $SD=.79$), (d) they having informal personal contacts with university professors ($M=2.02$, $SD=.86$) and (e) they giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university ($M=1.89$, $SD=1.00$). It is evident from the study findings that first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana have high adjustment in most areas of their social life.

Research Question Three

What is the level of emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana?

The purpose of research question three was to find out the level of emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Respondents were requested to provide responses to fourteen (14) items. The items were scored on a four-point Likert-type scale dubbed: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. To understand the mean scores of the results, items on the Likert-type scale that scored a mean of 0.00 to 2.49 was regarded as disagree and those items that scored a mean from 2.50 to 4.00 was regarded as agree. The criterion value of 2.50 was established for the scale. To obtain the criterion value ($CV=2.50$), the scores were added together and divided by the number scale ($4+3+2+1= 10/4=2.50$). Table 9 presents the results of the data analysis.

Table 9: Level of Emotional Adjustment of First Year Students (n=420)

Items	M	SD	Remarks
1. I worry a lot about my university expresses	3.13	.94	High

2. I have felt tired much of the time lately	2.93	1.35	High
3. I have not been sleeping very well	2.84	1.32	High
4. My appetite has been good lately	2.68	.99	High
5. I am experiencing, a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in university	2.63	.97	High
6. I have put on (or lost) too much weight recently	2.53	.98	High
7. I have been feeling tensed or nervous lately	2.53	.98	High
8. I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately	2.52	.98	High
9. Lately, I have been feeling blue and moody a lot	2.50	.90	High
10. I have been having a lot of headaches lately	2.49	1.02	Low
11. I feel am very different from other students at university in ways that I do not like	2.44	.98	Low
12. Lonesomeness for home as a source is of difficulty for me now	2.43	1.32	Low
13. I have not been able to control my emotions very well lately	2.34	.96	Low
14. I have been getting angry too easily lately	2.17	.91	Low
15. On a balance, I would rather be home than here	1.93	.97	Low
Mean of means/Standard deviations	2.53	1.03	

Source: Field Data (2023)

Key- Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, n-Sample Size

As shown in Table 9, the respondents in sum, agreed that their emotional adjustments in university was quite high ($M=2.53$, $SD=1.03$). Areas of respondents high emotional adjustment included; (a) respondents worrying a lot about their university expresses ($M=3.13$, $SD=.94$), (b) feeling tired much of the time lately ($M=2.93$, $SD=1.35$), (c) having not been sleeping very well ($M=2.84$, $SD=1.32$), (d) having good appetite lately ($M=2.68$, $SD=.99$), (e) experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon them in university ($M=2.63$, $SD=.97$), (f) putting on (or lost) too much weight recently and (g) feeling tensed or nervous lately ($M=2.53$, $SD=.98$) respectively, (h)

feeling lonely a lot at university lately ($M=2.52$, $SD=.98$) and (i) feeling blue and moody a lot ($M=2.50$, $SD=.90$).

The results, on the other hand, showed that respondents agreed that areas of their low emotional adjustment included (a) having a lot of headaches lately ($M=2.49$, $SD=1.02$), (b) feeling they are very different from other students at university in ways that they did not like ($M=2.44$, $SD=.98$), (c) feeling lonely due to difficulties ($M=2.43$, $SD=1.32$), (d) not been able to control their emotions very well lately ($M=2.34$, $SD=.96$), (e) been getting angry to easily lately ($M=2.17$, $SD=.91$) and (f) prefer to be at home than at the university ($M=1.93$, $SD=.97$). It could be observed from the study findings that first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region have high adjustment in most of areas of their emotional life.

Research Hypothesis One

H_{o1} : There is no statistically significant gender difference in academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{o1} : There is a statistically significant gender difference in academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

Hypothesis one examines the statistical significance gender difference in academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Gender Difference in Academic Adjustment of Students

Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Male	230	42.00	4.88			

				1.387	377	.166
Female	190	41.36	4.03			

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results from Table 10 showed that the mean score for male respondents ($M=42.00$, $SD=4.88$) is higher than the mean score for female respondents ($M=41.36$, $SD=4.03$) in terms of academic adjustment among first year students. The results, however, revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in academic adjustment at $t(377)=1.387$, $p>0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Hypothesis Two

H_{o2} : There is no statistically significant gender difference in the social adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

H_{a2} : There is a statistically significant gender difference in the social adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

The purpose of this hypothesis was to find out whether there was a statistically significant gender difference in social adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Gender Difference in Social Adjustment

Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Male	230	38.32	5.58			
				3.919	352	.000
Female	190	36.08	5.03			

Source: Field Data (2023)

As shown in Table 11, it was found that the mean score for male respondents ($M=38.32$, $SD=5.58$) is higher than the mean score for female respondents ($M=36.08$, $SD=5.03$) in terms of social adjustment of first year university students. The results further revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in terms of social adjustment at $t(352)=3.919$, $p<0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Three

H_{o3} : There is no statistically significant gender difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

H_{13} : There is a statistically significant gender difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana,

This hypothesis sought to find out the statistically significant gender difference in emotional adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Gender Difference in Emotional Adjustment

Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
Male	230	37.94	7.45			
				-.484	400	.628
Female	190	38.30	7.40			

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results in Table 12 revealed that the mean score for the female respondents ($M=38.30$, $SD=7.40$) is higher than the mean scores for male respondents ($M=37.94$, $SD=7.45$) in terms of emotional adjustment on the university campus. The results, however, revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in the emotional adjustment at $t(400)=-.484$, $p>0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Hypothesis Four

H_04 : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

H_14 : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

The purpose of research hypothesis 4 was to determine there was a statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. The test of normality revealed that for “15-19” “20-24”, “25-29” and “above 29” group the dependent variable “academic adjustment”, was not normally distributed. This is because the Sig. value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is lesser than 0.05. (See Appendix D). The test of homogeneity of variances showed that the sig. value is greater than 0.05, therefore, variances are assumed equal (See Appendix D). Hence, One-way analysis of variance test was conducted.

