

## Parenting Styles, Attachment and Emotional Support as Determinants of Adjustment to College Life among Fresh Undergraduates

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**Abstract:** The study examined the relationship of parenting styles, attachment and emotional support with adjustment to college life among fresh undergraduates. The study employed a correlational design as a guide. Three hundred fresh undergraduates of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria -123 males; 177 females, who were selected through Stratified random sampling approach participated in the study. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ;  $\alpha = .93$ ); Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ;  $\alpha = .92$ ); Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ;  $\alpha = .88$ ); and Perceived Emotional Support Scale (PES;  $\alpha = .89$ ) were the instrument used for data collection. The data generated were statistically analysed with the aid of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Model. The statistical results showed that the three predictor variables jointly accounted for a total of 60% of the overall variance in adjustment to college life. Based on the contribution of each of the predictor variables, Authoritarianism and Permissiveness parenting styles, negatively and significantly predicted adjustment to college life. However, attachment styles, Authoritative parenting style and emotional support significantly and directly predicted adjustment to college life. Seeing the investigated variables had significant effect on college adjustment, it was recommended that university authorities and policy makers should design a program that will lessen the impact of negative parenting and improve secure attachment styles and emotional support among fresh undergraduates.

**Keywords:** College adjustment; Attachment styles; Parenting Styles; Emotional support; Fresh, undergraduates.

### أنماط التنشئة الوالدية والتعلق والدعم العاطفي كمحددات للتكيف مع الحياة الجامعية بين الطلاب الجامعيين الجدد

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**الملخص:** تناولت الدراسة تأثير أنماط التنشئة والتعلق والدعم العاطفي على التكيف مع الحياة الجامعية بين الطلاب الجامعيين الجدد. استخدمت الباحثون التصميم الارتباطي لتوجيه الدراسة. شارك في الدراسة 300 طالب جامعي جديد من الجامعة الفيدرالية في أويو-إيكي، نيجيريا (123 ذكراً و177 أنثى). وقد تم اختيارهم باستخدام العينات العشوائية الطبقية. استخدم الباحثون لجمع البيانات استبيان تكيف الطالب مع الجامعة (SACQ;  $\alpha = .93$ )، واستبيان التنشئة الوالدية (PAQ;  $\alpha = .92$ )، واستبيان التعلق (ASQ;  $\alpha = .88$ )، ومقياس الدعم العاطفي المدرك (PES;  $\alpha = .89$ ). تم تحليل البيانات إحصائياً باستخدام معامل بيرسون للارتباطات، ونموذج الانحدار المتعدد. وأظهرت النتائج الإحصائية أن المتغيرات الثلاثة التي تمت دراستها تفسر مجتمعة ما مجموعه 60% من التباين الإجمالي في التكيف مع الحياة الجامعية. بناءً على مساهمة كل من المتغيرات المتوقعة، فقد تنبأت أنماط التنشئة السلطوية والمتساهلة عكسياً بالتكيف مع الحياة الجامعية. في حين، تنبأت أنماط التعلق، والنمط الوالدي الحازم، والدعم العاطفي طردياً بالتكيف مع الحياة الجامعية. نظراً لأن المتغيرات التي تمت دراستها، كان لها تأثير على التكيف الجامعي، فقد أوصى الباحثون بأن تقوم إدارة الجامعة وصانعو السياسات بتصميم برنامج من شأنه أن يخفف من تأثير التنشئة السلبية ويحسن أنماط التعلق الآمن والدعم العاطفي بين الطلاب الجامعيين الجدد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التكيف الجامعي؛ أنماط التعلق؛ أنماط التنشئة؛ الدعم العاطفي؛ الطلاب الجامعيين الجدد

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## Introduction

Transition from secondary education to post-secondary education could be a daunting journey. For a significant percentage of young people, the transition to postsecondary institutions of learning results in significant life changes as pupils gain learning experiences and chances for psychosocial growth. On the other hand, it can bring about significant apprehension and untold troubles for adolescents and young adults (Arjanggih & Kusumaningsih, 2016). Therefore, at the entrance year, the fresh students often struggle with adjustment difficulties (Ababu et al., 2018). This is due to the fact that, in comparison to post-primary education, university education is much more rigorous, and perhaps for the first time, young people will have to be separated from their family members and friends in order to create new social interactions. In most cases, young people are often worried and pessimistic about their ability to cope with such demands (Sekar & Lawrence, 2016).

