

Help-Seeking, Academic Motivation and Students' Self-Esteem as Predictors of Adjustment and Academic Performance of Mechanical Technology Education Students in Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the predictive power of help-seeking, academic motivation and self-esteem on adjustment and academic performance of Mechanical Technology Education (MTE) students at the Federal University of Northern Nigeria (FUoNN). Based on this primary objective three null hypotheses were postulated and tested. The study used a correlational research design, predictive correlation in particular. The area of the study was Northern Nigeria. The target population and the sample size are composed of all 101 students of 200 levels of MTE from FUoNN as of the 2022/2023 academic session. 5 universities offer MTE in Northern Nigeria, but only 3 were purposively selected, However, 2 universities were excluded from the study, due to distance and security issues. The instrument for data collection involved the Help-Seeking Attitude Scale, and the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) were all adapted. While the measure of academic performance was used, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), All four instruments were validated by experts and their reliability coefficient was expressed as HSAS=.947, AMS=.937, RSES= .880 and SACQ= 0.944, using Cronbach's alpha. Regression Analysis was used to test null hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, after meeting all its assumptions. The study found that help-seeking, academic motivation and self-esteem do not significantly predict students' adjustment but predict students' academic performance. The study recommended that the FUoNN should implement academic support programs, focus on fostering a culture of motivation and organize workshops or support groups to help students build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective help-seeking is crucial for successful learning when a student's knowledge or comprehension is insufficient to resolve an issue independently (Schlusche et al., 2023). It is not just a method that can assist students in addressing their immediate learning needs, but it is also an approach that can assist students in addressing their long-term learning needs (Ryan & Hicks, 2017). The help-seeking behaviours play a crucial role in students' academic success. Students who actively seek help when facing academic challenges are more likely to overcome obstacles and perform well.

Dupéré, et al. (2018) exploring the relationship between help-seeking behaviours and academic performance shed light

Major (2020) stated that the help-seeking approach tends to improve student-teacher relationships and motivation.

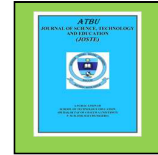
Motivation is a key determinant of students' engagement and persistence in their academic pursuits. Research illustrates that one of the most prominent academic problems plaguing today's teenage youth is a lack of motivation towards academic activities (Asmau, 2023). Dierendonck et al. (2023) found a positive and significant relationship between

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achievement and academic motivation. Elfeky and Elbyaly (2023) found a statistically significant difference between male and female students in academic motivation. Female students are more intrinsically and extrinsically motivated than males overall. A literature review shows that most studies on motivation generally had contradictory findings on a small sample. But generally, it increases self-efficacy and self-esteem (Alt, 2018), (Marc 2013; Agricola, Prins, & Sluijsmans, 2020; Barkley & Major, 2020).

Self-esteem could be defined as the self-evaluation and descriptive conceptualization that individuals make and maintain concerning themselves. Self-esteem is a psychological factor that plays a significant role in students' overall well-being and academic achievement. Alt (2018) explained that higher levels of self-esteem have been associated with increased confidence, resilience and academic success. Examining the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance can provide a better understanding of the impact of self-perception on students' educational outcomes, this self-esteem normally can be affected by the level of students' perceived stress (Alt, 2018). Mahadevan et al., (2019) poor self-esteem is considered the source of all evil, and strong self-esteem is viewed as the source of all good. In conclusion, and based on the literature, it is hypothesized to be positively related to academic performance and adjustment.

Adjustment to university is a complex construct that contains a collection of demands that differ in type and degree, it needs a variety of coping strategies, involving many factors other than academic performance (Páramo et al., 2017) as recommended by the findings of the meta-analysis conducted by Bieleke et al. (2022) the adjustment appears crucial to performing well academically, obtaining a degree, and viewing the university experience as positive.

Academic performance refers to how well a student performs in an academic setting or context, taking into account various factors that may influence academic success, to how well a student performs in a particular academic setting or context. This includes factors such as attendance, participation, effort, behaviour and motivation, which are more psychosocial (Peled, 2019). University students' academic

performance is the educational standing of a student at a given moment. This could be a grade obtained in a course or group of courses (Onihunwa et al., 2018). This study focused on Mechanical Technology Education (MTE)

MTE students (Production/Metalwork and Automobile) are those who are trained to acquire a degree in teaching technical courses and after graduation would be employed as mechanical engineering technicians or professional teachers of technology in academic institutions (Adeosun et al., 2022). In the course of their studies, they acquired skills like mechanical ability, accuracy, mechanical dexterity, creativity and confidence, effective communication and technical currency. (Modlo et al, 2018; Technology Education Lab [TEL], 2013), it is also expected that mechanical technology education students will be self-reliant and capable of employing others, but contrary to these objectives most students who graduated are unemployed because of their inability to perform well in translating what they theoretically learned into use since performance is not just to pass exams but it is expected to translate theory into practice (Adeosun et al., 2022).