Table 13: ANOVA of Academic Adjustment on the Basis of Age

Academic	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	151.511	3	50.504	2.489	.060
Within Groups	7608.843	417	20.290		
Total	7760.354	420			

Source: Field Data (2023)

From the one-way ANOVA, $F(3, 375) = 2.489$, $p = .060$. The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference in academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Hypothesis Five

H_{05} : There is no statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

H_{15} : There is a statistically significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

This hypothesis sought to explore the significant difference in the social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. The study showed that for the “25-29” and “above 29” group on the dependent variable, “social adjustment” was normally distributed. This is because the Sig. value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is greater than 0.05. However, for “15-19” and “20-24”, group the dependent variable “social adjustment”, was not normally distributed. This is because the Sig. value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is lesser than 0.05. (See Appendix D). It was found that the test of homogeneity of variance sig. value is greater than 0.05, therefore, variances are assumed equal (See Appendix D). One-way analysis of variance test was conducted, and the results is presented in Table 14.

Table 14: ANOVA of Social Adjustment on the Basis of Age

Social	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	394.874	3	131.625	4.567	.004
Within Groups	10088.177	417	28.823		
Total	10483.051	420			

Source: Field Data (2023)

The study results from the one-way ANOVA, $F(3, 350) = 4.567$, $p = .004$. The result shows that there is a statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Six

H_{06} : There is no statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

H_{16} : There is a statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

The purpose of this hypothesis was to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. The result for the “15-19”, “20-24”, “25-29”, and “above 29” group on the dependent variable, “emotional adjustment” was normally distributed. This is because the Sig. value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is greater than 0.05. (See Appendix D). It was found that the test of homogeneity of variance sig. value is greater than 0.05, therefore, variances are assumed equal (See Appendix D). One-way analysis of variance test was conducted, and the results is presented in Table 15.

Table 15: ANOVA of Emotional Adjustment on the Basis of Age

Emotional	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	290.437	3	96.812	1.765	.153
Within Groups	21825.963	417	54.839		
Total	22116.400	420			

Source: Field Data (2023)

From the one-way ANOVA, $F(3, 398) = 1.765$, $p = .153$. The result shows that there is no statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment

of first year students on the basis of age. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Research Hypothesis Seven

H_{o7} : There is no statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus.

H_{i7} : There is a statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus.

Hypothesis 7 determined the statistically significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of university. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Difference in Academic Adjustment on the Basis of University Campus

University	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
KNUST	322	41.97	4.30	2.098	377	.037
AAMUSTED	98	40.80	5.17			

Source: Field Data (2023)

It was found in Table 16 that the mean score for KNUST respondents ($M=41.97$, $SD=4.30$) is higher than the mean score for AAMUSTED respondents ($M=40.80$) in terms of academic adjustment on the university campus. The results, therefore, revealed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of their academic adjustment at $t(377)=2.098$, $p<0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Eight

H_{08} : There is no statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus.

H_{18} : There is a statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus.

The hypothesis was expected to establish a statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Difference in Social Adjustment on the Basis of University Campus

University	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
KNUST	322	36.83	5.46			
				-3.345	352	.001
AAMUSTED	98	39.24	4.94			

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results in Table 17 indicate that the mean score for KNUST respondents ($M=36.83$, $SD=5.46$) is lower than the mean score for AAMUSTED respondents ($M=39.24$, $SD=4.94$) in the light of social adjustment. The results, more so, showed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of social adjustment at $t(352) = -3.345$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Nine

H_{09} : There is no statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus.

H_{19} : There is a statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus.

The objective of this hypothesis was to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Difference in Emotional Adjustment on the Basis of University Campus

University	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
KNUST	322	38.78	7.45	3.382	400	.001
AAMUSTED	98	35.83	6.87			

Source: Field Data (2023)

It was found from Table 18 that the mean score for KNUST respondents ($M=38.78$, $SD=7.45$) is higher than the mean score for AAMUSTED respondents ($M=35.83$, $SD=6.68$) in the light of emotional adjustment. The results, moreover, showed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of emotional adjustment at $t(400)=3.382$, $p<0.05$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Ten

H_{o10} : There is no statistically significant difference in academic adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

H_{i10} : There is a statistically significant difference in academic adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

The purpose of this hypothesis was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in academic adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status. The independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Difference in Academic Adjustment with Regard to Residential Status

Residential status	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
On-campus	223	41.24	4.02	-2.129	344.107	.034
Off-campus	197	42.24	4.98			

Source: Field Data (2023)

It can be seen from Table 19 that the mean score for on-campus participants ($M=41.24$, $SD=4.02$) is lower than the mean score for off-campus participants ($M=42.24$, $SD=4.98$) in terms of students' academic adjustment. Additionally, the results showed a statistically significant difference between on-campus students and off-campus first year students in terms of academic adjustment at $t(344.107) = -2.219$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Eleven

H_{o11} : There is no statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

H_{i11} : There is statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

campus resident of first year students in social adjustment.

The focus of research hypothesis eleven was to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 20.

Table 20: Difference in Social Adjustment with Regard to Residential Status

Residential status	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
On-campus	223	36.76	5.21			
				-2.204	352	.028
Off-campus	197	38.05	5.69			

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 20 shows that the means score for on-campus participants ($M=36.76$, $SD=5.21$) is lower than the mean score for off-campus participants ($M=38.05$, $SD=5.69$) in terms of social adjustment of students in the universities. Furthermore, the results showed a significant difference between on-campus students and off-campus first year students in terms of social adjustment at $t(352) = -2.204$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Hypothesis Twelve

H_{o12} : There is no statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

H_{i12} : There is a statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

This hypothesis sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status. Independent samples t-test was conducted at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Difference in Emotional Adjustment with regard to Residential Status

Residential status	N	M	SD	t	df	p-value
On-campus	223	38.09	7.14			
				-.039	400	.969
Off-campus	197	38.12	7.75			

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results in Table 21 shows that the mean for on-campus respondents ($M=38.09$, $SD=7.14$) is not different from the mean score of off-campus respondents ($M=38.12$, $SD=7.75$) in terms of emotional adjustment. The results revealed no statistically significant difference between on-campus and off-campus first year students in emotional adjustment at $t(400)=-.039$, $p>0.05$. Hence, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Section C: Discussion

Level of Academic Adjustment of Students

The first specific objective assessed the level of academic adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The findings of the study indicated both high and low levels of academic adjustment among the university students. Regarding high level of academic adjustment, it was found that first year students indicated that they have been keeping up to date with their academic work and they enjoy their academic work at the university. The findings corroborate findings of Rivas-Drake (2010) who reported in the literature that first year students' high academic adjustment included their ability to keep up to date with their academic work, ability to identify and join a working study group and enjoy their academic work at the university. This enabled students to perform well in examinations and quizzes and became satisfied with chosen university. Ali et al. (2009) noted that first year students' high academic adjustment played pivotal role in influencing their academic outcomes.