Scholars have defined adjustment in many ways. For instance, early scholars like English and English (1958) viewed adjustment as an individual's interaction with their environment which safeguards the fulfilment of both physical and social needs. It is the manner by which a creature sustains equilibrium between their needs and the situations that affect the gratification of those needs (Sekar & Lawrence, 2016). Glenn (2011) conceptualised it as the process of obtaining and embracing manners of behaviour appropriate to the environment or the variations in the environment. Specifically, Mahjob (2000) hypothesised psychological adjustment as a constant active manner that is performed and experienced by people to modify their behaviour in the environment.

With the goal of helping college students adjust themselves and others, Al-khatib et al. (2012) described college adjustment as students' ability to efficiently grasp school materials, form friendly associations with classmates and tutors, and solve emotional and social problems. Based on this definition, four major areas where university students are expected to adjust well could be deduced (Arjanggih & Kusumaningsih, 2016; Benraghda et al., 2018). These include, scholastic adjustment (the ability of students to handle the basic learning requirements); social adjustment (the capability of students to open positive relationship with friends and lecturers, and form a networks of support, handle recent social liberty, nostal-

gia and lonesomeness); Personal-emotional adjustment (students' ability to handle daily life stresses and encounters such as anxiety, somatic symptoms, mental distress and depression); and institutional adjustment (the degree of contentment the students have with their learning activities in the university setting).

A review of literature showed that adjustment to college is a problem among university students (Olasupo et al., 2018; Obumse & Egenti, 2021). Among the associated problems are: low academic engagement (Benraghda et al., 2018); constant absenteeism and low academic achievement (Alipio, 2020), school dropout (Nordstrom et al., 2014); substance abuse and alcohol addiction (Salami, 2011); poor mental health (Olasupo et al., 2018); nostalgia, social deficit, poor time management and study skills (Ababu et al., 2018); and low academic self-efficacy and behavioural difficulties (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007).

Previous studies that have examined the antecedents of college adjustment among university students have established the associated factors like: gender differences (Chowhan et al., 2019), socioeconomic status (Ahmad et al., 2017), race (Melendez, 2015) and interpersonal motivation (Nakayama et al., 2015). Other linked factors include self-esteem, coping styles and personality (Valenti & Faraci, 2021), emotional stability and intelligence (Lee, 2016, Uwem et al., 2021); peer social support (Oke & Aluede, 2022), self-efficacy and achievement motivation (Elias et al., 2010) among many others. In spite of these, there are other factors common to influencing college adjustment among university students which the African scholars have paid little attention to; despite the possibility that those factors have drawn some research interest from the West (Valenti & Faraci, 2021). Such factors include parenting styles, attachment and emotional supports. Therefore, there is a need to extend research on these variables and this concerted call necessitates the current study.

### *Parenting Styles and College Adjustment*

Parenting style is a construct that is frequently used to forecast a child's future behaviours. Deci et al. (1994) characterises it as a technique for socialisation in childrearing, wherein parents impart norms, values, conducts, and sociability to their children. Njoku and Akaninwor-David (2019) characterised it in a similar way as the main child training model that parents adopt in raising their children, which includes the creation of laws and their enforcement.

According to Akhtar (2012), parenting style encompasses the diverse array of childcare systems, values, and behaviours that regulate the dynamic, power dynamics, and expectations between parents and children. Parenting styles are classified into two categories by Baumrind (1991): responsiveness (warmth and supportiveness), which is characterised by parents showing their love for their children by giving them attention, showing concern, and attending to their specific needs, desires, and affairs. Conversely, demanding parents set expectations and behavioural guidelines for their children in an attempt to incorporate them into the family through rules, punishment, and corrective measures (Love & Thomas, 2014). From the two parenting styles, four primary typologies of parenting styles have emerged. They are: authoritarianism, permissiveness, authoritarianism, and neglect.

Authoritarian parents value strictness and standards in child rearing but rarely use affection and tenderness. To raise their children, authoritative parents demonstrate a high level of responsiveness (warmth and love) as well as demandingness (law and strictness). They utilise the law when necessary, but allow their children some degree of liberty to make some decisions with some monitoring. Permissive parenting is more responsive, as the method allows children to demonstrate affection and have a high level of independence without corresponding demandingness (rules) as needed. Neglectful parents, on the other side, exhibit no or poor responsiveness and demandingness. They are largely uninvolved in problems concerning their children, and they are hostile to them (Yasmin & Kiani, 2015).

Research has generally shown a high correlation between parenting approaches and students' difficulties in adjusting to school (Omoteso et al., 2020). Parenting practises have been found by Love and Thomas (2014) to have a direct and indirect impact on university students' adjustment to college. This is because the influence that parents have on a child's life at a younger age carries over into later years and affects the child's psychological and emotional transition to college life (Rathus, 2017).

