

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY AND
ADAPTATION AMONG FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN LUSAKA**

**BY
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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in
Educational Psychology**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

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DECLARATION

I, **Mercy Mupeta Mwanza** declare that *The Relationship between General Self-Efficacy and Adaptation Among First-Year Undergraduate Students at the University of Zambia in Lusaka* was achieved through scientific research. It represents my own work and has not in part or in whole been presented as material for the award of any degree at this or any other University before. Where other people's works have been used, citation has been made by use of complete reference.

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Signature (Supervisor)..... Date 2017

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The University of Zambia approved this dissertation by **Mercy Mupeta Mwanza** as partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Educational Psychology. It is submitted with approval by the Examiners and with full consent from the Supervisor.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate what relationship existed between first-year undergraduate students' perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation to the learning environment at the University of Zambia (UNZA) in Lusaka District. The study further focused on defining and analyzing factors that facilitate adaptation. The objectives were: to determine the general self-efficacy of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia; to investigate to what extent first year undergraduate students feel they are adapting to their learning environment; to identify factors that facilitate the adaptation of first year undergraduate students to their learning environment. The theories guiding this study were Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, and Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

The concurrent triangulation research design was used on a sample of 150 first-year undergraduate students at UNZA who were purposively selected. To collect data for the study a semi-structured questionnaire was employed.

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In order to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation, Spearman correlation test was run, and to determine the predictive value of self-efficacy toward adaptation a linear regression test was run. Thematic analysis was also used to tackle the qualitative aspect of the study. Total self-efficacy and adaptation scores were computed, from which means were derived.

The study findings showed that 67% of the respondents fell in the range of high self-efficacy, 12% average, two per cent in low range. For adaptation, 51% of respondents fell below average, while 47% were above average, and one percent on average mark itself. Thus, from the above statistics, it can be concluded that fewer students were adapting better compared to the majority.

The relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation was found to be weak positive and non-linear $r = .157$, $p = .056$ ($p < .1$). Self-efficacy was also found to account for only two per cent of variation in adaptation, meaning that other factors accounted for the remaining 98%. These were more accommodation, financial support, improved quantity and quality of academic material in the library, better presence of extra-curricular activities, and recreational facilities, more study space and lecture theatres, improved social conduct, as well as improved operational methods.

The study recommends that UNZA administration, through the Dean of Students' Affairs office (DOSA) promote and even campaign for more recreational facilities and extra-curricular activities. The study further recommends that the Ministry of Higher Education through the University of Zambia expedite the process of investments in on campus accommodation facilities. Further attention should also be paid to normalization of the academic calendar to lessen the academic pressure on both students and lecturers.

Key Words: *Self-efficacy, adaptation, learning environment*

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my creator Yehovah who placed in my life those to whom I further dedicate this work. To my father and mother, Dr. Patrick David Mwanza and Mwenya Maluti Mwanza for their financial and emotional support, they are the epitome of hard work, courage, honesty, and humility, attributes, that because of them I have learnt to respect beyond any other. For this, I am thankful. To my brother and sister, Mbali David Mwanza and Akambiya Bessia Mwanza for their care and support, belief in my academic prowess, and exemplary academic lead. To my brother from another mother Joseph Ede, and my son from another womb Andrew-Patrick Ede for always providing a laugh or two, even three. To my future husband and children for their love and support.

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Finally, and not the least, I acknowledge the strength provided by my creator Yehovah to persevere and overcome the personal and academic challenges and doubts faced and felt during the course of this task, until such a time as this that I do not question can it be done, but state that it is done, because His answer had always been, yes.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------|---|
| DOSA | Dean of Students Affairs |
| HPB | Health Promoting Behaviour |
| SACQ | Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire |
| G.S.E | General Self-efficacy |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| UNZA | University of Zambia |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide background to this study, and outline the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, general research objective, specific research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and operational definitions.

1.1 Background

The transition to college life from secondary school bares many challenges for the new student (Lai, 2014). Studies by Gagliardi-Blea, Kurpius, & Kerr, 2008; Pillay & Ngcobo, 2010; Hicks & Heastie, 2008; Abdullah, Elias, Mahyuddi, & Uli. 2009; Oguz- Duran & YÜksel, 2010, have found that individuals going through the transition from secondary school to college face various social, personal-emotional, and academic challenges. Such challenges include homesickness, establishment of new social connections and loss previous ones, poor social support, financial strain, anxiety, sleep disturbance, increased responsibility, change in classroom setting, loneliness, separation from family, and general stress resulting from becoming a part of a new environment and/or even culture (Brooks & Dubois, 1995; Paul & Brier, 2001). Such challenges can result in high drop-out rates or decrease in graduate rates (Pillay & Ngcobo, 2010).

Stress arising from such many challenges occurring at the same time and an inability to adapt to the college environment have been found to be among the main causes of high drop-out rates, low grades and graduate rates. Especially for students without prior experience in such a setting, and for those with poor adaptability (Abdullah, et.al 2009; Pillay & Ngcobo, 2010).

According to Suldo, Shaunessy, Thalji, Michalowski, and Shaffer (2009) environmental stressors even lead to reduced academic performance, highlighting the important role that adaptation to the learning environment plays in students' university life.

Self-efficacy as a construct is one that encompasses individual's perceptions and expectations of his/her own capabilities. Bandura (1997) theorized that self-efficacy was a determinant of whether an individual would employ coping behavior in the face of obstacles or aversive experiences. Choi (2005) described it as cognitive capability in action. As such an individual

with higher self-efficacy tends to have better coping skills (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011). High self-efficacy entails having more confidence to face and overcome encountered challenges within the university setting (Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007; Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011), and beyond. Bresó, Schaufeli, and Salanova (2010), Salanova, Llorens, and Schaufeli (2011), and Choi (2005), also argue that higher self-efficacy will increase students' engagement and enhance performance. High self-efficacy also motivates inter-personal engagement, as well as self-directed learning (Vancouver & Kendall, 2006; Lema & Agrusa, 2006).