Statement of Problems

In FUoNN, MTE students face numerous challenges in their academic journey. Among these challenges, the interplay of students' help-seeking behaviours, academic motivation, and self-esteem emerges as critical factors influencing their adjustment to university life and subsequent academic performance. However, the precise nature of how these variables interact and predict adjustment and academic outcomes remains unclear. Thus, the problem at hand involves investigating the extent to which students' help-seeking tendencies, academic motivation levels, and self-esteem collectively impact the adjustment process and academic achievements of MTE students in FUoNN. Identifying these predictors and understanding their interrelations is essential for devising effective interventions and support systems to enhance the academic success and overall well-being of these students.

Objectives of the Study

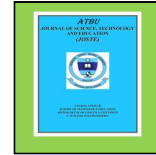
The objectives of the study are to determine whether students' help-seeking,

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academic motivation and students' self-esteem are predictors of adjustment and academic performance of MTE students in Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria (FUoNN)

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

- H₀₁: Students' help-seeking does not predict MTE Students' adjustment and academic performance in FUoNN
- H₀₂: Students' academic motivation does not predict MTE Students' adjustment and academic performance in FUoNN.
- H₀₃: Students' self-esteem does not predict MTE Students' adjustment and academic performance in FUoNN.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a correlational research design, predictive correlation in particular. According to Cohen et al, (2011) in predictive design, the study has the goal of investigating the prediction capability of a given variable. The area of the study was Northern Nigeria. The target population and the sample size are composed of all 101 students of 200 levels of MTE from FUoNN as of the 2022/2023 academic session. 5 universities offered MTE in Northern Nigeria, but only 3 were purposively selected, However, 2 universities were excluded from the study, due to distance and security issues. A sample size of 101 students was used, thus the study used the entire population, to have a high chance of generalising the findings of the study, reducing sampling error and selection bias to the minimum, and helping in obtaining accurate and reliable results (Cohen et al., 2018).

The instrument for data collection involved Help-Seeking Attitude Scale (HSAS)

developed by Karabenick and Knapp (1991) has 18 items and used 5 -a point rating scale ranging from 5-1, e.g 5 = Very High (VH), 4 = High (H), 3 = Moderate (M), 2 = Low (L), 1= Very Low (VL). The academic Motivation Scale (AMS) was adapted and developed by Vallerand et al, (1992), it has 20 items and is measured similarly to HSAS. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was adapted and developed by (Rosenberg 1965). The instrument has 10 items and uses 5 a 5-point rating scale similar to AMS. Adjustment to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was adapted from Baker & Siryk, (1989). It has 67 items, measured 5-point rating scale ranging from 5-1, e.g. 5 = Strongly Agree (SA), 4 = Agree (AG), 3 = Moderate Agree (MA), 2 = Dis Agree (DA), 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). While the measure academic performance used, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), The decision rule provided for calculating regression equation was given as follows 4.50- 5.00 = Very High Level (VHL) 3.50 - 4.49 =High Level (HL), 2.50 - 3.49 = Moderate Level (ML), 1.50 - 2.49=Low Level (LL), 0.00 - 1.49= Very Low Level (VLL). All four instruments were validated by experts and their reliability coefficient was expressed as HSAS=.947, AMS=.937, RSES= .880 and SACQ= 0.944, using Cronbach's alpha. Regression Analysis was used to test null hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, based on the assumption of sample size, multicollinearity and singularity, outliers, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals.

RESULTS

Research Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: Students' help-seeking approach does not significantly predict their adjustment and academic performance in FUoNN

Table 1: Model Summary (Help-Seeking and Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.006 ^a	.000	.010	.18454

a. Predictors: (Constant), Help-seeking

Table 2: Regression (Help-Seeking and Adjustment in FUoNN.)

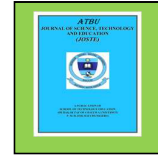
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.000	1	.000	.004	.949 ^b
	Residual	3.371	99	.034		

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Total	3.372	100
a. Dependent Variable: Adjustment		
b. Predictors: (Constant), Help-seeking		

Table 3: Regression Coefficient (Help-Seeking and Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.005	.239		16.730	.000
	Help-seeking	-.005	.078	-.006	-.065	.949

a. Dependent Variable: Adjustment.

Tables 1 and 2 show significant differences between the various R values, $F=0.04$ (df 1, 100), $P > 0.05$, since the computed p-value (.949) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and concluded that help-seeking does not significantly predict students' adjustment in FUoNN. Furthermore, the adjusted R square value (.010) indicates

that 1% of students' adjustment in FUoNN in this study was accounted for by help-seeking. Table 3 suggests help-seeking does not significantly predict students' adjustment ($\beta = -.006$, $t = -.065$, $p = .949 > .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction between the predictor and outcome variables is hereby accepted.