Additional studies have demonstrated that the various parenting typologies had impact on college adjustment (Kerr et al., 2012; Love & Thomas, 2014). Accordingly, it was discovered that young adults who experienced authoritative parenting had low levels of psychological issues, emotional challenges, and high levels of academic adjustment (Aldhafri, 2016;

Kazemi et al., 2010). It was also discovered that first-year college students with high levels of emotional wellbeing, interpersonal competence, and self-esteem are those who receive supportive parents, which is a sign of authoritativeness (Kazemi et al., 2010; Love & Thomas, 2014). On the other hand, studies show a negative correlation between authoritarian parenting and a well-adjusted college life (Sartaj & Aslam, 2010; Aldhafri, 2016). As per the study of Alt (2015), there exists a robust association between the style and depressive disorders, low self-esteem, emotional challenges, inadequate social skills, and loneliness.

The results of studies on the connection between overprotective parenting and college life adjustment are not entirely consistent. However, in terms of low self-worth, emotional maladjustment and bad health, several investigations found that permissive parenting inversely correlated with better college adjustment (Aldhafri 2011; Love & Thomas, 2014). Other research revealed clear connection between the two ideas, finding that children with permissive parenting performed better overall and in terms of social competency (Garcia & Gracia, 2009). Studies on the subject of negligent parenting have revealed that it poses a risk to a child's ability to transition to college life and is negatively correlated with social competence (Kazemi et al., 2010; Di Maggio & Zappulla, 2014).

### ***Attachment Styles and College Adjustment***

The word attachment was first described by the principal proponent of the attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969), who viewed it as enduring psychological affinity between human beings. It is equally described as an inherent and long-term emotional connection that bonds an individual to another through time and space (Worthy et al., 2020). Attachment is also characteristically portrayed by Trucharte et al. (2022) as an intimate, mutual, emotive relationship between two individuals, typified by shared affection and a desire to uphold closeness.

Attachment is basically considered biological and formed from infancy. That might explain why Trucharte et al. (2022) conceptualised it as the affectionate connection which a child experiences with his/her mother (or primary caregiver). Nevertheless, attachment does not stop with infancy but endures as an individual ages in different stages of life (Soysal et al., 2005). As individuals develop, they develop different types of attachment arising from their child-

hood experiences. There are two broad classes of attachment styles which include secure and insecure attachment (Trucharte et al., 2022).

Secure attachment is experienced when an individual succeeds in their environment owing to their carer's efforts (Corwin, 2012). Insecure attachment on the other hands is hypernym used to explain all attachment styles not secure. Three basic styles of insecure attachment are identified by researchers (Trucharte et al., 2022) which include dismissive style characterised by having excessive self-dependence and avoidance of others; preoccupied attachment style marked by extreme desire for closeness and underdeveloped self-reliance; and fearful attachment style typified by a negative self-image, fear of rejection, behavioural avoidance and escalated negative emotion (Abdul Kadir, 2017; Trucharte et al., 2022).

Yet, research from Africa does not sufficiently emphasise the connection between attachment types and academic adjustment among college students. For instance, the study of Ernest-Ehibudu and Obikoya (2017) discovered direct connection between attachment forms and school adjustment among secondary school students. Relatedly, Obikoya and Awujo (2017) established statistically significant relationship between the components of family attachment and school adjustment among secondary school students. Sünbül and Çekici (2018) also found fearful and preoccupied (components of insecure) attachment styles significantly determined homesickness among first year college students. The investigation of Kural and Özyurt (2018) concluded that freshmen attachment security directly associated with overall university adjustment. Among undergraduates, Tanner (2018) discovered that secured attachment with parents showed significant strong positive relationship with adaptation to college life. The outcomes of the study of Kurland and Siegel (2020) showed that attachment security had positive influence on college academic success. In addition, Ebimoboere and Udochi (2021) revealed positive association between constituents of attachment styles and school adjustment.