Furthermore, strong links have been found to exist between academic performance and motivation; constructs that are mainly related with self-efficacy (Choi, 2005, Razmefar, 2013; Ogunmakin, Akomolafe, & Fasooto, 2013; Ahangi & Sharaf, 2013; Landine & Stewart, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, 1998). As such, higher self-efficacy can lead to increase in not only performance and motivation, but adaptation as well (Lai, 2014). There is as such a need to establish what relationship exists between general self-efficacy and adaptation in a bid to contribute towards optimizing the learning environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Bryman (2007), a statement of the problem is a perplexing question surrounding practice, scholarly literature or theory that points toward a need for meaningful investigation and understanding (Bryman, 2007). It also generally 'refers to some difficulty which a researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or practical situation and wants to obtain a solution for the same,' (Kothari, 2004: 24). In this vane, this study's investigation is propelled by the following.

In a study conducted at the University of Zambia (UNZA), Wilson (1994) identified a myriad of problems with adaptation faced by students. Lai (2014) found that higher self-efficacy can lead to increase in not only performance and motivation, but adaptation as well.

The problem became apparent when it was realized that the relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation in Zambia, especially with regards identifying whether self-efficacy can act as a predictor of better adaptation to the learning environment has not been fully explored.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study according to Creswell (2012:110) is ‘a statement that advances the overall direction or focus for the study.’

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship that exists between perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation among first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia in Lusaka District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

A study objective is a precise statement connected to the identified aim of the (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The following were the objectives of this study, beginning with the general objective.

1.4.1 General Objective

To determine the relationship that exists between students’ perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation to their learning environment

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine the general self-efficacy of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia
2. To investigate to what extent students feel they are adapting to their learning environment
3. To identify factors that facilitate the adaptation of first year undergraduate students to their learning environment.

1.5 Research Questions

Research questions are those ‘questions in quantitative or qualitative research that narrow the purpose statement to specific questions that researchers seek to answer,’ (Creswell, 2012:110).

Mackey and Gass (2005) propound that a research question is that which seeks to address or investigate a study. In line with this, this study begged the following questions.

1.5.1 General Research Question

Is there a positively or negatively correlated relationship between high or low self-efficacy and perceived adaptation?

1.5.2 Specific Research Questions

1. What are the general self-efficacy scores of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia?
2. To what extent do students feel they are comfortably adapting to their new learning environment?
3. What factors that facilitate adaptation do students feel are missing in the University?

1.6 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework according to Vinz (2015) comprises varying related assumptions that act as guidance or lens for argument on a given research subject. Kombo and Tromp (2014: 56) have referred to it as ‘...a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories.’ This study was guided by two theories; the social cognitive theory, and the ecological systems theory.

The social cognitive theory is one that was propelled by Albert Bandura. According to the social cognitive theory, motivations and actions are guided by anticipatory control mechanisms that have three expectancies and these are situational-outcome expectancies, action-outcome expectancies, and perceived self-efficacy (Salami, 2011). Particularly, outcome-expectancies, ‘include options to change the environment and cope with adjustment problems,’ (Salami, 2011: 1). Under this theory, human beings unlike what older psychology advocated, do not merely function in response to the environment, as an external pressure producing an internal and then external behaviour automatically, but have the capacity to themselves create an impression on

the environment and possibly influence or change the types of experiences that they have. 'They are agents of experiences rather than simply under-goers of experiences,' (Bandura, 2001: 4). As such, 'the core features of agency enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times,' (Bandura, 2001: 2). This idea that human beings possess agency, or intentionality is what Bandura argues, results in outcomes as is the case when an individual plans agency, for a given purpose, to achieve a particular outcome. However, among the mechanisms for personal agency, one of the most fundamental; the lack of which may produce pervasive results, is an individual's belief in his/her own capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Perceived self-efficacy beliefs are crucial in the causal structure of the social cognitive theory as they do not only change independently, but also have an impact on other determinants of adaptation (Bandura, 1997; Maddux, 1995; Schwarzer, 1992).

The ecological systems theory was propelled by Urie Bronfenbrenner. According to this theory, the environment exists in five distinct categories that he termed systems, that is; microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. These different systems' role in interacting with the individual are different ranging from near, and having a direct impact on the individual, to far, but also having a direct impact on the individual, as well as space or time, yet also having a direct impact on the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The microsystem comprises the interactions that take place between an individual and external environments and in which face to face interactions take place. According to Bronfenbrenner, such environments include the family, school, peer groups or work place. 'A microsystem is a pattern of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face to face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in the immediate environment,' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 39). The mesosystem is that which acts as a bridge between two or more micro-systems and processes taking place within those systems. That is, 'comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person,' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40).

The exo-system however, unlike the mesosystem comprises at least one or more settings or processes that do not contain the developing persons, but still affect them. The macro-system on

the other hand 'may be thought of as the social blueprint for a particular culture or sub-culture,' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40). This is because it consists of the prevailing belief systems, lifestyles, customs, hazards, opportunity structures and material resources existing within and among the afore mentioned systems (microsystem, mesosystem, exo-system).

The chronosystem meanwhile 'encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also the environment in which that person lives, for example, family structure, socio-economic status, employment, place of residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life,' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40). As such, the student experiences all of these categories during his/her first year at college or university.

The specific system of interest in this research will be the microsystem of which the school environment is a part, and the chronosystem. Research relating to this theory (ecological systems theory) in this regard however, in Zambia, has mostly been conducted in relation to children, and not young adults. This highlights a missed aspect, and an opportunity for study. 'Human beings, Bronfenbrenner suggested, cannot develop in isolation, but within a system of relationships that include family and society,' (Krishnan, 2010: 5).