The findings, however, showed the following areas of low academic adjustment of first year students: students not doing well enough academically

for the amount of work they put in, students not performing well during examinations and them not really smart enough for academic work they are expected to be doing. The findings are consistent with Tenkorang et al. (2020) who conducted a study to investigate the adjustment challenges faced by first year students in the University of Cape Coast and the coping strategies freshmen use in response to the adjustment challenges they face. Tenkorang et al. noted that first year students in the University of Cape Coast are faced with adjustment challenges such as difficulty handling the academic pressure on university campus, not doing well enough for the amount of work put on them and not really smart enough for academic work as expected of them. They added that first year academically adjusted slowly due to trouble concentrating when they try to study, they have not been very efficient in the use of study time and not performing well during examinations.

Results of the study are also consistent with Alexander and Onwuegbuzie (2007) who identified areas of low academic adjustment among first year university students. It was reported that students in universities face various sources of academic stress, including the demonstration of an ability to engage in challenging materials under time limitations. Students are found to be victims of time management when they have so many academic works on them. Misra and McKean (2000) also mentioned that university students have trouble paying attention when they could not meet assessment deadlines due to so many tasks on them.

The findings of the current study further lend support to findings of Raskin (2017) who maintained that academic adjustment of first year students in university happens to be difficult, students do not really enjoy it and may

negatively affect students' learning and academic standings. This would mostly mean that students would not satisfy higher education demands because students are not properly familiarized with the university requirements.

The results of the study further support Cemakilar and Falbo (2008) who opined that good academic adjustment was found related with lesser self-reported skipping of classes. This finding essentially means that students who do not enjoy and pay particular attention to classes on university campus would probably struggle to go through the academic work on campus.

The result of the study further supports Grayson (2003) who noted that first year students need to be integrated into university environment and this will eventually lead to motivation to continue their studies. First year students who successfully adjust into the university environment show higher levels of academic achievements as compared to those who fail to socially adjust.

The findings of the study are confirmed by the Social Identity Theory, Transition Theory and Gullahorn and Gullahorn's W-Curve Model. The Social Identity Theory provides a framework for understanding how students' group memberships, and the corresponding norms, influence their academic behaviour. A student identifies themselves with academic in-groups, such as a study group or academic department, can foster motivation and academic engagement. Students who align themselves with high-achieving in-groups tend to adopt similar academic behaviours, such as attending classes, studying effectively, and seeking academic support (Chung, 2018). The theory further confirms that students with strong in-group identification may engage in behaviours that enhance academic performance because they feel a sense of pride in their group's achievements (Haslam, 2004).

The Transition Theory also confirms that study findings in the sense that students' academic success depends on their personal resources (self) and the strategies they employ to cope with academic demands. Students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to use adaptive strategies such as seeking help from professors or utilizing academic resources (e.g., tutoring services, study groups). Support systems, such as academic advisors, peer tutors, and mentoring, also contribute to academic success. Access to such resources can alleviate stress and promote academic resilience (Tinto, 1993). McKenzie and Schweitzer (2001) indicate that students who engage with academic resources and develop effective study strategies tend to have more positive academic experiences.

The findings are additionally supported by the Gullahorn and Gullahorn's W-Curve Model which aligns with students' academic experiences during this transition. According to the model, at the beginning of the academic year, students may experience a sense of novelty and enthusiasm about their courses, but they might also feel overwhelmed by the new academic demands. As the semester progresses and students adapt to the academic rigor of university life, they begin to recover and adjust academically.

Level of Social Adjustment of Students

The findings of the study indicated both high and low levels of social adjustment among the university students. It was found that first year students indicated areas of high social adjustment to include: feeling that they fit in well as part of the university environment, getting along very with roommate(s) at the university, meeting many people, and making as many friends as they would like the university and they have good friends at university with whom they can

talk about any problem. The findings are consistent with findings of Sarimski (2018) who maintains that first year students' high social adjustment included first year students fitting well in social communities like university environment and students getting along very well with peers and friends at universities. Sarimski added that first year students' high social adjustment depicts students' ability to successfully belong to or participate in any social community activity on university campus. Jean (2010) established that successful student social adjustment ultimately influences the ability of students to earn high grade point averages.

The findings also showed the following areas of low social adjustment: they having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university, they being very involved with social activities in university, they having close social ties at university, they having informal personal contacts with university professors and they giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university. The findings support Sarimski (2018) who mentioned that component of low social adjustment of first year university students include being very involved with social activities in university. Meadows (2014) opined that first-year students have low social adjustment being involved with social activities in university. Meadows added that first year students also have low social adjustment in having close social ties at the university and having informal personal contacts with university professors. Meadows, therefore, suggested that the transition into a university environment must involve a much larger and impersonal structure that focuses most on the assessment and achievements of students.

The findings, however, are at variance with findings of Rienties et al. (2012). Rienties et al. (2012) indicated that areas of high social adjustment of

first year university students involve adapting to interpersonal-societal demands of university experience such as making friends, involving in social activities, being able to be away from home and involves satisfying the requirements of the social environment of the university. It basically involves the adaptation to the social domain of their educational life. Swenson, Nordstrom and Hiester (2008) intimated that high social adjustment relates to concerns about how the demands of the university setting affect a student. These cover relationships, social activities organised by the university, etc. Relationship quality is positively related to all aspects of adjustment to university. An association of friends usually provides a context within which a first-year student can truly express him or herself, feel comfortable and have positive experiences on campus. Ultimately, this will serve as a cushion against loneliness and the presence of positive experiences. Gargono (2012) and Dacosta (2010) indicated that first year students who adjust well to the university environment spend more time socializing with friends and these students show signs of happiness with their social relationships.