### ***Emotional Support and College Adjustment***

Emotional support is one of the four basic supportive behaviours identified by House (1983): emotional support, instrumental support, informational support and appraisal support. Emotional support is described as a deliberate verbal and nonverbal manner to exhibit care and friendliness for one another which is marked by the offer of encouragement, acceptance, inspiration, affection and sense of importance to the

receiver (Ebimoboere & Udochi, 2021). It is conceptualised as the necessity for assistance and safety in traumatic moments, occasioning a person's feeling of concern for others (Tanner, 2018). Emotional support therefore encompasses a diverse array of behaviours, including empathy, confrontation when necessary, compassionate engagement, care, encouragement towards others, and manifestations of love expressed through attentive care, valued emotions, and dependable bonds of friendship (Campbell & Wright, 2002). The emotional support givers are usually traced to family, lecturers, friends, setup, counsellors and clerics (Atoum & Al-Shoboul, 2018)

There is a growing body of proof that indicates that psychological assistance correlates adequately with emotional intelligence, psychological security (Sabiha, 2012), and life satisfaction (Şener, 2011) among others. Conversely, there is apparent dearth of research associating emotional support with college adjustment (Atoum & Al-Shoboul, 2018). However, studies that have investigated the umbrella concept of the emotional support (social support) found that social support is positively correlated with adjustment to college life among university freshmen (Shiddiq et al., 2020). Also, Oke and Aluede, (2022) found that peer social support is directly linked with adjustment to college life. The study carried out by Lubis et al. (2022) also discovered that social support which freshmen received from significant others strongly predicted their adjustment to college life. Furthermore, among adult freshmen, Wesley and Booker (2021) found that social support significantly associated with college life.

### **Rationale for the Study**

Students are expected to possess the ability to adjust adequately with activities within the academia for them to make the desired success. However, fresh undergraduates in Nigerian universities have been reportedly faced with the problem of adjustments as they pursue their academic activities in their respective institutions. This problem of adjustment is capable of negatively affecting students' relational, affective and scholastic wellness (Olasupo et al., 2018). The consequences of poor adjustment could be traced to poor school grade, academic failure, depression, absenteeism, gangsterism, cultism, bullying and suicidal behaviour among others as widely reported among Nigerian university students (Fayombo et al., 2012; Ebimoboere & Udochi, 2021; Adegbenro, 2023; Ladi-Akinyemi et al., 2023).

Recent research on the antecedents of college adjustment among undergraduates in Nigeria has predominantly focused on individual sub-components of adjustment. For example, Inaja et al. (2017), and Omoteso et al. (2020) examined the social adjustment of college students, while Dalyop (2022) concentrated on academic and emotional adjustment. Despite these valuable insights, there is a notable scarcity of studies that combine the entire spectrum of college adjustment components into a single, comprehensive framework. This gap suggests a need for further research that integrates social, academic, emotional, and other relevant dimensions to provide a more holistic understanding of college adjustment processes among Nigerian undergraduates.

Moreover, most studies investigating the antecedents of college adjustment in Nigeria have concentrated on factors within the learners and the academic environment. There has been insufficient attention paid to the experiences at home from which new students emerge. Key factors such as parenting ideologies, attachment styles, and emotional support are often overlooked. This oversight could explain why adjustment problems persist among fresh undergraduates, and why existing solutions have not been entirely effective. There is therefore the need to consider these home-related factors to develop more comprehensive and effective strategies for facilitating college adjustment.

Also, despite extensive research on students' adjustment, there is a notable gap in understanding how factors such as parenting styles, attachment patterns, and emotional support collectively influence this process. Existing studies tend to examine these factors in isolation, rather than in an integrated manner that reflects the complex interplay affecting students' adjustment. This segmented approach overlooks the cumulative and potentially synergistic effects the factors mentioned might have, resulting in an incomplete picture of the determinants of successful adjustment. As a result, the study of college adjustment remains incomplete, and the development of effective interventions and strategies to support young adults during this critical transition is hindered. Addressing this gap by integrating these variables into a cohesive framework can lead to more comprehensive strate-

gies that better support fresh undergraduates in navigating their new academic and social environments. In light of this, the current study sought to investigate the relationship of parenting styles, attachment, and emotional support on the adjustment to college life of fresh undergraduates.

### Research Questions

1. What pattern of relationship exists between parenting styles, attachment, emotional support and adjustment to college life among fresh students?
2. What is the joint contribution of the parenting styles, attachment and emotional support on adjustment to college life among fresh students?
3. What is the relative contribution of the parenting styles, attachment and emotional support on adjustment to college life among fresh students?

### Methodology

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. This is considered appropriate because, the design gives the opportunity to collect information as they occur in their natural setting across different ages and ascertain the impact of predictor variables on the criterion measures without necessarily manipulating any variable (Gall et al., 2007). In this study, the relationship among predictor variables (the parenting styles, attachment and emotional support) and the outcome variable (adjustment to college) were examined which meet the assumptions of correlational design.