However, as Bronfenbrenner himself theorized, regarding the element of time (chrono-system), 'an event has varying degrees of impact on development, and the impact decreases as time progresses,' (Krishnan, 2010: 9). This implies that an older individual is able to cope with life events such as death or the divorce of parents better than a child. However, research shows that although this may be true, children are able to adapt to new environments better than adults. Research conducted by Garcia-oll and Magnusson (2005) on adaptation of immigrant parents in the United Kingdom (U.K) suggests that children have an easier time adapting to a new environment than adults. 'Immigrant children's adaptation patterns seems to suggest that they have an easier time than adults because they are malleable and better exposed to the new culture through the school system,' (Pinter, 2013: 58). As such, adaptation by young adults to college or university life would be more challenging than adaptation of children to a new school or town. Indeed, Bandura acknowledged that 'human adaptation and change are rooted in social systems. Personal agency through efficacy belief operates within a broad network of social structural

influences. In these agentic transactions, people are producers as well as products of social systems,' (Bandura, 1998: 1).

Based upon these varied yet complementing characteristics, Albert Bandura's social cognitive, and Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory were chosen to guide this study.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of a study is that which allows for focus to be placed on the implications of the study on various aspects of the field of study including theory, educational interventions, practice, and other scholarly research (Pajares, 2007).

In this study, discovering whether individual self-efficacy of students influences how well they adapt can help the learning institution under study, and perhaps others as well, establish new avenues for helping their students with different personality constructs; particularly self-efficacy, adapt to the learning environment, and therefore, function at their optimum levels.

The whole burden of enabling the holistic development of an individual through education cannot be placed on the parent or guardian alone, or lecturer in the classroom or lecture hall. If findings reveal that self-efficacy does in fact have a strong relationship with adaptation, or that students are facing many challenges in their adaptation, support structures to create more positive learning environments may be put in place within the educational environment or campus.

In light of growing competition in the provision of tertiary education, the findings of this research may help to make this, and perhaps other, tertiary education institutions more attractive and accommodating for potential local and international students, as adaptation is a subject that affects their satisfaction and overall well-being.

Finally, and not the least, the study will add to the body of knowledge on adaptation of students to their learning environment.

1.8 Scope

This research was conducted at UNZA as it is the largest university in Zambia and hosts students from all parts of the country from different ethnic and social economic backgrounds. As such, it is the optimum location for a study of this nature, as it will provide a diverse population for study. The study was restricted to undergraduate students, and the inclusion criteria for participants was that they were studying for the first time at a tertiary education institution.

1.9 Operational Definitions

Operational definitions are those used by the researcher in his or her study, specific to his or her study. Theobald (1991) asserts that they provide insight as to the rationing associated to the main terms within a study, and as such meaning can be defined by the researcher. They are terms that should be used throughout the research, that are specifically related to that research study. In this research, the following terms will hold the following meanings;

Adaptation: social, academic, and emotional adjustment to college or university life

Learning Environment: physical, academic, institutional and social surrounding of the student within and around the campus.

Self-Efficacy: the belief students have, and judgments they make of their own capabilities to deal with the different situations they experience in their learning environment.

Coping: strategies employed to adjust to university or college life

1.10 Delimitation

The University of Zambia

UNZA is the oldest and largest public university in Zambia, and was established by an act of Parliament in 1965. It opened its doors to the public in July, 1966 (www.unza.zm). The university's main campus is located along the Great East Road within Munali constituency. UNZA hosts eight schools and these are; Humanities & Social Sciences, Education, Engineering, Law, Agricultural Sciences, Mines, Medicine, Natural Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine (www.unza.zm). This site comprised the study area.

1.11 Summary of Chapter One

This Chapter has presented the background to this study, outlined the identified problem that has prompted its undertaking, and highlighted the purpose of the intended study. In addition, the chapter has also outlined the general and specific objectives guiding the study, and the accompanying general and specific questions, as well as indicated the theories guiding the study. The significance attached to undertaking the study has also been highlighted. This chapter has further outlined the scope of the study, operational definitions within the study, and finally, but not the least, the delimitation of the study. The next chapter will discuss literature pertaining to the main concepts of this study, and the lacunas identified therein.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapter presented a background to the study, highlighting the problem that prompted its undertaking, its purpose, outlined the general and specific objectives and questions that guided the study, the theories adopted, the significance attached to undertaking the study. The foregoing chapter further outlined the scope of the study, operational definitions within the study, and the delimitation of the study. The focus of this chapter is literature pertaining to the main concepts of the study.

The literature review provides the researcher or ‘the reader with a theory base, a survey of published works that pertain to your investigation, and an analysis of that work. It is a critical, factual overview of what has gone before,’ (Hofstee, 2006: 91). The purpose of which is to distinctly evaluate, synthesize, analyze and represent the emergence of one’s study from previous studies by other researchers (O’Neil, 2010). This chapter in this study will begin by reviewing literature on the various characteristics of the main concepts associated with the study; general self-efficacy and adaptation. Literature on general self-efficacy and adaptation, and factors that facilitate adaptation will then be reviewed. A summary of the chapter presenting the lacunas identified in the literature, and subsequent justification for the study will constitute the final part of this chapter.

2.1 Literature on Main Concepts

Literature on the main concepts used in this study will now be reviewed and discussed. These are, general self-efficacy, adaptation, and factors that facilitate adaptation.

2.1.1 General Self-Efficacy

Although a person can have different self-efficacy beliefs depending on different tasks, that is, Specific Self-Efficacy (SSE), a general self-efficacy can also be determined. General Self-Efficacy (GSE) refers to ‘individuals’ perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations,’ (Judge, Erez, & Bono, 1998: 170). Research conducted by Eden (1988) found that GSE positively influences SSE for a wide range of tasks, implying that SSE can be viewed to be a sub-set of GSE. That is, GSE has “spill over” effects that can also determine SSE

(Shelton, 1990; Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs, & Rogers, 1982). As such, Chen, Gully, Whiteman, and Kilcullen (2001) posit that ‘GSE captures differences among individuals in their tendency to view themselves as capable of meeting task demands in a broad array of contexts.’ SSE has even been viewed to be an outcome of GSE, however, according to Imam (2007: 2), ‘majority of self-efficacy researchers have continued to focus on SSE exclusively while ignoring the generality dimension of self-efficacy.’