The current findings are contrast to the findings of Jean (2010) study. Jean indicated that beyond the classroom, interaction with fellow students through leisure, extracurricular activities and socialization through clubs and associations apparently has a positive effect on the academic performance of students. Gómez et al. (2014) in their study showed that social networks, developed through sports and leisure, had positive correlation to the adjustment levels of first year students.

The findings of study are corroborated with the Social Identity Theory which states that the first-year student often experience a shift in social identity

as they transition from high school to university. They may feel a need to form new social groups and distinguish themselves from the out-group (other students or institutions), which influences their social experiences (Jenkins, 2008). As students join various social clubs, study groups, or cultural organizations, their social identities become more defined. Their sense of belonging within these groups can foster positive social adjustment, as it satisfies the need for affiliation and reduces feelings of isolation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Students who identify strongly with their in-group (e.g., peers from the same department or cultural group) may experience greater social support, enhancing their adjustment to university life (Baron, 2012).

Transition Theory emphasizes the importance of support systems during a transition period. First-year university students often face challenges in social adjustment as they navigate new environments, build social networks, and establish relationships with peers, faculty, and staff. Schlossberg's model indicates that social support is crucial for helping students adapt socially. Students with stronger social networks tend to feel more connected and supported, which in turn helps them manage new social situations. The model further showed that student self-factors, such as students' self-concept and prior experiences, impact their ability to form relationships and navigate new social contexts. Those who have high self-esteem or strong pre-existing social skills may adjust more quickly. Hernandez (2015) corroborated the findings by indicating that students with a strong social support system report higher levels of social satisfaction and fewer feelings of loneliness or isolation).

The first stage of the W-Curve Model is characterized by an initial euphoria as individuals enter a new environment. For first-year university

students, this period is marked by excitement about making new friends, exploring new opportunities, and engaging in social activities. However, social adjustment can take a downturn during the culture shock phase, as students encounter difficulties such as isolation, feelings of loneliness, or challenges in forming new friendships due to differences in social norms, values, or expectations. As students' progress through the W-Curve's stages of recovery and reintegration, they experience better social adjustment. They become more comfortable in the university environment and gradually build meaningful relationships.

Level of Emotional Adjustment of Students

The findings of the study indicated both high and low levels of emotional adjustment among the university students. The findings showed that first year students indicated the following as areas of high emotional adjustment: worrying a lot about their university expresses and experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon them in university. The findings are consistent with findings of Eccles et al. (1991), Engels et al. (2016), Roeser and Eccles (1998) which posited that first-year students' area of high emotional adjustment included feeling lonely due to difficulties, getting worried about university, and experiencing difficulty coping with stresses. It was added that first year students tend to have high emotional adjustment by experiencing behavioural problems and university related stress. The high emotional adjustment of first year students was probably due to students' familiarity with the university environment before their official admission into the school.

The study findings showed first year students' areas of low emotional adjustment to include: having a lot of headaches lately, feeling they are very

different from other students at university in ways that they did not like, feeling lonely due to difficulties, not been able to control their emotions very well lately, been getting angry too easily lately and prefer to be at home than at the university. The current findings corroborate findings of Mullan (2014) who noted that areas of low emotional adjustment of first year students in university included feeling lonely due to difficulties. Mullan added that areas of low emotional adjustment of first year students' adjustment were having a lot of headaches, and weakened immunity, negatively impacting their general wellbeing. Sulaiman (2013) opined areas of low emotional adjustment of first year students to cover feeling they are very different from other students at university in ways that they did not like and not been able to control their emotions very well lately. This makes first year students struggle to learn to control their emotions at the university. This inability of first year students to struggle to control their emotional adjustment could make them prefer to be at home than at the university.

The study findings showed that participants generally agreed that their emotional adjustment was quite well. Participants to a larger extent seemed to manage stress, anxiety, and overall emotional well-being in response to the challenges of university life. This was essentially due to participants ability to belong to supportive groups and perform their responsibilities as expected. The findings are in line with the proposition of the Social Identity Theory which states that a strong sense of belonging to a supportive in-group can enhance emotional resilience, reduce feelings of stress, and provide coping mechanisms for challenges. Jetten (2015) noted that students who identify with a group that

offers emotional support are likely to feel emotionally secure and better able to cope with the stresses of university life.

The Transition Theory supported the findings of the study in the sense that emotional adjustment is mediated by coping strategies, personal resources, and the availability of support. Coping strategies such as problem-focused coping (e.g., planning, seeking advice) and emotion-focused coping (e.g., relaxation, self-compassion) can improve emotional adjustment by reducing stress and anxiety. Self-regulation, or the ability to manage one's emotions effectively, is crucial. Students who are more emotionally resilient tend to recover more quickly from stressful situations, which facilitates better emotional adjustment. Students with stronger emotional regulation and coping skills tend to report higher levels of emotional stability and well-being (Conner, Pope & Hall, 2016).

The W-Curve Model maintained that feelings of homesickness, anxiety, and stress are common during first year in the university. The W-Curve predicts that emotional distress peaks during the culture shock stage, but as students adapt to the environment, emotional stability is restored. Emotional adjustment improves as students gain confidence, form connections, and develop coping mechanisms to deal with the pressures of university life. The final stage of the W-Curve is marked by emotional well-being, as students successfully navigate the challenges of their first year.

Gender Differences in Academic, Social and Emotional Adjustment

The hypothesis was conducted to find out whether statistically gender differences existed in academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year public university students in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The findings

showed, that regarding academic adjustment, the mean score for first year male students was higher than mean score for female first year students. The results, however, revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in academic adjustment. The finding essentially means that even though male first year students seem to differ from their counterparts' female students, the difference is not statistically significant. The finding could be attributed probably to the reason that males tend to organise themselves quickly in new environment hence their ability to perform slightly above females in the mean scores. However, statistically, both male and female first year students are same in terms of academic adjustment which could be due to the reason that they are both new to the university campus and have not yet acquired the experience of navigating the university academic work. The current findings corroborate the findings of Nyarko-Sampson (2017) who indicated no significant differences existed between the male and female students in academic adjustment on university campus.