Table 4: Model Summary (Help-Seeking and Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.284 ^a	.081	.072	.12120

a. Predictors: (Constant), Help-seeking

Table 5: Regression (Help-Seeking and Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.128	1	.128	8.717	.004 ^b
	Residual	1.454	99	.015		
	Total	1.582	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Help-seeking

Table 6: Regression Coefficient (Help-Seeking and Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.505	.157		22.291	.000
	Help-seeking	.150	.051	.284	2.953	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Tables 4 and 5 show significant differences between the various R values, $F = 8.71$ (df 1, 100), $P < 0.05$, since the computed p-value (.004) is less than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that help-seeking

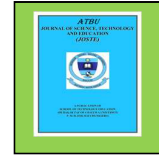
significantly predicts students' academic performance in FUoNN. Furthermore, the adjusted R square value (.072) indicates that 72 % of student's academic performance in FUoNN in this study was accounted for by help-seeking. Table 6 suggests help help-seeking

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significantly predicts students' academic performance ($\beta = .284, t = 2.953, p = .004 < .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction between the predictor and outcome variables is hereby rejected.

Research Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: Students' academic motivation does not significantly predict their adjustment and academic performance in FUoNN.

Table 7: Model Summary (Academic Motivation and Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.083 ^a	.007	.003	.18391

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic motivation

Table 8: Regression (Academic Motivation and Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.023	1	.023	.688	.409 ^b
	Residual	3.348	99	.034		
	Total	3.372	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Adjustment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic motivation

Table 9: Regression Coefficient (Academic Motivation and Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.268	.336		12.706	.000
	Academic motivation	-.092	.111	-.083	-.829	.409

a. Dependent Variable: Adjustment

Tables 7 and 8 show significant differences between the various R values, $F = .688$ ($df = 1, 100$), $P > 0.05$, since the computed p-value (.409) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and concluded that academic motivation does not significantly predict students' adjustment in FUoNN. Furthermore, the adjusted R square value (.003) indicates

that 0.3% of students' adjustment in FUoNN in this study was accounted for by academic motivation. Table 9 suggests academic motivation does not significantly predict students' adjustment ($\beta = -.083, t = -.829, p = .409 > .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction between the predictor and outcome variables is hereby accepted.

Table 10: Model Summary (Academic Motivation and Performance in FUoNN)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.248 ^a	.062	.052	.12245

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic motivation

Table 11: Regression (Academic Motivation and Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.098	1	.098	6.513	.012 ^b
	Residual	1.485	99	.015		
	Total	1.582	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic motivation

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Table 12: Regression Coefficient (Academic Motivation and Performance in FUoNN)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.537	.224		20.287	.000
	Academic motivation	.189	.074	-.248	-2.552	.012

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Tables 10 and 11 show significant differences between the various R values, $F = 6.513$ (df 1, 100), $P > 0.05$, since the computed p-value (.012) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and concludes that academic motivation significantly predicts students' academic performance in FUoNN. Furthermore, the adjusted R square value (.052) indicates that 52 % of student's academic performance in FUoNN in this study was accounted for by academic motivation. Table 12 suggests that

academic motivation significantly predicts students' academic performance ($\beta = -.248$, $t = -2.552$, $p = .012 < .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction between the predictor and outcome variables is hereby rejected.

Research Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: Students' self-esteem does not significantly predict their adjustment and academic performance in Federal Universities of Northern Nigeria.

Table 13: Model Summary (Self-Esteem and Students' Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.053 ^a	.003	.007	.18428

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem

Table 14: Regression (Self-Esteem and Students' Adjustment in FUoNN)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.010	1	.010	.283	.596 ^b
	Residual	3.362	99	.034		
	Total	3.372	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Adjustment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem

Table 15: Regression Coefficient (Self-Esteem and Students Adjustment in FUoNN).

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.935	.105		37.479	.000
	Self-esteem	.016	.030	.053	.532	.596

a. Dependent Variable: Adjustment

Tables 13 and 14 show significant differences between the various R values, $F = .283$ (df 1, 100), $P > 0.05$, since the computed p-value (.596) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and concluded that self-esteem does not significantly predict students' adjustment in FUoNN. Furthermore, the adjusted R square value (.007) indicates that 0.7% of students'

adjustment in FUoNN in this study was accounted for by self-esteem. Table 15 suggests that self-esteem does not significantly predict students' adjustment ($\beta = .053$, $t = .532$, $p = .596 > .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction between the predictor and outcome variables is hereby accepted.