Self-efficacy has a fundamental influence on learning because most individuals will only pursue a learning endeavour when they think they will be capable of performing successfully (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). It has also been found to be positively correlated to learning goal orientation (Chen, Gully, Whiteman & Kilcullen, 2000). That is, general learning, and not necessarily academic learning, but of which it is a part. Aside from this, a positive relationship has also been found between GSE and motivational traits such as need for achievement and conscientiousness (Chen, et.al, 2001). As such, ‘strong efficacy beliefs, along with fundamental learning tools supplied by formal education, result in students who possess skills necessary for social and economic stability,’ (Smith, 2002: 1).

Origins of Efficacy through Agency

To borrow the words of renowned philosopher John Locke, the human being at birth is akin to a ‘tabula rasa’ or blank slate upon which anything may be written (Knaller & Dean, 1824). It is this very idea that persists with regard to agency and its relationship to self-efficacy. ‘Infants exploratory experiences in which they see themselves produce effects by their actions provide the initial basis for developing a sense of efficacy...by repeatedly observing that environmental events occur with action, but not in its absence, infants learn that actions produce effects,’ (Ramachaudran, 1998: 9). However, those actions must be perceived as distinct to oneself, and in this way ‘the self becomes differentiated from others through dissimilar experience...based on growing personal and social experiences they eventually form a symbolic representation of themselves as a distinct self,’ (Ramachaudran, 1998: 3). This efficacy is eventually influenced by actors such as the family, the peer group, the school system, the transitional experiences of adolescence and adulthood (Ramachaudran, 1998).

Sources of Self-Efficacy

Bandura in his study of self-efficacy discovered that these beliefs ‘determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes,’ (Ramachaudran, 1998: 3). The sources of these effects he found to be; experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and affect or emotions. It can be deduced that these sources (experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and affect) can also influence, or be used to enhance or increase self-efficacy.

Efficacy Activated Processes

Cognitive Processes

Efficacy strongly influences the goals that individuals set for him or herself through self-appraisal, ‘the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer is their commitment to them,’ (Ramachaudran, 1998: 4). Due to the fact that the majority of courses of action are first organized in thought, self-efficacy determines what types of anticipatory outcomes or scenarios individuals construct and rehearse in their minds.

Motivational Processes

Causal attributions, outcome-expectancies and cognized goals have been identified as the different types of cognitive motivators, with the attribution theory, expectancy-values theory and goal theory been the corresponding theories behind them respectively.

Causality within the attribution theory points to three dimension: locus, stability and controllability. As such;

In respect to its locus, a cause can be considered as external or internal (factors that are inside or outside the individual). Regarding

its controllability, an event can be caused by a factor which is or is not under the individuals' control. In terms of its stability, a cause can be permanent or subject to change. Intelligence is frequently seen as internal, stable, and uncontrollable. Effort is considered as internal, unstable and controllable. Task difficulty and luck are taken as external, unstable and uncontrollable (Weiner, 1985) in Boruchovitch (2004: 1).

Those individuals that attribute success to internal, stable and controllable factors tend to be individuals that possess a higher self-efficacy, while those who attribute success to external factors tend to possess lower self-efficacy or belief in their abilities (Yailagh, Lloyd & Walsh, 2009). In expectancy-value theory, outcome expectancies are governed by an individual's self-belief about his or her efficacy or capabilities. It is as such, no wonder that an individual may choose to not pursue attractive or even beneficial options (external motivations) due to the fact that he or she has judged that he or she lacks the capability for them.

Goals are largely driven by self-influence as individuals 'seek self-satisfaction from fulfilling valued goals and are prompted to intensify their efforts by discontent with substandard performances...' (Ramachaudran, 1998: 4). As such, self-efficacy beliefs contribute to motivation by determining the goals individuals set for themselves, the effort put into a task, their perseverance when they face difficulties, and resilience after failure. As a result, goal attainment or readjustment of personal goals depends on one's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1984).

Affective Processes

The level of belief an individual has in his or her capability to cope with a difficult situation determines how much stress or depression that individual will have, as well as his or her level of motivation. Individuals who believe that they cannot manage stress tend to experience higher anxiety, dwell on disturbing thoughts, and focus on their inability to cope. As a result, such individuals tend to magnify the threats posed by their environment, as such arousing anxiety.

Selection Processes

Self-efficacy beliefs can shape one's course of life, as well as the direction of personal development by influencing the types of activities and environments or social networks individuals choose to be a part. This is because 'people avoid activities and situations they believe exceed their coping capabilities. But they readily undertake challenging activities and select situations they judge themselves capable of handling,' (Ramachaudran, 1998: 4).

Additionally, a study by Hu (2010) on the effects of perceived self-efficacy, social-support and adjustment to college on the health promoting behaviours (HPB) of Chinese/Taiwanese international students in the United States of America (U.S.A), in fact found that perceived self-efficacy was one of the main predictors of HPB, even among American college students.

High versus Low Self-Efficacy in Individuals

Self-efficacy has the general tendency to bestow certain characteristics upon individuals, depending on how much of it, or how little of it such an individual possesses. Individuals in possession of high self-efficacy have the tendency to pursue difficult tasks with the view of overcoming or mastering them. This is because of the belief that their actions can influence their external environment, and as such, increased effort toward a task, will lead to the accomplishment of that task. In addition, they perceive failure as merely a result of insufficient effort, and not personal insufficiency.

Thus, individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be optimistic, focusing on what can be done, as opposed to what cannot be done. For instance, according to Schunk (1994) students with a high sense of self-efficacy beliefs study harder and persist longer when they approach difficulties. Indeed, this persistence at a task develops a higher know-how and interest toward it, resulting paradoxically, in an intrinsic interest towards the task (Bandura, 1994). Bandura (1994), further expounds that such an outlook lowers vulnerability to depression, reduces stress and produces more personal accomplishments. Studies have also found that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely than not to view a potentially stressful situation as a challenge rather than a threat, compared to those with low self-efficacy (Jerusalem & Mittag, 1995; Jerusalem &

Schwarzer, 1992). As a result of this, those with higher self-efficacy reported better physical health and lower anxiety compared to those individuals with lower self-efficacy.