The population of the study was made up of all fresh students of the Federal University, Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling technique was utilised to recruit participants for the study. Participants were first stratified along the stratum of faculties. This is followed by using a basic random selection procedure in selecting five (5) faculties from the university's ten (10) faculties. The next stage entailed using a purposeful sampling technique to choose sixty (60) fresh students from each faculty. In all, a total number of three hundred (300) fresh undergraduates participated in the study. The summary of their demographic information is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Descriptions of the Participants

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	123	41
	Female	177	59
Age	16 – 20 Years	203	67.67

Mean Age = 17.8	21 – 25 Years	83	27.67
	26 – 30 Years	14	4.67

The administration of the instrument took place during the 2021/2022 Second Semester. Second semester was so chosen to have allowed the participants spent considerable time in the university and to let them adapt to their new environment. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous, and participants' consent was obtained. The consent forms were attached to the research instrument. The participants were thoroughly informed about the purpose of the research and their right to opt out at any time if they felt unable to continue or if their rights were violated. Only those who agreed to participate were involved in the study otherwise, the instruments were returned. The research described only the correlation among variables, thus no ethical concerns were raised.

Regardless of this, the research proposal, including a comprehensive research plan, consent forms, and data collection instruments, was submitted to the Ethical Committee of Federal University, Oye Ekiti. The submission emphasised the study's adherence to ethical guidelines, particularly concerning participants' confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the minimization of potential risks.

The Ethical Committee conducted a thorough review of the submitted documents and granted approval for the research to proceed, acknowledging that the study met all ethical standards required for research involving human participants. The committee noted that the proposed measures to ensure confidentiality, informed consent, and risk minimisation were satisfactory, and approval was successfully obtained prior to commencing the research study.

Three hundred copies of the research instruments were administered to the respondents with the help of five trained research assistants. The instruments were filled and returned immediately as the research assistants were available to answer any clear concerns raised by the respondents. All the administered instruments were fully completed and with a 100% return rate. The administration of the instruments was completed within a period of five weeks.

### Measures

Four research instruments were employed to collect information from the respondents. The instruments are:

**Adjustment to College Life:** This is measured by adapting the 'Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ)', which was designed by Baker

and Siryk (1989). It contained 67 items which assessed four components of college adjustment namely: academic, social, personal-emotional, and institutional attachment. The response in this study is in Likert-type rating format ranging from 1 (Doesn't apply to me at all) to 5 (Applies very closely to me). Baker and Siryk (1989) reported Cronbach's Alpha for the scale which yielded 0.92 to 0.95. However, the adapted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .93 was obtained in a pilot test

**Parenting Style:** The short adaptation of the Buri's (1991) 30-item Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) designed by Alkharusi et al. (2011) was adopted for the study. It contained 20 items measuring three main typologies of parenting styles as propounded by Baumrind (1971), namely authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. The response format is in 5-point Likert-type ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The authors reported the following internal consistency values for each subscale (Authoritarian: 0.77; Authoritative: 0.82; and Permissive: 0.74). The Cronbach's alpha value recorded for each subscale in the current study are Authoritative ( $\alpha=.91$ ), authoritarian ( $\alpha=.79$ ), and permissive ( $\alpha=.76$ ) parenting styles.

**Attachment:** The Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) originally developed by Van Oudenhoven et al. (2003) and modified by Polek (2008) was adopted to assess attachment style of the participants. The scale contains 22 items that measured four aspects of attachment (Secure, Dismissing, Preoccupied and Fearful) styles in line with Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) prototype of attachment style. The ASQ was primarily developed to weigh the sociability of the respondents by assessing their overall attachment to other individuals. Respondents were asked to react to each item on a five-point rating arrangement varying from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items negatively worded items were scored in reverse order such that the higher the score, the higher the attachment is secured. The author reported internal consistency reliability of a range of 0.70 to 0.85. The internal consistence reliability of the scale for the present research yielded  $\alpha=.88$ .

**Emotional Support:** The modified 'Perceived Emotional Support' Scale by Hisada et al. (1989) earlier developed by Sarason et al. (1987) was adopted to

measure the emotional support of the respondents. Respondents were requested to reflect about significant others and then to signify the amount of emotional support these significant others provided as contained in each item. Respondents described the extent to which each item applied to them based on the five-point rating format ranging from 1 = (Not at all) to 5 (Applies very well). However, the adapted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .89 was obtained for its reliability.

The English version of each of the instrument was used to collect the data. The researchers checked the existing scales and ensured they meet the specific needs and cultural context of Nigerian undergraduates, ensuring that the measures used in this study were relevant and applicable to the local population. Moreover, despite the fact that the authors of each scale have reported their high validity values, before they were used in this study, two experts in measurement and evaluation were also contacted to examine the content validity of the scale and their adaptability to the Nigerian contest. This contextualization was crucial in ensuring that the findings of the study were not only generalizable but also sensitive to the unique experiences and perspectives of Nigerian students transitioning to college life.

