

Reactions and Adaptation towards the Transformation from school life to University Life

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Abstract: Introduction: The transition refers to a periods of change, disequilibrium and internal conflict about gains and losses (Cowan, 1991, p.7) Adaptation towards the circumstances differs in the required time taken to adjust, and differs according to the contributing factors such as academic, social and personal. This study aims to investigate the adjustments of undergraduates of above factors. **Materials and methods:** This analytical study was conducted to explore the distribution of the pattern of the adaptation of first year undergraduates in their early stage of entering to the university. 52 students were included in this study. The students were asked to answer a questionnaire focused on the extent of their adaptations towards factors classified which are academic, social, personnel and towards university. The data has been collected in the first two months of their entrance in which the transition happens. There were 40 questions in the questioner and four point likert scale was used to calculate the extent of their adaptation in the transition. Data was analyzed using Rstudio statistical software. **Results and discussion:** P value for the degree of adjustment and the gender was found to be 0.0005294. In the 5% confidence interval p value < 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypothesis. Thus males are well adjusted to university life compared to females. Nevertheless, their social adaptation does not have any significant difference statistically. There is no difference in adjustment to university by the attempt of the GCE Advanced level examination. There is no evidence to support for the fact that type of accommodation affects the adjustment to the university.

Key Words: Adaptation, transition, school life, university life.

1. INTRODUCTION:

People experience discomfort or tension when a change of environment is rated. The transition refers to “periods of change, disequilibrium and internal conflict about gains and losses that occur between periods of stability, balance, and relative quiescence” (Cowan, 1991, p.7)

University has made students stressful requiring them to make important adjustments to their personal, social and academic lives. Social support can be considered as the most prominent contributing factor in aiding students’ adjustment to university. (Simmons, S, 2008)

Some students may quickly adapt to the new circumstances, whereas it may take time for some others to adapt. Especially, people who are away for the first time and who do not have old friends at the university take much longer to adapt.

According to Tinto, 1996 the major causes of students’ dropout from universities are academic and adjustment difficulties, new and difficult goals, weak commitment, external motivation for learning, financial inadequacies and isolation.

There are four important categories for weak adaptation for students from local public universities in Malaysia. They are academic problems, health problems, financial crisis and social and personal problems. They may lead to students’ failure to complete their studies. (Khamis *et. al.* 2002)

It seems that adjustment to university environment is an ample process that is mainly carried out during the first university year and especially in the first semester which implies a multitude of availabilities and personal resources. (Cinci, A2013)

This transition provides not only challenges but also opportunities. Students can be living on their own for the first time in the colleges. They should gradually adapt to academic objectives and new social responsibilities of the college (Holmstrom, Karp, & Gray, 2002).

Both male and female students, experience compatibility among roommates. Both male and female first year students have equally poor adjustment to roommates. Female had higher levels of adjustment in social relationships and adjustment to academic programs than males. (Wangeri et al, 2012)

It should be encouraged to prepare male and female students to be autonomous as they join university. In addition public universities should develop a comprehensive orientation programme and follow up mechanisms to ensure settling fast in the university. In particular, students at risk of poor adjustment should be identified and given extra attention. (Wangeri et al, 2012)

The adjustment for the transition to the university can be categorizing under five major themes: social support, expectations, transitional issues, time management, and emotions. Social support was found to be the most prominent contributing factor. (Urquhart B., 2011)

Social support intervention benefits college students, in reducing loneliness. Students develop deeper and form more meaningful connections with a small group of students, as this opens up with the fresher to share the experiences of transitioning week programs. (J. F, Ayers, 2010)

Difficulties regarding cultural backgrounds, separation from family, disengaging high school friends, finance, dress and food were the main themes of problems that the students face. Differences in culture, language and religion are barriers to communication with other students.

Separation anxiety is common in females. (Mudhovozi P., 2012)

General Objective of this study is to determine the Academic, Social, and Personal Adjustment to the university transformation and to find out whether there is a significant relationship between gender difference and the degree of adaptation to the university transformation

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This is a descriptive and analytic study which is conducted to evaluate the students’ adaptation to the university life. All the first year students of the Faculty of Allied health Sciences, university of Peradeniya, who gave their consent, were included in the study. They were given a questioner with 40 questions to investigate different types of adaptation levels.

All the data were entered to a Microsoft Excel Sheet and analyzed by R-Studio statistical software.