On the other hand, individuals in possession of low self-efficacy tend to view difficult tasks as threats that have to be avoided as much as possible. This is because they perceive any possible failure to be an attestation of their inabilities, as such individuals with low self-efficacy will tend to have lower commitment toward a task, as well as set minimalistic aspirations. In addition, when faced with difficult tasks, such individuals will focus on what they cannot do, as opposed to what they can do. As a result, for example, students who have low self-efficacy beliefs perform worse at learning tasks and tend to avoid difficult tasks (Schunk, 1994). Individuals with low self-efficacy tend to have a pessimistic approach to life, as a result of this, they easily fall victim to illnesses such as stress and depression (Bandura, 1994).

Differences between Self-efficacy, Self-Concept, Self-Esteem and Locus of Control

Various personal concepts are often confused with self-efficacy, but chief among these are self-concept, self-esteem and perceived control (locus of control). However, these concepts are distinct from each other in that, as Bandura (1986) expostulates, self-concept regards a general self-assessment of one's abilities or lack of abilities with no focus on whether or not one can accomplish a task successfully. This concept is quite vague and as such will not be included in this study.

Self-esteem beliefs are also distinct from self-efficacy in that self-esteem beliefs arise from an appraisal of one's self-worth. It is possible for an individual to have high self-esteem and low self-efficacy and vice-versa (Bandura, 1997). In other words, self-esteem simply refers to whether an individual likes or dislikes him or herself, or how much an individual likes or dislikes him or herself (Gajdzik, 2005).

Although self-efficacy and perceived control both deal with outcomes, perceived control deals particularly with overall expectations that the outcome can be controlled either by the individual or by his or her environment. Individuals with internal locus of control believe that they are in

control of outcomes while those with external locus of control believe that the environment or others control outcomes (Rotter, 1966).

2.1.2 Adaptation

Adaptation is the on-going process through which an individual varies his or her behaviour in order to produce more harmonious interactions between him or herself and his or her environment (Ganesh & Shankarrao, 2016). Salami (2011) in his research study on psychosocial predictors of adjustment among first year college of education students in Nigeria, describes adaptation as ‘a condition or state in which one feels that one’s needs have been (or will be) fulfilled and one’s behaviors conforms to the needs of a given environment,’ (Salami, 2011: 240).

Adaptation to college life more specifically has been defined as the successful negotiation of various challenges faced by students while making use of available resources (Perucci & Hu, 1995; Gajdzik, 2005; Pedersen, 1991). Church (1982) goes further by stating that this adjustment to a new learning and social environment may in fact require the relinquishing of past attitudes, values, and behaviours and learning new ones in their stead. Establishing some type of balance between de-socialization and socialization (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991).

Types of Adaptation

The types of adaptation in relation to this research are the social, academic and personal-emotional (psychomatic) adjustment.

Social Adaptation

First-year students must face the university experience by themselves without the familiar home support and security of a safe support system (Al-Busaidi Bhargava, Al-Ismaïly, Al-Lawati, Al-Kindi, Al-Shafae, Al-Maniri, 2011). Even for those who manage to develop a good number of social relationships within the university setting, loneliness and homesickness is still experienced (Curtona, 2007; Rice, 2009), as they have to gradually detach from home. Social adjustment can be determined in how well students function in their immediate surroundings, their participation in social activities, as well as their satisfaction with the social aspects of the

university experience (Dyson, & Rank, 2006). The peer group is especially of great importance to first year students as it is a replacement, or fills the gap of family as a support system (Law, 2007). As such, ‘freshmen therefore have a strong need to be liked and accepted by one another and to influence and be influenced by one another,’ (Mutambara & Veni, 2012). Social adaptation therefore, relates to the inter-personal and societal demands of university life, and how the student develops and copes with them (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Academic Adaptation

Rice (2009), has espoused that the manner in which courses are delivered at tertiary level can be confusing, posing a great academic challenge for first year college students. A situation that is especially true, ‘for students coming from cultural and language backgrounds that are different to those underpinning the dominant ideologies of higher education institutions,’ (Mutambara & Veni, 2012: 245). As students may often be accustomed to relying on teachers as an authority on a subject, they may find thinking independently about a course or course content especially challenging (Robinson, 2009; Titley, 1980). Academic adaptation as such relates to how students successfully cope with the varied educational demands typical of the university experience (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Personal-emotional Adaptation

Poor emotional adaptation relates to distress and somatic symptoms, as first year college students are concerned about fitting in (Heath, 1968), the desire to do so more often than not results in use or abuse of alcohol and drugs, sexual activity and a general fear leading to a compromise in their values (Kasayira, Kapandambira, & Hungwe, 2007). Kitzrow (2003) found that the number of university students struggling with mental health issues is steadily increasing, to an extent that they are being labelled as ideal incubators for mental health problems. One of the major sources of stress for students in developing countries is the lack of finance to meet basic needs (especially for those who do not stay on campus), as well as peer pressure and time management (Kasayira et.al, 2007). According to a report by Law (2007), students have been found to suffer more fatigue than more than five other occupations including teaching and police work. Personal-emotional adaptation as such relates to how a student is feeling psychologically and physically (Baker & Siryk, 1989).

Benefits of Proper Adaptation

Studies suggest that universities design various first year programmes to assist students' transition from high school to university because early adjustment results in positive outcomes such as high grades and credit completion (Grayson, 2003; Astin, 1984; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

In addition to this academic benefit, a study by Monroe (2009) found positive correlations between social adjustment at university or college and overall social adjustment after college.

