

**SOCIAL SKILLS AND ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN ABAK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

By

**Imaobong Akpan Bassey
Department of Guidance and Counselling
University of Uyo, Uyo**

And

**Professor Akpan Oko Udoh
Department of psychological Foundations of Education
University of Uyo, Uyo**

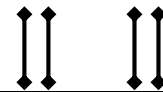
ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of social skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area. Two specific objectives, two research questions, and two null hypotheses guided the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 2,264 JSII students in 11 public secondary schools in Abak Local Government Area during the 2025/2026 academic session. A sample size of 300 students was selected using multistage sampling procedure involving simple random and proportionate sampling techniques. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher made questionnaire titled Social Skills and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (SSAAQ). The instrument contained items on communication skills, adaptability skills, and academic adjustment. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and dependent t test at .05 alpha level. The findings of the study revealed that communication skills had high influence on academic adjustment among secondary school students. The study also found that adaptability skills had high influence on academic adjustment among secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was concluded that communication and adaptability skills are important determinants of academic adjustment among secondary school students. It was recommended among others that teachers should encourage classroom interaction and participation, while school counsellors should organize programmes that develop students' communication and adaptability skills.

KEYWORDS: Social Skills, Communication Skill, Adaptability Skill, Academic Adjustment

INTRODUCTION

Academic adjustment among secondary school students has become increasingly problematic because many learners find it difficult to cope with the academic, emotional, and social demands of schooling. Many students find it difficult to cope with classroom expectations, examination pressure, homework, time management, peer relationships, and interactions with teachers. These challenges often result in low academic performance, truancy, lack of concentration, poor study habits, indiscipline, emotional instability, and school dropout. In many

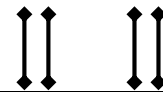


secondary schools, students appear unable to effectively balance the demands of school life with the social and developmental changes associated with adolescence. The transition from childhood to adolescence often exposes students to new academic responsibilities and emotional experiences that may overwhelm their ability to function effectively in school. Academic adjustment refers to the extent to which students are able to adapt successfully to the academic, emotional, behavioural, and social demands of school life. It includes students' ability to maintain good study habits, participate in classroom activities, build positive peer relationships, manage emotions, and cope with academic pressure (Baker and Siryk, 1984). Students who are academically adjusted are more likely to attend school regularly, participate actively in learning, and maintain stable emotional functioning (Gambo, 2025). In contrast, poorly adjusted students often display behavioural problems, low academic performance, and poor school participation (Ezra and Maha, 2025).

The issue of poor academic adjustment has serious implications for students' educational progress and future opportunities. Students who experience difficulty in adjusting academically often struggle to understand lessons, complete assignments, prepare for examinations, and maintain interest in school activities. Such students may become discouraged, avoid school, or engage in antisocial behaviours as a coping mechanism. Poor academic adjustment can also affect students' relationships with classmates and teachers, thereby increasing the risk of social isolation and low self-confidence. Furthermore, students who are unable to adjust effectively to school demands may find it difficult to cope with changes in curriculum, classroom environment, or teaching methods. In the long term, poor academic adjustment may contribute to academic failure, emotional problems, and school dropout (Raza, Qazi, Khan, and Salam, 2021; Niu et al., 2025). Academic adjustment of students can be addressed using a range of psychological, social and school based mechanisms. Among these mechanisms, social skills have been understudied.

Social skills refer to the behaviours and abilities that enable individuals to interact effectively, appropriately, and positively with others in different social situations. It includes communication, cooperation, listening, empathy, adaptability, and self-control (Gresham, Sugai, and Horner, 2021). Students with strong social skills are more likely to express their concerns, seek help, resolve conflicts peacefully, and establish supportive friendships that enhance school adjustment (Abogoh and Dania, 2025). Studies have shown that students with stronger social relationships and social support systems tend to exhibit better academic adjustment and school engagement (Olugbeko and Lana, 2024; Niu, Ismail, and Hasbullah, 2025).