### Data Analysis Procedure

The IBM SPSS Statistics software, version 26.0, was employed to analyse the collected data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to examine the relationships between the predictor and outcome

variables. Furthermore, a standard multiple regression analysis was performed to ascertain the statistical significance of these relationships and to determine whether the observed effects were statistically significant.

### Results

The form of relationship that existed among parenting styles, attachment styles, emotional support and adjustment to college life among fresh students as asked in Research Question One was statistically examined and the result is as presented in Table 2. From the table, it is obvious that the predictor variables in this study associated significantly with the criterion variable (Adjustment to college). The result indicated that while authoritarian ( $r = -.667$ ;  $p < .01$ ) and permissive ( $r = -.658$ ;  $p < .01$ ) parenting styles demonstrated inverse relationship significantly with college adjustment, other predictor variables in this study: authoritative parenting ( $r = .608$ ;  $p < .01$ ); attachment style ( $r = .488$ ;  $p < .01$ ); and emotional support ( $r = .320$ ;  $p < .01$ ) significantly and positively associated with college adjustment.

By this result, it can be inferred that students who were raised in families with authoritarianism and permissiveness are likely to have problems with college adjustment. This is because the result indicated that the two parenting styles decreased the adjustment levels of the fresh students to college lifestyles. In the opposite, students nurtured with authoritative parenting style and those who have secure attachment style as well as students with positive perception of emotional support experience are likely to easily adjust to college lifestyles.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of the Predictor and Criterion Variables

N	Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	College Adjustment	300	235.06	46.81					
2	Authoritative Parenting	300	28.51	8.14	.608**				
3	Authoritarian Parenting	300	6.62	4.71	-.667**	.708**			
4	Permissive Parenting	300	23.18	5.95	-.658**	.562*	.606**		
5	Attachment Styles	300	85.36	12.76	.488**	.396**	.305**	.450**	
6	Emotional Support	300	68.36	12.24	.320**	.097	.127*	.266**	.547*

\*\*Sig. at 0.01 level, \*Sig. at 0.05 level

In assessing the potential collinearity among the predictors (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles, attachment, and emotional support) both Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were considered. The Tolerance values ranged from 0.428 to 0.643, and the corresponding VIF values ranged from 1.556 to 2.336. Specifically, authoritative parenting style had a Tolerance of 0.435 and a

VIF of 2.299, authoritarian parenting style had a Tolerance of 0.428 and a VIF of 2.336, permissive parenting style had a Tolerance of 0.538 and a VIF of 1.858, attachment had a Tolerance of 0.643 and a VIF of 1.556, and emotional support had a Tolerance of 0.551 and a VIF of 1.814. All Tolerance values were above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.1, and all VIF values were well below the threshold of 10,

indicating no problematic collinearity among the predictors. Therefore, multicollinearity is not a concern in this analysis, suggesting that the independent variables can be reliably interpreted in relation to their impact on college adjustment.

The Combined effect of the predictor variables (Parenting styles, attachment and emotional support) on

the college adjustment was also assessed. The Table 3 showed that the three main predictor variables justified 60% of the total variance in college adjustment among fresh undergraduates ( $R^2=.602$ ;  $F(5,294)=89.035$ ;  $p<.01$ ). Other factors unknown to the perimeter of this study might constitute the unexplained 40% of the variance.

**Table 3:** Linear Multiple Regression of Parenting styles, Attachment, Emotional Support and Adjustment

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	394709.831	5	78941.966	89.035	.000
Residual	260672.205	294	886.640		
Total	655382.036	299			
R = .776	R <sup>2</sup> =.602	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .595	Std Err. Est. =29.77650		

Table 4 showed the linear regression of parenting styles, attachment and emotional support on adjustment among fresh students. As statistically expressed in the table, based on the magnitude of their contributions, permissiveness ( $\beta=.278$ ;  $t= -5.544$ ;  $p<.01$ ), authoritarianism ( $\beta=-.338$ ;  $t= -6.038$ ;  $p<.01$ ) were the strongest predictors of college adjustment among fresh undergraduates respectively. In addition, the

two variables negatively predicted the outcome variable. Following these variables are attachment styles ( $\beta=.140$ ;  $t= 2.837$ ;  $p<.01$ ), authoritative parenting style ( $\beta=.146$ ;  $t= 2.625$ ;  $p=.01$ ) and emotional support ( $\beta=.112$ ;  $t= 2.509$ ;  $p=.01$ ) which positively predicted adjustment to college life significantly in that order.