Furthermore, according to some studies, proper adaptation contributes not only to academic success (Abdullah, et.al, 2009; Fischer, 2007), but also mental (Hechanova-Alampay, Beehr, Christiansen, & Van-Horn, 2002), and psychological health outcomes (Andrade, 2005, 2006; Heikinheimo & Shute, 1986; Kagan & Cohen, 1990; Li & Gasser, 2005).

Negative Effects of Poor Adaptation

Shin and Abel (1999) and Kim and Gudykunst (1988) found that poor adjustment results in psychological and psychosomatic (poor physical health caused by internal conflict or stress) problems. Matsumoto, LeRoux, Bernhard and Gray (2001) found that aside from depression, anxiety, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships, diminished school and work performance was also an effect of poor adjustment or maladjustment. Communication problems as a whole were also found to be a negative effect of poor adjustment (Gao & Gudykunst, 1991). Indeed, maladjusted students have been found to perform poorly academically in comparison to their actual intelligence, in contrast with those who were more well-adjusted (Kasayira, et.al, 2007). Poorly adjusted first year students also report having more feelings of loneliness and homesickness (Prancer, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Alisat, 2009). Ultimately, poor adaptation to university life may cause attrition, or force the student to leave the institution (Enochs & Roland, 2006).

Factors that Influence Adaptation

The very idea that although various individuals may have things in common, but still be different, has been impetus for many of the theories of teaching and learning. When it comes to

the learning environment itself, many learning institutions in Zambia have a standardized setting comprised of class or lecture halls, boarding rooms, and sports grounds. However, although the set-up may be the same, the timing and novelty of the circumstance of being a first year undergraduate student is a major cause for concern for these individuals. Indeed, ‘A major challenge for many of today’s young people is the transition from high school to university,’ (Tunde & Adesokan, 2013: 17). It is at this point that individuals negotiate developmental tasks while struggling with newly found freedom, focusing on interpersonal relationships, all while attempting to balance these things with academic concerns (Beard, Elmore & Lange, 1982). It is for this reason that Tryphena & Cecilia (2007) have stated that generally, studying at university is, for most students, a stressful time.

Different individuals employ different coping styles. Coping, according to Lazarous (1991, 1999) in Tunde & Adesokan (2013: 18) is ‘the changing of thoughts and actions to manage the external and internal demands for a stressful event.’ Pierce and Sarason (1996) have defined coping as consisting three dimensions regarding a particular life event; personality characteristics, personal relationships, and situational parameters, or in this study, the learning environment.

The way individuals cope has also been found to be influenced by material resources and existential beliefs such as, belief in God. With those possessing not only social support, material resources and existential beliefs, coping with stress better than those without these things (Kim & Duda, 2003). Aside from personality ((Duggan, Sham, Lee, Minne, & Murray, 1995; Vollrath & Torgersen, 2000), social support, material or financial resources (Social Economic Status), and existential beliefs are other contributing factors (Lazarous & Folkman, 1984; Tunde & Adesokan, 2013).

Educational Background of Family

Various studies reveal that being the first to attend college in a family does not only negatively affect mental health, but also deteriorate such an individual’s ability to attain a degree ((Davis, 2010; Jenkins, Belanger, Connally, Boals, & Duron, 2013; Rubin, 2012; Ward, Siegal, & Davenport, 2012). This, is perhaps especially so because the level of education of a parent or guardian has an effect on the social economic status of a student. Martin (2015) found that social class was an important factor with regards to how well first time students (those whose parents or

guardians had never been to university or college) navigated relationships in the college environment.

Perhaps, it is because of this idea that Pierce and Sarason (1996) in Tunde and Adesokan (2013) postulate that coping involves personality characteristics, personal relationships and situational parameters. If these three elements positively combine, they produce individuals who have more confidence, persistence, assertiveness, and expectations of success. An individual's coping ability is also influenced by their health and energy, which (Lazarous & Folkman, 1984; Jerusalem & Mittag, 1995) regard as a type of resource.

Social Support

Social support and timing of the transition into college or university life for first time students play a significant role in the adjustment of first year students into college (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Bejerano, 2014). Social support is an interactive process which couples the function and quality of social relationships with the aid and assistance received from others, thereby helping individuals to cope or exchange resources (Hu, 2010: 12). It can also be referred to as those social relationships that promote health and well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Hogan, Linden, & Njarian, 2002; House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988). Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb (2000: 64) have referred to social support as 'a social "fund" from which people may draw when handling stressors.' In fact, 'the main or direct effect model hypothesizes that social support is beneficial for everyone, even those not under stress,' (Hu, 2010: 29).

Studies in communication research have indeed found that social interactions are a fundamental source of support and play an integral role in the process of adaptation of students to college. Specifically, interactions from and among members of student's social networks (Crede & Niehorster, 2012; Kranstuber, Carr, & Hosek, 2012; Jones, 2008; Thompson & Mazer, 2009; Wang, 2012). In addition, communication of concern and care can lessen or reduce stress and other difficulties students face as they transition to college life (Thompson, 2008; Thompson & mazer, 2009; Jones, 2008). Furthermore, interaction with teachers or lecturers has also been

found to be particularly influential in shaping student outcomes (Bejerano, 2014; Ellis, 2000; Schrodtt, Witt, Turman, Myers, Barton, & Kodiane, 2009; Jones, 2008).

Most individuals are able to better cope with stressful situations when they have close friends and groups to which they belong and through these social ties glean social support, as well as when they are able to share experiences with others (Antonovsky, 1979; Mischel, 1986). In fact, according to Cobb (1976), individual's belonging to a group, helps with not only the provision of emotional support, and problem solving, but also helps to boost self-esteem. Social support has been identified as the most important factor in reducing negative effects of poor adjustment to university life such as depression, loneliness, and anxiety (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2000).

Social support therefore, helps students adapt to their new environment, however, 'these factors can also undermine the transition process by making it harder for students to adjust if the resources they are drawing from are insufficient,' (Bejerano, 2014: 3). In other words, the lack of adequate social support in the college or university for the new students can undermine proper adaptation. A study by Mutambara and Veni (2012) found that friends on campus were the main source of support regards adjustment. Thus in order to facilitate the process of making friends, socialization was enhanced through the promotion of group activities and tasks. This was found to help students with their academic and social adjustment (Mutambara & Veni, 2012).