Communication skill is an important aspect of social skills because it enables students to express ideas, ask questions, seek clarification, and interact positively with others. Students with effective communication skills tend to participate more actively in classroom discussions, maintain better relationships with peers and teachers, and develop greater confidence in academic activities (Nkwusi, 2024). Effective communication also helps students cope with academic stress because they can share their concerns and receive support from others (Opoh et al., 2024). Poor communication skills, on the other hand, may result in social isolation, low classroom participation, and inability to express academic problems (Gresham et al., 2021). Adaptability skill is another important factor in academic adjustment. Adaptability refers to the ability to adjust positively to changes in the learning environment, classroom expectations, school rules, and social conditions. Students who are adaptable are usually able to cope with examination pressure, changes in teachers, curriculum demands, and academic setbacks (Martin et al., 2021).



Adaptability promotes resilience, persistence, and effective problem solving among students (She et al., 2023). Nigerian studies have also shown that adaptive learning competencies are associated with better academic functioning and emotional stability among students (Green and Owo, 2026). Students who possess adaptability skills are more likely to remain motivated and function effectively despite the challenges associated with school life (Auta and Maha, 2025).

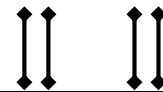
Empirical evidence supports the influence of communication and adaptability skills on academic adjustment. Opoh et al. (2024) found that family communication had a significant positive relationship with emotional adjustment among secondary school students in Cross River State. Similarly, Hendriani et al. (2025) reported that peer interpersonal communication significantly predicted academic adjustment among students. Odojin and Agamugoro (2023) also found that social support and coping strategies significantly influenced academic adjustment among junior secondary school students in Delta State. Likewise, Ezra and Maha (2025) revealed that social adjustment significantly influenced academic performance among public secondary school students in North Central Nigeria. These findings suggest that communication and adaptability skills are important determinants of academic adjustment among secondary school students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Academic adjustment is expected to enable students to cope effectively with school demands, maintain good academic performance, and develop positive relationships within the school environment. However, in many secondary schools, students appear to experience serious difficulties in adjusting to the academic, emotional, and social demands of school life. Many students seem to struggle with low academic performance, poor classroom participation, examination anxiety, absenteeism, poor study habits, and difficulty maintaining positive relationships with teachers and peers. These challenges may be linked to poor communication skills and limited adaptability among students. Observation has shown that some students are unable to express their academic concerns, ask questions in class, interact positively with peers, or seek help from teachers when faced with difficulties. Others appear unable to cope with changes in school routines, academic pressure, and different teaching methods. Such difficulties may affect their ability to function effectively in school and may contribute to poor academic adjustment. Although communication and adaptability skills are considered important factors in students' academic success, there is limited empirical evidence on how these skills influence academic adjustment among secondary school students. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult for teachers, school counsellors, and educational administrators to develop appropriate interventions that can improve students' adjustment to school life. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the influence of communication and adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of social skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. Specifically, the study examined:



- i) The influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.
- ii) The influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i) What is the influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area?
- ii) What is the influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area?

HYPOTHESES

- i) There is no significant influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.
- ii) There is no significant influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A Survey research design was adopted for the study. Survey research design is a method of collecting data from a population of interest in order to describe existing conditions, opinions, behaviours, or relationships among variables without manipulating them. According to Nworgu, survey research design is appropriate when the researcher intends to obtain data from a representative sample of a population regarding current issues or conditions. This design was considered suitable for the study because it enabled the researcher to investigate the influence of social skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students without manipulating any of the variables.

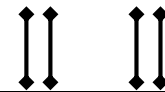
POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population of the study comprised 2,264 JSII students in the 11 public secondary schools in Abak Local Government Area during the 2025/2026 academic session. The population figure was obtained from the Akwa Ibom State Secondary Education Board records for the 2025/2026 academic session.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A sample size of 300 SSII students was selected for the study. The sample size represented approximately 13.25 percent of the population. A simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 6 public secondary schools from the 11 schools in Abak Local Government Area. In each school, a balloting method was used to select 50 JSII students, giving a total of 300 students. This procedure ensured that all students had equal opportunity of being selected for the study.