On gender difference in social adjustment of first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, it was found that the mean score for first year male students was higher than the mean score for female first year students. Furthermore, the study revealed that a statistically significant difference existed between male and female first year students in social adjustment. It is evident from the study findings that first year male students are active and easily socialize on the university campus as compared with first year female students. This finding could be attributed to the fact that some of the male students might have had the opportunity to experience university social activities prior to their enrolment on the university campuses. This makes first

year male students to easily move around on the university campus with ease and confidence. Males are generally said to be easily associated with and make friends than females. Hence, males' disposition to be free with their colleagues who are ahead of them on the university campuses would grant them the requisite skills and knowledge to engage themselves in many social orientations.

The findings in relation to social adjustment of first year students supports the findings of Kaur and Sharma (2022). Kaur and Sharma conducted their study on gender differences in social adjustment and interpersonal support among undergraduate students in Punjab, India. It was found that male students were more socially adjusted and perceived better interpersonal support related to material, appraisal and college belongingness as compared to their female counterparts. Kaur and Sharma added that male students have higher level of perceived interpersonal support which make them have better adjustment in various social settings. Females exhibit more challenges in establishing social relationships. So female students' adjustment was mainly affected by their social relationships, interpersonal support, and their social experiences in the university.

The findings are in line with findings of Raj and Singaravelu (2019) who mentioned that male students are better than the female student in their emotional adjustment. It may be due to the reason that, male student may easily adopt with any kind of classroom and learning situation, may have fewer expectations, and tolerate the inconvenience about the teaching-learning process than the female student teachers. It may be the situation for the male

student in their home, society and where ever they are, thus possess more adjustment than female student teachers.

Differences in Academic, Social, and Emotional Adjustment of Students on the Basis of Age

The result shows that there is no significant difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. This finding suggests that first year students in the university experience the same academic adjustment regardless of age. This finding could be probably attributed the reason that first year students are new at the university and, therefore, their level of experience in terms of academic adjustment would almost be similar. The finding is in line with Raju and Rahamtulla (2007) who noted that regardless of the age of student, their academic adjustment is the same in schools in the Visakhapatnam area of India.

In contrast, it was found that a significant difference existed in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. This finding could probably stem from the fact that some first-year students were older than others. This is in line with the view held by Urquhart and Pooley (2007) that young students reported struggles with social pressures than mature students.

The result shows no significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. The finding means that emotional adjustment of first year university students is not determined by age. Regardless of students age during first year, they did not differ significantly in terms of the emotional adjustment. Perhaps, they did not differ with respect to how they perceived their new environment.

Differences in Academic, Social and Emotional Adjustment of Students on the Basis of University Campus

The purpose of this hypothesis was to determine whether statistically significant differences existed in academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus. The findings showed that the mean score for KNUST participants was higher than the mean score for AAMUSTED participants. The results further revealed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of academic adjustment. The findings revealed that first year KNUST students academically adjust better on campus than AAMUSTED first year students. This revelation could be attributed to the fact that probably KNUST's environment makes it easy for students to read and discuss content taught in classroom thereby enabling them to academically adjust better. AAMUSTED perhaps does not have huge academic environment and facilities which would make students to academically adjust.

Regarding social adjustment, the findings showed that the mean score for KNUST participants is lower than the mean score for AAMUSTED participants. The results, more so, showed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of social adjustment. It is evident from the study results in relation to social adjustment that first year AAMUSTED students performed better than KNUST,

The findings in relation to emotional adjustment of students showed that the mean score for KNUST participants is higher than the mean score for AAMUSTED participants. The results moreover, showed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in

terms of emotional adjustment. These findings could be attributed to the reason that probably because KNUST has more robust counselling centre than AAMUSTED. It is, therefore, concluded that KNUST has better system for first year students to academically, socially, and emotionally adjust better than AAMUSTED.

Differences in Academic, Social and Emotional Adjustment of Students on the Basis of Residential Status

The objective was to test whether statistically significant differences existed in academic, social, and emotional adjustment of students on the basis of residential status. On academic adjustment of students, it was found that the mean score for on-campus first year students was lower than the mean score for off-campus first year students. The results, further, showed that significant difference existed in academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of residential status. The significant difference in academic adjustment on the basis of residential status of first year students could be attributed to the fact that probably off campus students enjoy relatively peaceful atmosphere in the hostels than on campus students. This could be explained in the sense that perhaps on campus students engage in activities which disturb the academic concentration of students on campus. Majority of the continuing students stay off campus with some fresh students. This could also explain better why off campus fresh students better adjust socially and academically than on campus first year students.

The findings lend support to findings of Palmer and Bray (2002) found that the grade distribution for completing students was significantly different between the two groups: off campus and on campus students. Palmer and Bray (2002) added that the mean final grade was statistically significantly higher for off-campus students than on campus students. It was also found that the failure rate for off-campus students was significantly lower as compared to students on stay on campus. Oliaro and Trotter (2010) concluded that off-campus education meets the needs of a particular group of students and as such is an important option for education than on campus education.

The findings in relation to difference in social adjustment of first year student on the basis of residential status showed that the means score for on-campus participants was lower than the mean score for off-campus students. Furthermore, the results showed a significant difference in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of residential status. Though this revelation is real, it is also surprising. This finding indicates that first year off-campus students socially adjusted better than first year students on-campus. Ideally, it was expected that, since, on campus contain many students, adjustment of students socially would have been high. This finding could be due to the fact that, first year students who are off campus would be motivated and attracted to social gathering scenes more than on-campus students.

The findings in relation to emotional adjustment of first year university students on the basis of residential status showed that the mean score for on-campus students was not different from the mean score of off-campus students. Hence, there was no statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of residential status. The findings imply that both on-

campus and off-campus first year university students experience the same level of emotional adjustment. In other words, first year students do not differ in terms of their emotional adjustment regardless of residential status.