**Table 4:** Regression Coefficient of Parenting styles, Attachment, Emotional Support and Adjustment

	unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	31.173	12.644		2.465	.014
Authoritativeness	.840	.320	.146	2.625	.009
Authoritarianism	-3.360	-.557	-.338	-6.038	.000
Permissiveness	-2.192	-.395	-.278	-5.544	.000
Attachment Styles	.514	.181	.140	2.837	.005
Emotional Support	.430	.171	.112	2.509	.013

## Discussion

This study explored the relationship between parenting styles, attachment, and emotional support on the adjustment to college life among first-year undergraduates. The combined effect of the three predictor variables on adjustment to college life as found in the study is high. A value of sixty per cent variance is very large and could not have been due to the event of coincidence. This large influence of the three variables on adjustment to the college life could be explained in that they are largely family oriented and family is believed to be the first social support of every child. Therefore, the rate at which young people adjust when they are detached from their family to the academic environment will be a function of how they have been prepared at home to meet the

challenges in terms of the styles of parenting and attachment as well as how they are trained to perceive emotional supports they receive from home and elsewhere.

Each parenting style had a significant impact on the adjustment of first-year students to college life, affecting them in different ways. Authoritarianism demonstrated a significant negative association with the adjustment to college life and proved to be the most powerful determinant of the criterion measure among the examined predictor factors. This is plausible, as authoritarian style of parenting has hardly yielded positive outcomes on adolescents' social, emotional, cognitive and physical wellbeing among others (Pinquart, 2017). Most children raised under dictatorships and harsh parenting are likely to exhibit



behaviours that are antithetical to adapting to new situation and circumstances. Such behaviour may include but not limited to low self-esteem, poor assertiveness, aggression, avoidance and retaliatory behaviours.

Furthermore, when students are at the university without supervision and are no longer under the control of a dictatorship, young people who have experienced authoritarianism may feel pressured to display their alleged lack of freedom in unhealthy ways. The outcomes of the study is in agreement with the studies of Sartaj and Aslam (2010), Aldhafri (2016) who found that young people raised in authoritarian environment are likely not to be well-adjusted with the college life. Behaviours like poor social skills, emotional problems, lonesomeness and depression have been established among such group of people (Aldhafri, 2016).

Permissiveness was also found to be at direct opposite of a well-adjusted life at the college in the current study. This suggests that the deeper the permissiveness experienced at home, the poorer the adjustment to college life. This outcome is not in consonance with the studies of researchers like Garcia and Gracia (2009) and Kazemi et al. (2010) who discovered that permissive parenting produce better consequences on the general wellbeing and social skills of young people. It however concur with the studies of Aldhafri (2011) and that of Love and Thomas (2014), who discovered strong connections between poor emotional competence, negative self-worth and ill-health, and a negative association between permissiveness and adjustment to college life. The explainable reason for the current finding could be linked to the fact that individuals raised in permissive home are raised as “kings” where provisions are made for virtually all their demands and are hardly punished for wrong doings. Thus, all the instances of “kingship” and unhealthy freedom that occurred in their comfort zone may not be present in college, which could lead to dissatisfaction. This could account for why young adults in universities report higher rates of negative emotions like worry, distress, and depression over unimportant issues and occasionally even suicidal behaviour.

In addition, permissive parenting style is likely to have negatively related to college adjustment because it often results in students who are less prepared to handle the challenges and responsibilities of independent life. The style of parenting can limit a child's opportunities to develop critical life skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, and self-regulation,

as parents typically make decisions on behalf of their children and shield them from experiencing failure or adversity. When these students get to college, they may struggle with the newfound autonomy, find it difficult to manage their time and responsibilities, and have trouble coping with stress and setbacks. This lack of preparedness can lead to higher levels of anxiety, lower academic performance, and difficulty in forming social relationships, all of which are crucial components of successful college adjustment.

In relation to authoritative style of parenting, the outcome of this study statistically produced a direct relationship which is an indication that improved authoritative style of parenting generates better adjustment to college life. The results corroborate those of Love and Thomas (2014) and Aldhafri (2016), among others, who found that authoritative parenting results in young adults who are well-adjusted for college life because those from such homes are more likely to exhibit behaviours free from psychological distress. They are able to maintain emotional stability, lead well-adjusted academic lives, and exhibit strong social skills. This result is likely to be so because authoritativeness is characterised with both love and law. Children that are raised in such environment are already equipped with behaviours that can make them live independently and relate well with others outside their homes. This might have accounted for the positive relationship found between the two variables.