3. RESULTS:

Figure 1 illustrates the gender difference in adaptation to the university life. This graph shows that males are relatively high in adapting to all academic, social, emotional components of this study. Wilcoxon rank sum test was used to calculate whether there is a significant relationship among these two variables. P value was found to be 0.0005294. In the 5% confidence interval p value < 0.05, therefore we reject the null hypothesis. Thus males are well adjusted to university life compared to females. In comparison with the academic adjustment of these two gender variables p value was found to be 0.001061, where we can reject null hypothesis. It is evident that males’ academic adjustment is greater than females.

The p value for the social adjustment was found to be 0.2333 which is greater than 0.05. Therefore in the 5% confidence interval null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus males and females have the similar social adjustments.

P value for emotional adjustment by gender was found to be 0.01958 where we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that males have high degree of emotional adjustment.

P value for the degree of attachment of university by gender was found to be 0.002259; therefore we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that males have high degree of emotional adjustment by the graph below.

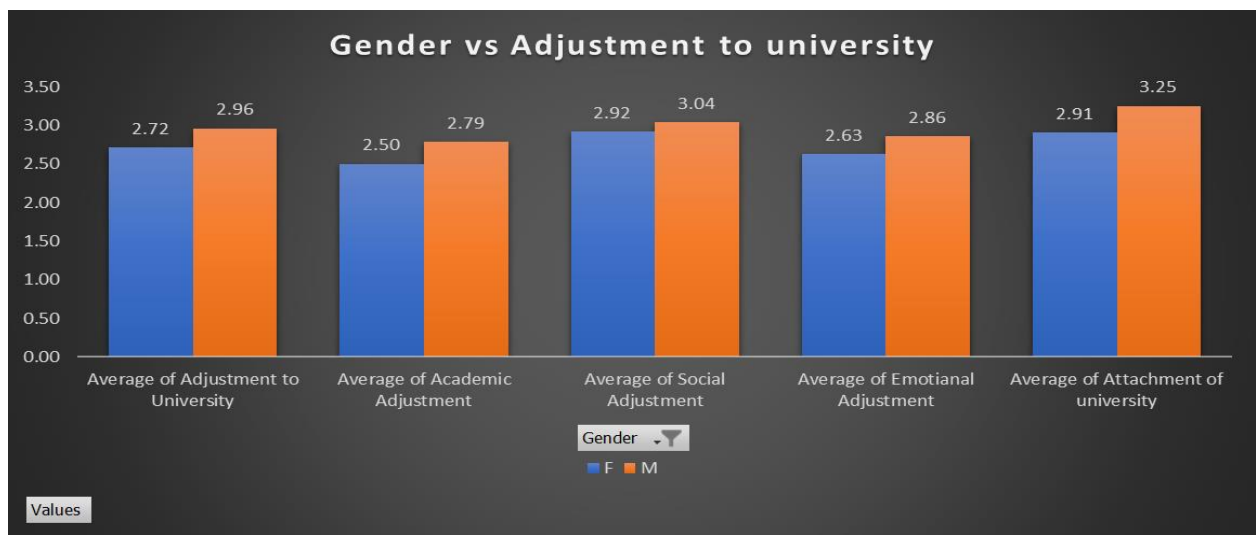


Figure 1: Gender vs adjustment to university.

Another interesting scope of this study was to find out whether there is a relationship between the students' adjustment and the number of attempts students have sat for their GCE/ Advanced level examination at school. Following figure illustrates that overall adjustment to the university life is high in students who have entered to the university by the second attempt. Nevertheless emotional adjustment and the attachment to the university is more in the students who have entered by the first attempt.