Chapter Summary

The study was conducted to assess first year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Data from the study were both descriptively and inferentially analysed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses respectively. It was found that participants agreed that areas of high academic, social, and emotional adjustment included: (a) keeping up to date with their academic work and they enjoy their academic work at the university, (b) feeling that they fit in well as part of the university environment, and (c) worrying a lot about their university expresses. On low academic, social and emotional adjustment, it was found that first year students agreed that (a) they were not doing well enough academically for the amount of work they put in, (b) they having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university and (c) having a lot of headaches lately. The study found that gender did not significantly influence academic and emotional adjustment of first year students. However, it was observed that gender had a significant influence on social adjustment of first year students. The study did not reveal statistically significant gender differences in academic and emotional adjustment of first year students. However, statistically significant gender difference was found in the social adjustment of first year students. Significant differences also existed in the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus. Significant differences further existed in academic, and

social adjustment of first year students on the basis of residential status. In contrast, no significant difference existed in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of residential status. Similarly, there was no significant difference in the academic and emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. However, a significant difference was found in the social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study's findings and recommendations. It also provides a brief description of the study's purpose, research methods, research questions, and hypotheses that guided it. Finally, it presents implications for counselling and suggestions for further studies.

Overview of the Study

The study investigated the determinants of first year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The study was a descriptive survey and sought to investigate the topic under review. The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) determine the level of academic adjustment of first year students,
- 2) determine the level of social adjustment of first year students,
- 3) find out level of emotional adjustment of first year students,
- 4) determine the influence of gender on the academic adjustment of first year students,
- 5) find the influence of gender on the social adjustment of first year students
- 6) determine the influence of gender on the emotional adjustment of first year students,
- 7) explore the difference in the academic adjustment of first year students based on age,
- 8) determine the difference in the social adjustment of first year students based on age,

- 9) find out the difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age,
- 10) determine the difference in the academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus,
- 11) explore the difference in the social adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus,
- 12) determine the difference in the emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of university campus,
- 13) explore the difference in academic adjustment of first year students with respect to residential status,
- 14) determine the difference in social adjustment of first year students with respect to residential status, and to
- 15) find out the difference in emotional adjustment of first year students with regard to residential status.

The study was conducted in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The target population of the study was first year students in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The multistage sampling procedure was used to select 420 first year students from both KNUST and AAMUSTED for the study.

Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection for the study. The data collected were analysed with means, standard deviations, t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05.

Summary of Key Findings

1. The findings showed that first year students in the two universities have both high and low academic adjustments
2. The findings showed that majority of the first-year students have high social adjustment while few also have low social adjustment.
3. First year students in the two universities have high emotional adjustment. However, few of the students also have low emotional adjustment.
4. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in their academic adjustment. This means that both male and female students adjusted academically.
5. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in terms of their social adjustment. Females first year students exhibited a higher adjustment level as compared to male first year students.
6. There is no statistically significant difference between male and female first year students in their emotional adjustment. This means that both male and female students were able to adjust emotionally.
7. There is no statistically significant difference in academic adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. This implies that all first year students in the universities were able to adjust irrespective of age.
8. The findings showed that there was a statistically significant difference in social adjustment of first year students on the basis of age.

9. The findings however revealed no statistically significant difference in emotional adjustment of first year students on the basis of age. This implies that age has nothing to do with emotional adjustment.
10. It was further found that there was a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of their academic adjustment. KNUST first year students reported a higher level of adjustment as compared to their counterparts in AAMUSTED.
11. Findings showed a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of social adjustment. First year students in AAMUSTED reported more social adjustment as compared to those in KNUST.
12. There is a statistically significant difference between KNUST and AAMUSTED first year students in terms of emotional adjustment. KNUST first year students reported high emotional adjustment as compared to AAMUSTED students.
13. It was revealed from the findings that, a statistically significant difference existed between on-campus and off-campus first year students in terms of their academic adjustment. On-campus first year students reported low academic adjustment as compared to off-campus first year students.
14. It was also revealed from the findings that statistically significant difference existed between on-campus and off-campus first year students in terms of their social adjustment. Off-campus first year students had higher social adjustment as compared with on-campus students.

15. The findings showed no statistically significant difference between on-campus and off-campus first year students in emotional adjustment. This implies that students adjust emotionally irrespective of their residential statuses.

Conclusions

Based on the findings obtained from the study, the following conclusions can be drawn. Regarding academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year student in university. Respondents involved in the study generally reported that they had areas of high academic, social and emotional adjustment. It could, therefore, be concluded to a greater extent, that respondents agreed that their areas of high academic, social and emotional adjustment included first year students have been keeping up to date with their academic work, feeling that they fit in well as part of the university environment and worrying a lot about their university expresses. On academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year student in university, respondents involved in the study generally reported that they had areas of low academic, social and emotional adjustment. It could, therefore, be concluded to a greater extent, that respondents agreed that their areas of low academic, social and emotional adjustment included respondents not doing well enough academically for work they put in, students having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university and students having a lot of headaches.

The type of university students attended played key role in their academic, social, and emotional adjustment. Residential status was a key determinant of first year students' academic and social adjustment.

Reconceptualised Framework

The observed model provides a structured representation of the relationships between demographic and contextual variables (gender, age-range, university campus, and residential status) and adjustment outcomes (academic, social, and emotional). It encapsulates the findings of the study and offers a framework to understand how these variables influence students'

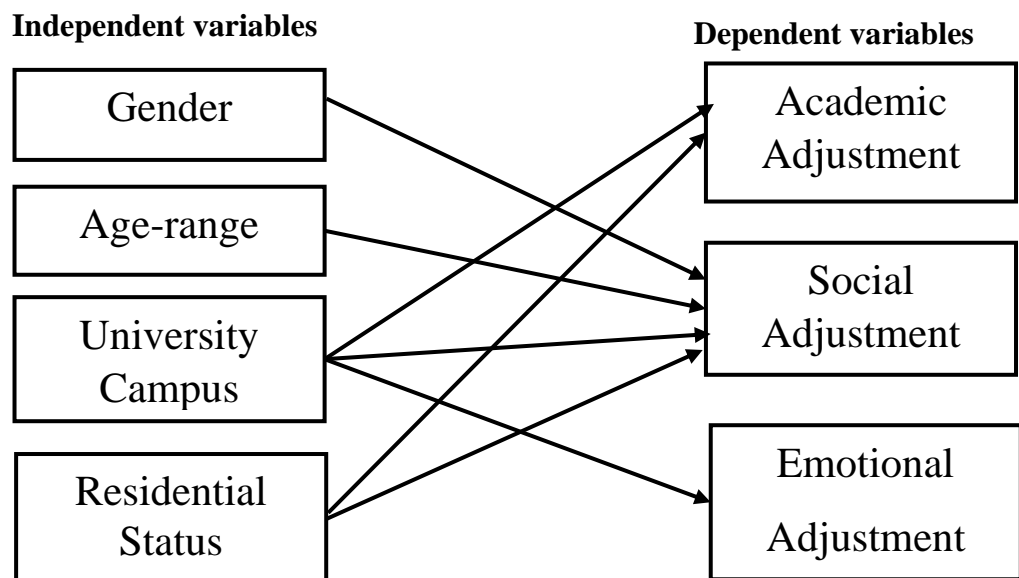


Figure 3: Final Observed Model
Source: Researcher's Construction

adjustment experiences.