INSTRUMENTATION



Researcher made instrument titled Social Skills and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (SSAAQ) was developed and used for data collection. The instrument was divided into three sections. Section A contained demographic information of the respondents. Section B contained 10 items developed to measure communication skills and 10 items developed to measure adaptability skills. Section C contained 20 items developed to measure academic adjustment among secondary school students. The questionnaire items were structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Mean, standard deviation, and p value derived from dependent t test analysis were used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at .05 alpha level.

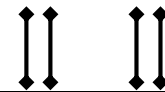
RESULT

Research Question One: What is the influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area?

Table 1: Summary of dependent t test analysis of the influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students

Variables	n	Mean	Std	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Communication skills	300	16.88	3.04	.521	.000
Academic adjustment	300	65.24	8.71		

The result in Table 1 shows the influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. The result shows that the mean responses of students on communication skills and academic adjustment are 16.88 and 65.24 respectively, which leads to a mean difference of 48.36. The standard deviations also show that the students did not differ much in their responses on communication skills and academic adjustment. The high mean difference produces a correlation coefficient of .521 that is significant because $p = .000$ to show that communication skills have high influence on academic adjustment. Hence, this result indicates that communication skills greatly influence academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.



Research Question Two: How do adaptability skills influence academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area?

Table 2: Summary of dependent t test analysis of the influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	Std	Correlation coefficient	P-value
Adaptability skills	300	15.72	2.81	.468	.001
Academic adjustment	300	65.24	8.71		

The result in Table 2 shows the influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. The result shows that the mean responses of students on adaptability skills and academic adjustment are 15.72 and 65.24 respectively, which leads to a mean difference of 49.52. The standard deviations also show that the students did not differ much in their responses on adaptability skills and academic adjustment. The high mean difference produces a correlation coefficient of .468 that is significant because $p = .001$ to show that adaptability skills have high influence on academic adjustment. Hence, this result indicates that adaptability skills greatly influence academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

Table 3: Summary of dependent t test analysis of the influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision at $P \leq .05$ alpha
Communication skills	300	16.88	3.04	90.18	.000	Significant
Academic adjustment	300	65.24	8.71			

*significant at $p \leq .05$, $df = 299$

The result in Table 3 shows whether there is significant influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. The result indicates that the t-value of 90.18 is significant because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 alpha level. Hence, there is a significant influence of a communication skill on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of adaptability skill on academic adjustment among secondary school students in Abak Local Government Area.

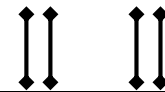


Table 4: Summary of dependent t test analysis of the influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students

Variables	n	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision at P ≤ .05 alpha
Adaptability skills	300	15.72	2.81	93.47	.001	Significant
Academic adjustment	300	65.24	8.71			

*significant at $p \leq .05$, $df = 299$

The result in Table 4 shows whether there is significant influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. The result indicates that the t-value of 176.18 is significant because the p-value of .001 is less than .05 alpha level. Hence, there is a significant influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students.

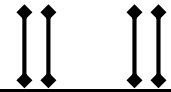
DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that communication skills positively influence academic adjustment among secondary school students. The corresponding test of hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of communication skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. This finding suggests that students who communicate effectively with teachers and peers are more likely to adjust positively to the academic environment. Effective communication enables students to ask questions, seek clarification, express academic concerns, and participate actively in classroom activities. It also promotes better relationships with classmates and teachers, thereby reducing anxiety and improving confidence. The finding agrees with that of Nkwusi (2024) who found that communication skills significantly contributed to students' academic performance and learning outcomes in Imo State. The finding is also consistent with that of Opoh et al., (2024) who found that family communication significantly influenced emotional adjustment among secondary school students in Cross River State.