However, although peer support has been mostly viewed in a favourable light, in terms of its positive effects, a study by Bejerano (2014) found that there is a need for students to be informed of the negative aspects of peer support in terms of reliance and influence. This same study also found that dealing with students' depression and bolstering their self-esteem must not be left to students to deal with individually through seeking counselling services. This is because 'students do not often use the support services that are available to them,' (Benson, Hewitt, Devos, Crosling, & Heagney, 2009 In Bejerano, 2014: 120).

A study by Mattanah, Ayers, Brand, Brooks, Quimby and McNary (2010) found that participation in peer-led support groups by first-year students' resulted in reduced loneliness and higher perceptions of social support with regard to the college transition.

Social Economic Status

A study by Ostrove (2007) found that both objective and subjective measures of students' social economic background influenced their college experience. Objective measures involved assessment of family income, parents' educational background and occupation, while subjective measures involved asking students in what social class they perceived themselves to belong. However, the subjective measure was found to have a higher correspondence with social adjustment to college. The significance of this finding is that it corresponds to a sense of belonging which affects performance in that there is a high possibility that 'feeling that one does not belong affects the extent of participation in class, willingness to seek help as needed, and other critical behaviors that influence college success,' (Ostrove, 2007: 381).

Studies have also found that insufficient finance to meet basic needs, as well as having to search for alternative accommodation in nearby high density areas, along with peer pressure, task and time management were major sources of stress for students (Kasayira et.al, 2007; Mutambara & Veni, 2012).

Previous Traveling Experience and Age

Previous traveling experience has been linked to reduced emotional distress and homesickness for first year college or university students (Thurber & Walton, 2012). In fact, although many students find this transition to be a thrilling adventure that is socially and intellectually stimulating time, others, find this time to be distressing and overwhelming, especially those who are socially anxious and have trouble making and keeping friends (Urani, Miller, Johnson, & Petzel, 2003).

A young chronological age has also been linked to increased distress during this transition into college (Poyrazli, 2007), as well as distance from home (Mooney, Sherman, & Lo-Presto, 1991). Despite the fact that some students find the new experience of college life exciting, and others find it distressing, the university or college experience illicit in both a desire to belong and feel socially acceptable (Watt & Badger, 2009), as well as face the challenges of managing their lives independently, establishing new friendships; adjusting to new schedules; and succeeding in academic and various other pursuits (Johnson, 2007). This brings to the fore issues of acculturation in which the students attempt to settle conflicts between home culture, beliefs, values and behaviours, and the newly found culture, beliefs, values and behaviours prevailing at

the university. If these issues are not properly resolved, those who fail to adapt may as a result adopt maladaptive coping mechanisms such as binge drinking (consumption of excess amounts of alcohol within a short period of time), drug use or illicit conduct (Ichiyama & Kruse, 1998).

The Learning Environment

The learning environment refers to the totality of influences surrounding a school within and outside its boundaries (Alabi, Oduwaiye, & Fasasi, 2012). This implies that the school can operate as a micro-system, having various components; inside the classroom or lecture hall, and even extend as far as outside the school itself to its nearest surrounding. This, affecting the student in one way or another, however, particularly for this research, how the student adapts to it in relation to his or her self-efficacy. 'Learning environments involve both the people and the space in which students learn and develop,' (Akingube, 2013: 21). This may be so, however, it is not just any learning environment that is of interest to educators, but a positive learning environment, which is 'the combination of the physical, emotional, cultural/social and academic environments,' (Akingube, 2013: 21).

The physical environment comprises an atmosphere that elicits feelings of safety, relaxation, support, being cared for, and adequate infrastructure to support this; including relevant buildings or space for play, learning, as well as equipment for doing so. While the emotional environment comprises the student being under the care of responsible and knowledgeable adults such as teachers or lecturers, parents or mentors who are responsive to student's needs and interest, and thus, students can trust. The social/cultural environment on the other hand comprises the provision of an atmosphere in which students are given the chance to make friends, develop relationships, and learn socially and culturally acceptable behaviours. Whereas the academic environment encompasses the opportunity for students to access and use physical, human, and material resources in a manner that allows them to use these resources creatively and develop their potential (Alabi, et.al, 2012). A study by Mutambara & Veni (2012) found that the majority of the students found group work to be helpful to their socialization, preferring voluntary academic presentation groups. The students noted that 'being part of a group helped them to make friends with their class mates some of whom they could never have had a chance to be close to,' (Mutambara & Veni, 2012: 248).

2.1.3 Literature on Self-Efficacy and Adaptation

Sherer and Adams (1983) in their study on the relationship between self-efficacy and student adjustment to their college environment found a positive correlation between high scores of general self-efficacy and adaptation. Bandura (1986) further found that individuals with high beliefs in their personal ability and competence faced a lower risk of emotional maladjustment compared to those with lower self-efficacy beliefs. As such, there exists a positive correlation between self-efficacy and adjustment (Black, Mendenhall, & Oddon, 1991; Harrison, Chadwick, & Scales, 1996; Hirose, Wada, & Watanabe, 1999; Leung & Berry, 2001).

A study by Lai (2014) investigating the relationship among self-efficacy, effort regulation, perceived stress and adaptation of college freshmen at a Malaysian university found that ‘the better a college student freshman can adjust socially, personal-emotionally, academically and are strongly attached to their college, then they can adapt better to the overall college demands,’ (Lai, 2014: 1). The study was guided by Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory as the theory highlights the point that self-efficacy affects general performance (Burney, 2008). As the study’s focus was first-year college students, the following recommendations were made:

From the perspective of positive psychology, findings from this study suggest a way in which college officials and administrators may structure students’ first-year seminars and orientation programs to promote the most positive development and outcomes of students’ adaptation to college life...Researchers and academicians hence must identify methods to improve students’ behavioral coping skills and resiliencies to the numerous college stressors and overall well-being. The results of this study also suggested that providing students with the techniques to develop social connections (social adjustment) and learn optimistic and motivated thinking styles (academic, social, personal-emotional adaptation, self-regulation and self-efficacy) might be effectively beneficial in promoting their psychological well-being and assisting them

in dealing with the transition to college as well as to completion of their studies (Lai, 2014: 115).