The findings confirm the assumptions laid out at the beginning of the study, particularly the influence of demographic and contextual variables on students' adjustment levels. For instance, gender differences were observed in social adjustment, with male students demonstrating higher levels of adjustment compared to their female counterparts. Similarly, age-range and university campus emerged as significant factors influencing academic and social adjustment. Residential status played a prominent role in academic and social adjustment but had no significant impact on emotional adjustment. These findings align with the conceptual framework, validating the premise that

adjustment is a multidimensional process shaped by personal and contextual factors.

The observed model synthesizes these findings, positioning gender, age-range, university campus, and residential status as significant predictors of academic, social, and emotional adjustment. The interplay between these variables underscores the multidimensional nature of the adjustment process. For instance, university campus and residential status play central roles across multiple domains, reflecting the institutional and environmental contexts that shape students' experiences. Gender and age-range differences further highlight the importance of personalized approaches to support students' unique needs.

The theoretical framework, including the W-Curve Model of Adjustment, Social Identity Theory, and Transition Theory, is validated by these findings. The W-Curve Model's stage-ranges of adjustment are reflected in the emotional challenges and eventual integration reported by students. Social Identity Theory explains the gendered differences in social adjustment, emphasizing the role of group dynamics and belongingness. Transition Theory highlights how situational and personal factors mediate the adjustment process, particularly the impact of residential and institutional contexts.

In light of these findings, the theoretical framework can be reconceptualised to integrate the observed variables more explicitly. Residential status and university-specific contexts should be central elements in understanding the adjustment process, aligning with the broader theoretical perspectives. This expanded framework provides a nuanced understanding of first year students' adjustment trajectories, guiding targeted interventions to enhance academic, social, and emotional well-being.

Recommendations

These recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

1. The university management of the two universities should introduce a course on study skills for all undergraduate first year students in addition to other relevant programmes that could assist the students to adjust academically.
2. The Counselling Centre of the two universities should organise seminars on social issues such as stress management, anger management, relationship issues, and how to live at peace with their peers and roommates.
3. Management of universities should organise workshops and seminars to improve the emotional adjustment of first year students. This would help to reduce emotional difficulties like depression and other mental health challenges among students.
4. University authorities should organise fora to address gender issues on academic, social, and emotional adjustment. This will assist in managing gender related issues that could affect the academic, social, and emotional adjustment of first year students.
5. The Counselling Centres in the universities should organise programmes for the various age groups as there is significant differences in the various age groups in terms of social adjustment. This would help the various age groups to adjust socially and emotionally.

6. Ministry of Education should provide the requisite facilities for the two universities to help first year students adjust academically, socially, and emotionally to the university environments.
7. University authorities and other stakeholders of education should provide hospitable residential facilities for first year students in the two universities. This would help them to easily settle into their new environment and also adjust academically, socially, and emotionally to the university environment.

Implications for Policymakers

The results of this study have some importance and implications for policymakers such as the Government of Ghana:

1. The government should expand residential facilities on campus.
2. The government should partner with the private sector to build residential facilities on built, operate and transfer.
3. Residential policy by the universities should be flexible to attract investors.
4. The study's results can inform policy decisions at the university, regional or national level, related to student welfare, academic support and university management.
5. The findings can inform policymakers and university administrators about the unique challenges faced by first year students, enabling them to design student-friendly policies that enhances smooth transitions and academic success.

Implications for Counselling

The results of the study have the following implications for counselling:

1. Counsellors engaging first year students in both face-to-face and cyber counselling will help the first-year students adjust better on campus. These students will be able to open up on their adjustment problems for them to be assisted and guided to be able to handle these issues better.
2. There should be outreach programmes organised by the counselling centres/units of the public universities in the Ashanti Region so as to help raise awareness about the adjustment needs of students who require counselling. This will make students especially first year students seek counselling whenever they are faced with adjustment problems.
3. Counsellors should assist first year students who come to them as clients by telling them to avoid self-blame for externally caused challenges or issues of life by giving alternative reasons that enhance empowerment. Thus, psychotherapists must suggest important opportunities together with the needed resources in addition to therapy that are geared towards helping first year students gain relevant skills and solve problems that crop up in counselling

Contributions to Knowledge

The study contributes to localized knowledge that may differ from studies conducted in other regions or countries, providing specific insights into the adjustment's challenges faced by first year students in public universities within the Ashanti Region taken into consideration the academic, social and emotional factors unique to Ghana. The research can validate, challenge, or expand existing theories on students' adjustments (for example; Tinto's theory of student integration or Schlossberg's transition theory) within the context of Ghana. The study broadens understanding of the unique academic, social, and

emotional challenges first-year students in public universities in Ghana's Ashanti Region experience. It again contributes to the existing corpus of research by identifying region-specific variables that impact student adjustment, such as cultural diversity, financial constraints, and a range of educational backgrounds. Furthermore, the study adds factual information to the growing corpus of research on student retention, mental health, and academic performance in the higher education system in Ghana and in sub-Saharan Africa to a larger extent.

Contribution to Practice:

The results can help educators, counsellors, and university administrators develop specialised and tailored support networks and systems for first-year students. Based on the study's findings, useful interventions like financial aid programs, counselling sessions, academic support services, and mentorship programs can be created. This helps to enhance orientation programs by addressing the identified challenges, thus fostering a smoother transition for new students and enhancing their overall university well-being, experience, and adventure.