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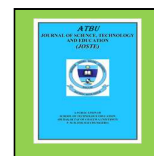


Table 16: Model Summary (Self-Esteem and Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.214 ^a	.046	.036	.12349

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem

Table 17: Regression (Self-Esteem and Students Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.072	1	.072	4.744	.032 ^b
	Residual	1.510	99	.015		
	Total	1.582	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-esteem

Table 18: Regression Coefficient (Self-Esteem and Academic Performance in FUoNN)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.118	.070		58.536	.000
	Self-esteem	.044	.020	-.214		

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Tables 16 and 17 show significant differences between the various R values, $F = 4.744$ ($df = 1, 100$), $P < 0.05$. Since the computed p-value (.032) is less than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and concludes that self-esteem significantly predicts students' academic performance in FUoNN. Furthermore, the adjusted R square value (.036) indicates that 36 % of student's academic performance in FUoNN in this study was accounted for by self-esteem. Table 18 suggests that self-esteem significantly predicts students' academic performance ($\beta = -.214$, $t = -2.178$, $p = .036 < .05$). Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction between the predictor and outcome variables is hereby rejected.

FINDINGS

- 1) The help-seeking approach among MTE students at FUoNN does not significantly predict students' adjustment ($R^2 = 0.10$, $F = .004$, $P = .949$) but predicts students' academic performance ($R^2 = .072$, $F = 8.71$, $P = .004$).
- 2) The academic motivation among MTE students at FUoNN does not significantly predict students' adjustment ($R^2 = .003$, $F = .688$, $P = .409$) but predicts academic performance ($R^2 = .052$, $F = 6.513$, $P = .012$).

- 3) The self-esteem among MTE students at FUoNN does not significantly predict students' adjustment ($R^2 = .007$, $F = .283$, $P = .596$) but predicts their academic performance ($R^2 = .036$, $F = 4.744$, $P = .032$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

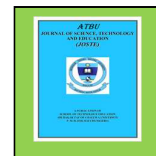
The first finding of the study showed that the level of help-seeking approach among MTE students at FUoNN does not significantly predict students' adjustment but can predict students' academic performance. This finding indicated that help-seeking behaviours play a crucial role in students' academic success. The study agreed with Marc (2013) who studied the psychosocial factors of help-seeking in predicting the academic performance of students at a historically disadvantaged university and stated that students who actively seek help when facing academic challenges are more likely to overcome obstacles and perform well and stated that help-seeking predicts academic performance. In the same vein, Dupéré, et al. (2018) exploring the relationship between help-seeking behaviours and academic performance shed light on the importance of seeking assistance and support when needed. Also findings from Backhaus (2019); and Barkley and Major, (2020) indicated the help-seeking approach tends to improve students' teacher's relationships and motivation

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and predicts academic performance.

Furthermore, the findings of the study disclosed that academic motivation among MTE students at Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria and academic motivation significantly predict students' adjustment and academic performance. This finding is on track with that of Dierendonck et al. (2023) who found that there was a positive and significant relationship between achievement and academic motivation and found a statistically significant difference between male and female students in academic motivation.

The findings on self-esteem discovered that self-esteem among MTE students at FUoNN does not significantly predict students' adjustment but predicts academic performance. This agrees with that of Marc (2013) whose study hinges on the fact that self-esteem is a concept that has been extensively studied in the psychological literature and previous studies and may be described as a person's academic performance. Marc (2011) made it clear that self-esteem is related to some variables that may lead to better adjustment and students' academic performance. For example, happiness, life satisfaction, self-efficacy, a deep learning approach, and low levels of stress have all been related to a student's level of self-esteem. (Marcionetti, & Rossier, 2021).

Students who have fewer non-persistence decisions have been reported to display a higher level of self-esteem and to feel more positive about completing academic tasks. Many studies have found a positive link between self-esteem, adjustment, and academic success. For example, Brown et al, (2023) reported a significant positive relationship between academic self-esteem and academic performance ($r = .41, p < .001$) among 208 first to fourth-year American undergraduate students. Similarly, this indicated an association between self-esteem and self-reported academic performance of undergraduate students,

CONCLUSION

Overall, while help-seeking, academic motivation, and self-esteem may not directly impact students' adjustment to university life, they do play significant roles in influencing academic performance. Therefore, interventions aimed at enhancing these factors

could potentially improve the academic outcomes and overall well-being of MTE students in Federal Universities in Northern Nigeria. Further research may explore additional factors that contribute to students' adjustment and academic success, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study

1. The FUoNN should implement academic support programs. These programs could include peer tutoring, counselling services, or mentorship initiatives to encourage students to seek help when needed.
2. The FUoNN should focus on fostering a culture of motivation. This can be achieved through recognition and rewards for academic achievements, providing engaging and relevant coursework, and encouraging students to set and pursue academic goals.
3. The FUoNN should organize workshops or support groups to help students build their self-esteem and self-confidence.

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