The findings of the study also revealed that adaptability skills positively influence academic adjustment among secondary school students. The corresponding test of hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of adaptability skills on academic adjustment among secondary school students. This implies that students who are able to adjust to new conditions, cope with academic pressure, and respond positively to changes in school routines are more likely to experience better academic adjustment. Adaptability enables students to remain emotionally stable, recover from setbacks, and maintain interest in learning despite challenges. The finding is in agreement with that of She et al., (2024) who found that adaptability significantly influenced students' self-regulated learning and academic motivation. The finding also supports that of Green and Owo (2024) who found that adaptive competencies significantly improved students' functioning and performance in school settings.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that communication and adaptability skills have significant positive influence on academic adjustment among secondary school students. The results indicate that students who possess strong communication skills and

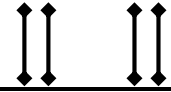


adaptability skills are more likely to cope effectively with academic demands, participate actively in school activities, and maintain positive relationships with teachers and peers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

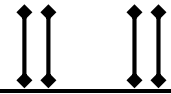
It was therefore recommended that:

- Classroom teachers should encourage open communication in the classroom by allowing students to ask questions, participate in discussions, and express their academic concerns freely.
- School counsellors should organize seminars, workshops, and guidance programmes aimed at developing students' communication and adaptability skills.
- Parents should create supportive home environments that encourage children to communicate openly and develop confidence in dealing with academic challenges.
- School administrators should design policies and programmes that help students adapt to changes in school routines, curriculum demands, and classroom expectations.



REFERENCES

- Abogoh, N. I., and Dania, P. O. (2025). Social skills, self-awareness of Social Studies teachers and social adjustment of upper basic Social Studies students in Delta State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research*, 12(2), 45-58.
- Auta, R., and Maha, F. (2025). Influence of social adjustment on academic performance: Evidence from public schools in North Central Nigeria. *Education Letters*, 1(3), 15-27.
- Baker, R. W., and Siryk, B. (1984). Measuring adjustment to college. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 31(2), 179-189.
- Credé, M., and Niehorster, S. (2020). Adjustment to college as measured by the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire: A quantitative review of its structure and relationships with correlates and consequences. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(2), 463-499.
- Ezra, A. R., and Maha, F. (2025). Influence of social adjustment on academic performance: Evidence from public schools in North Central Nigeria. *Education Letters*, 1(3), 15-27.
- Gambo, M. A. (2025). Impact of adjustments on academic performance among senior secondary school students in Jere Local Government Area of Borno State, Nigeria. *Faculty of Education Journal*, 2(3), 57-65.
- Green, B., and Owo, W. J. (2026). Assessment of adaptive learning competencies among Basic Science students in Rivers State: A cross sectional study. *Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences Journal of Mathematics and Science Education*, 7(1), 44-58.
- Gresham, F. M., Sugai, G., and Horner, R. H. (2021). Interpreting outcomes of social skills training for students with high incidence disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 87(1), 3-18.
- Hendriani, A. P., Saud, M., Mataputun, Y., Reba, Y. A., Muttaqin, A., Karisma, D., and Putra, R. A. (2025). Students' academic adjustment viewed from peer interpersonal communication. *Jurnal Perspektif Pendidikan*, 19(2), 370-385.
- Martin, A. J., Nejad, H., Colmar, S., and Liem, G. A. D. (2021). Adaptability: Conceptual and empirical perspectives on responses to change, novelty, and uncertainty. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 31(1), 1-14.
- Niu, X., Ismail, S. A. M., and Hasbullah, M. (2025). Social support and school adjustment among children and adolescents: A systematic review. *Multidisciplinary Reviews*, 9(1), e2026043.
- Nkwusi, B. G. (2024). Impact of social media and communication skills on academic performance among Nigerian students in Imo State College of Education. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 13(3), 122-136.



- Odofin, T., and Agamugoro, P. A. (2023). Social support, coping strategies and academic adjustment among junior secondary school boarders in Ughelli North Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. *KWASU International Journal of Education*, 6(1), 34-48.
- Olugbeko, S. O., and Lana, E. O. (2024). Academic self-efficacy and social support as predictors of school adjustment of first year university students in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Innovation and Practice*, 8(3), 102-118.
- Opoh, F. A., Nwafor, P., Adams, A. P., and Ekpoto, D. F. (2024). Family communication and emotional adjustment of students in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. *Global Journal of Applied, Management and Social Sciences*, 30, 58-66.
- She, C., Liang, J., Jiang, Y., and Xing, W. (2023). Learning adaptability facilitates self-regulated learning at school: The chain mediating roles of academic motivation and self-management. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1162072.