Contribution to Policy:

The study provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers within Ghana's higher education sector. It informs the formulation of policies and strategies aimed at improving student welfare, mental health services, and academic support systems. This underscores the need for equitable resource allocation to public universities and institutions within the Ashanti Region, ensuring that all students, regardless of background or status, receive adequate support for successful academic and social integration.

Suggestions for Future Research

The following are recommended for future research:

1. The study should be conducted in the other remaining universities in Ghana to have a nationwide representation.
2. A qualitative study should be used to assess first year students' adjustment in public universities in the Ashanti Region of Ghana
3. Research should be conducted on the adjustment challenges of distance education students.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS
DETERMINANTS OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT IN
PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE ASHANTI REGION OF GHANA

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is to collect information that would be used in completing the research topic stated above. The information collected is for purely academic purposes and would be treated with utmost confidentiality. The success of this study depends on your responses; accordingly, your participation is much appreciated.

Thank you.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The section is asking for your background information. Please indicate your response by ticking (X) or (✓) on the appropriate box and for others you may write.

1. Indicate your gender

a. Male [] b. Female []

2. Age: a. 15-19 [] b. 20-24 [] c. 25-29 [] d. Above 29 []

3. Indicate the university in which you are studying

a. KNUST [] b. AAMUSTED []

4. Indicate your residential status

a. On-campus resident [] b. Off-campus resident []

SECTION B: ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT

The section looks at how the respondent is faring in his/ her academic activities such as quizzes, assignments, lectures, examinations etc.

For the following items, please read carefully and select the response which best expresses your opinion about each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements in Sections using the guide below:

4. Strongly agree (SA) 3. Agree (A) 2. Disagree (D) 1. Strongly disagree (SD)

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1	I have been keeping up to date with my academic work.				
2	I am finding academic work at university difficult.				
3	I have not been performing well during examinations				
4	I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.				
5	I'm not working as hard as I should at my course work.				
6	I'm not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.				
7	Getting a university degree is very important for me.				
8	I haven't been very efficient in the use of study time lately.				
9	I really haven't had much motivation for studying lately				
10	I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at university.				
11	Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study				
12	I'm not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in				
13	I am attending classes regularly.				
14	I am enjoying my academic work at university.				
15	I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.				

SECTION C: SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

The section focuses on the socialization and acclimatization aspects of the university life of first year students in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. That is, how the respondent is adjusting in terms of his/her interpersonal activities, the formation and maintenance of relationships, dissociative experiences etc.

For the following items, please read carefully and select the response which best expresses your opinion about each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements in Sections using the guide below:

4. Strongly agree (SA) 3. Agree (A) 2. Disagree (D) 1. Strongly disagree (SD)

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
16	I feel that I fit in well as part of the university environment.				
17	I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at university				
18	I am very involved with social activities in university.				
19	Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy				
20	I have had informal, personal contacts with university professors.				
21	I have several close social ties at university.				
22	I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at university				
23	I am getting along very well with my roommates(s) at university. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.)				
24	I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the university setting				
25	I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at university.				
26	I haven't been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.				
27	Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another university.				
28	I have some good friends or acquaintances at university with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.				
29	I am quite satisfied with my social life at university.				

SECTION D: EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

The section is about the sentimental issues of respondents thus, it seeks the feelings of the respondents in varying moods such as: sadness, depression, stress, emptiness, homesickness, loneliness, etc.

For the following items, please read carefully and select the response which best expresses your opinion about each statement by ticking (✓) the appropriate box. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the statements in Sections using the guide below:

4. Strongly agree (SA) 3. Agree (A) 2. Disagree (D) 1. Strongly disagree (SD)

No	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
30	I have been feeling tensed or nervous lately.				
31	Lately, I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.				
32	I have felt tired much of the time lately.				
33	I haven't been able to control my emotions very well lately.				
34	Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now.				
35	My appetite has been good lately				
36	I have been having a lot of headaches lately.				
37	I've put on (or lost) too much weight recently				
38	I have been getting angry too easily lately.				
39	I haven't been sleeping very well				
40	I worry a lot about my university expenses.				
41	I have been feeling lonely a lot at university lately				
42	I feel I am very different from other students at university in ways that I don't like.				
43	On a balance, I would rather be home than here.				
44	I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in university.				

APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Telephone: 0332091854
Email: dgc@ucc.edu.gh



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

13th December, 2022

The Chairman
Institutional Review Board
U. C. C.
Cape Coast

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Joseph Asamoah Gyawu a student from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Cape Coast. He is pursuing Ph.D in Guidance and Counselling.

As part of her requirement, he is expected to work on a thesis titled:

*Determinants of first-year students
Adjustment in public universities in the
Ashanti Region of Ghana.*

He has successfully defended his proposal and is seeking for ethical clearance to collect data for the study.

We would be most grateful if you could provide him the necessary assistance for ethical clearance for his study.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Stephen Doh'.


DR. STEPHEN DOH FIA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: CC/ERB/UCC/EdS/18-23/08  Date: 8th March, 2023

Your Ref:

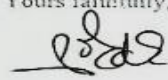
Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

The bearer, Joseph Asamoah Gyau, Reg. No. ET/2018/0012 is
M.Phil / Ph.D. student in the Department of
..... in the College of Education Studies
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to
undertake a research study on the topic:
Determinants of first year students' adjustment
in public Universities in the Ashanti
region of Ghana

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies
(CES) has assessed his/her proposal and confirm that the proposal
satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the
study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval
to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would
give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said
research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Omotosho
jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0243784739

Deputy Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
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Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
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APPENDIX D

NORMALITY TEST

Tests of Normality

Shapiro-Wilk

	Age	Statistic	df	Sig.
Academic adjustment	15-19	.971	178	.001
	20-24	.944	146	.000
	25-29	.812	24	.000
	above 29	.904	31	.009

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.830	3	375	.478

Tests of Normality

Shapiro-Wilk

	Age	Statistic	df	Sig.
Social adjustment	15-19	.941	179	.000
	20-24	.960	131	.001
	25-29	.924	22	.091
	above 29	.979	22	.901

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.666	3	350	.573

Tests of Normality

Shapiro-Wilk				
	Age	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Emotional adjustment	15-19	.994	189	.651
	20-24	.990	154	.319
	25-29	.955	25	.329
	above 29	.975	34	.602

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.239	3	398	.869