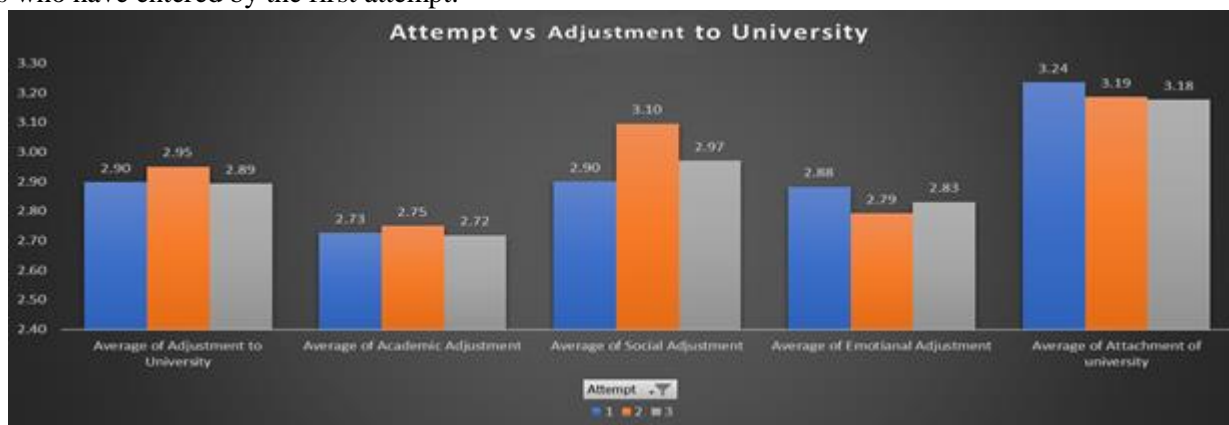


Figure 2: Attempt at the GCE/AL Vs Adjustment to university.

Statistical calculations were done using kruskal wallis rank sum test in order to find out the significant difference in the attempt at the GCE AL examination and the adjustment to university.

Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 0.77172, df = 2, p-value = 0.6799

The p value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, there is no evidence in rejecting the null hypothesis. There is no difference in overall adjustment to university by the attempt of the GCE Advanced level examination. Calculated p values are as following

Academic Adjustment by Attempt
 Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 0.13924, df = 2, p-value = 0.9327

Social Adjustment by Attempt
 Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 0.87741, df = 2, p-value = 0.6449

Emotional Adjustment by Attempt
 Kruskal-Wallis chi-squared = 0.40765, df = 2, p-value = 0.8156

The next perspective of this study is to find out whether there is a relationship between the type of accommodation of the students and the degree of adjustment to the university.

Figure 3 illustrates that the students having accommodation at the university hostel premises are well adapted to the university compared to students having accommodation at other places.

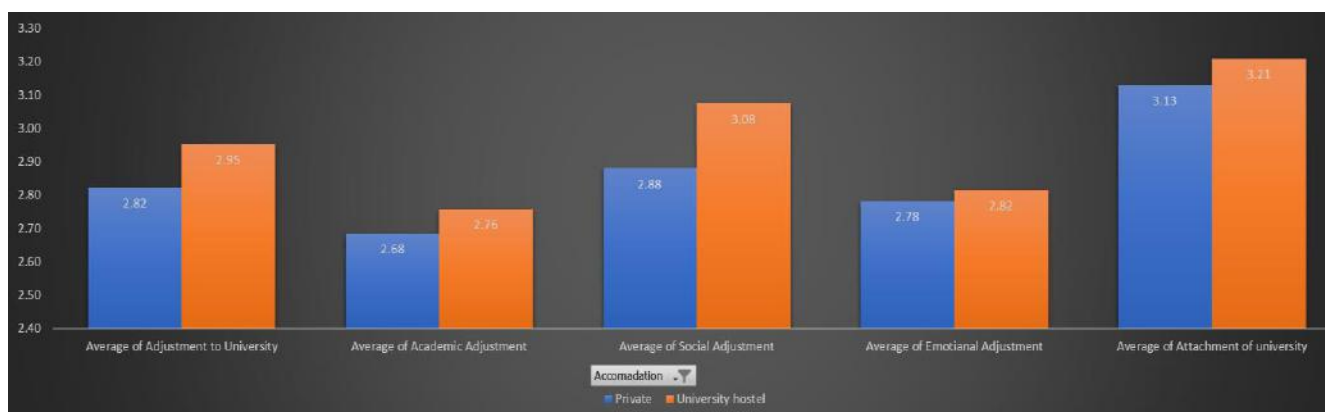


Figure 3: Adaptation to the university Vs. type of accommodation.

Nevertheless, Statistical analysis shows a p value of 0.261 which is greater than 0.05.

There is no evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The conclusion is that there is no relationship between the type of accommodation and the adjustment to the university. The following p values are for the academic, social, and emotional aspects of adaptation.

Academic Adjustment by Accommodation p-value = 0.5867

Social Adjustment by Accommodation p-value = 0.09011

Emotional Adjustment by Accommodation p-value = 0.7916

Attachment to the university by Accommodation p-value = 0.4609

5. DISCUSSION:

In the comparison of male's adaptation with the females', it is evident that the males are well adapted to the university in the fields of academic and emotional aspects. Attachment to the university is significantly high in males as well. Nevertheless, their social adaptation does not have any significant difference statistically. There is no difference in adjustment to university by the attempt of the GCE Advanced level examination. There is no evidence to support for the fact that type of accommodation affects the adjustment to the university.

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