This parenting style balances nurturing support with clear expectations and consistent discipline, promoting the development of essential life skills such as self-regulation, problem-solving, and effective communication. Therefore, children raised by authoritative parents are typically encouraged to express their opinions and make decisions within set boundaries, which helps them develop confidence and autonomy. When these students get into college, they are likely to be better equipped to handle the demands of academic work, manage their time effectively, and form healthy social relationships. They are also more likely to seek help when needed, as they are accustomed to open communication and support from their parents. This combination of independence, responsibility, and social competence likely contributes to smoother and more successful college adjustment.

Attachment styles equally produced positive connection with adjustment to college life. The outcome suggests that the more secured the attachment is, the better the adjustment to college life. This outcome is in concord with the study of Tanner (2018), Kurland

and Siegel (2020), and Ebimoboere and Udochi (2021) among others who found positive relationship between the components of attachment styles and adjustment to school and academics. The reason is obvious; individuals with secured attachment style are raised by their caregivers to make success out of their environment as they are able to work independently and in group. They maintain positive and normal relationship with others as against excessive dependent on self and significant others, negative emotions, poor self-worth and avoidance behaviour which are identified characteristics of insecure attachment and are capable of hampering the adjustment of students to college life. Therefore, secure attachment could be closely connected with adjustment of fresh students to college life.

Emotional support results in positive association with adjustment to college life. This finding is in line with Shiddiq et al. (2020), Wesley and Booker (2021) and Lubis et al. (2022) who have discovered positive connection between social support (from which emotional support is a component) and adjustment to college life. The reason could be linked to the fact that individuals who experienced perceived emotional support from significant others are likely not to be frustrated but feel motivated at the face of diverse challenges faced in the college. Therefore, the more the perceived emotional support is, the more there is possibility of adjustment to college life among fresh university undergraduates.

Also, emotional support helps students manage stress, build self-esteem, and develop effective coping strategies. When students feel understood and encouraged, they are more likely to face academic and social challenges with confidence, leading to better overall adjustment. Emotional support fosters a sense of belonging and strong social connections, which are crucial for emotional well-being. Additionally, students who receive emotional support are more motivated academically and are more likely to seek help when needed, preventing small issues from becoming significant problems. All these factors combined create a supportive environment that enhances students' ability to adapt and thrive in college.

### **Limitation**

Despite the insightful findings on the relationship between parenting styles, attachment, emotional support, and college adjustment, this study is not without its limitations. Recognizing these limitations is important for understanding the scope and applicability of the results, as well as for guiding future research in this area.

In the first instance, the study focused solely on fresh undergraduates from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations or educational institutions. The experiences and background of students from different regions or types of universities (e.g., private vs. public) might differ, and thus, the results may not be broadly applicable. In addition, the study was conducted within a specific cultural context in Nigeria, where parenting styles, attachment, and emotional support may have different connotations and implications than in other cultural settings. This cultural specificity may limit the application of the findings to other contexts with different cultural norms and values. Further studies can include students from different universities, regions and cultures.

Also, the study applied a correlational, cross-sectional design, which reduces the ability to draw causal conclusions. While the study identifies associations between parenting styles, attachment, emotional support, and college adjustment, it does not allow for determining whether these factors directly cause changes in college adjustment over time

Furthermore, while the study focused on specific variables related to parenting, attachment, and emotional support, it did not account for other potential factors that could influence college adjustment, such as peer relationships, academic stress, socioeconomic status, or mental health conditions. These unexamined variables might also play significant roles in a student's adjustment to college life. Further studies could include all these variables.

Granting the observed limitations, these factors do not detract from the validity of the findings. The consistency of the data and the rigorous analytical approach ensure that the results are trustworthy. Therefore, the conclusions of the study regarding the influence of parenting styles, attachment, and emotional support on college adjustment remain valid and meaningful.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Some contributory factors that predicted adjustment to college life were examined in this study. The study established the potency of the examined variables (parenting styles, attachment and emotional support) to influence the college adjustment of fresh university undergraduates. While authoritarianism and permissiveness contributed negatively but significantly to college adjustment, other examined variables (authoritativeness, attachment styles and emotional attachment) significantly and directly predicted college adjustment.

The outcomes of this study are of great importance to homes, the school and the behaviour research sectors. Parents need to be more educated on the effective styles of child nurturing as this does not only have implication on the current but the future lives of the children. The university administrators will also need to put efforts in promoting better adjustment to college among the fresh university undergraduates. The induction and acclimatisation programmes of fresh undergraduates should incorporate the factors considered in this study. Also, the school support services need to focus on solving the adjustment difficulties among affected individuals by providing effective emotional supports that serves the role of foster-parents and secure attachment providers.

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