As with the above study, this study has made use of Bandura's social cognitive theory as one of two theories guiding the work. However, unlike the same study, this study will not be using the full Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), but will only adapt some phrases from the scale.

A study by Gajdzik (2005) on the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and adjustment of international graduate students and American graduate students utilised the Social-Cultural Adaptation Scale by Ward and Kennedy (1999). The findings of this study revealed that there was no significant relationship between general self-efficacy and international student's social cultural adaptation. This contrary finding to the majority other studies, Gajdzik (2005) attributed to the fact that his sample population consisted graduate students while most other research focused on undergraduate students. Indeed, because 'graduate students are different from undergraduates in that they are usually older and therefore have accumulated more experiences relating to university life and life in general. With this in mind, it can be expected that the performance of these two respective groups would be different,' (Gajdzik, 2005: 69).

As with the above researcher, the writer will be contrasting self-efficacy and adaptation. However, unlike the above study that focused on the social-cultural adaptation of students (local versus international), this study will focus on the adaptation (social, academic and personal-emotional) of all students, as these students already hail from various ethnic backgrounds.

A study conducted in the United States of America (U.S.A) by Smith (2007) on the effects of self-efficacy and self-esteem on homesickness and college adjustment made use of the modified General Self-Efficacy Scale by Sherer, et.al (1982) originally developed by Bossher & Smit, (1998) as a measure for self-efficacy. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965) was used as a measure of self-esteem, and the Dundee Relocation Inventory (DRI) (Fisher, 1989) was used to assess homesickness. Adjustment to college was assessed using the Tests of reactions and Adaptations to College (TRAC) (Larose & Roy, 1995). A total of 107 students took part in the study and findings showed that female students scored higher on overall self-

efficacy compared to male students. Both female and male students who experienced above average homesickness also had lower self-efficacy scores, suggesting a strong correlation between the two. No significant differences were found between male and female students' self-esteem, and no significant correlation was found between homesickness, and self-esteem. As such, the researcher concluded that 'the finding that self-efficacy lessens the experience of homesickness in first-year college students suggests that skills of those high in self-efficacy are the skills needed for successful adjustment to new situations, thus ameliorating the experience of homesickness,' (Smith, 2007: 4). With regards to adaptation to college, the study targeted the aspect of homesickness, the aspects of adaptation covered in this study however will be regards the social, academic, and personal-emotional, of which homesickness is covered under this umbrella, or is subset.

Another study, conducted by Chemers, Hu, and Garcia (2001) in the U.S.A titled 'academic self-efficacy and first-year college student performance and adjustment', sought to examine the effects of academic self-efficacy and optimism on students' academic performance, stress, health, and commitment to remain in school. The study adopted a longitudinal research design and the study was completed after 12 months. 256 participating students completed distributed questionnaires. To assess academic performance, the researcher made use of students Grade Point Average (GPA) scores, Pascarella and Terenzini (1980) college social support scale was used to assess adjustment, while the researcher developed his or her own scales to assess self-efficacy. The study found that self-efficacy showed powerful relations to academic performance and adaptation to college of the sampled first-year students. The researcher thus surmised that Students who enter college with confidence in their ability to perform well academically do perform significantly better than do less confident students.

Although the above study tested the relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation, it tested specific self-efficacy, that is, academic self-efficacy. In contrast, this study will test for general self-efficacy. The longitudinal research design employed by the above study will not be employed in this study as the dependent variable (academic performance) relied on overall test and exam scores. This study assessed adaptation that required measurement in the first few weeks of the first-year students' college life.

A study by Peterson, Louw, and Dumont (2009: 99) on adjustment to university and academic performance among disadvantaged students in South Africa explored ‘the pathways taken by adjustment and other psychosocial variables (help-seeking, academic motivation, self-esteem, perceived stress, and perceived academic overload), in relation to the success of economically and educationally disadvantaged students at university.’ The sample consisted 194 students and hypothesized that students who engaged the psychosocial traits defined in their study were better adjusted to university and achieved a higher level of academic performance. The study further hypothesized that academic performance would have a positive correlation with adjustment. The study found that psychosocial variables better explained the students’ adjustment to university than academic performance. The study, aside from using an adaptation of the Academic Motivation Scale, Rosenberg’s Self-Esteem Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, academic overload scale, and open ended questions, also used the SACQ. The SAQC developed by Baker and Siryk (1989), is a 67-item self-report questionnaire usually used as a diagnostic tool for the identification of students experiencing difficulties in adjusting to university, so that remedial interventions may be facilitated or enforced (Peterson, et.al, 2009).

The above study employed a wide array of traits (help-seeking, academic motivation, self-esteem, perceived stress, and perceived academic overload) with which to contrast against adjustment. However, among these traits, self-efficacy was absent, as such, the writer chose to explore this niche. In addition, the writer will focus only on this particular construct (self-efficacy), and its relationship with adaptation, positive or negative. Whereas the focus of the above study was on financially disadvantaged students, this study was not selective in this regard, but targeted first year students in general.

A study by Mutambara and Veni (2012) titled ‘an analysis of factors affecting students’ adjustment at a university in Zimbabwe’, made use of descriptive research and unstructured questionnaires that were filled by 100 out of 115 participants. The study covered three particular angles of adjustment which were, academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment. The researchers developed qualitative questions for their questionnaire by adopting some constructs from the SACQ which is quantitative. This study by Mutambara & Veni (2012) found that the majority of students were failing to adjust to college demands (academic, social, personal-emotional), especially compounded by socio-economic conditions prevailing in that country at

that time. The study, by the above researchers, like the current study targeted three particular aspects of adaptation, that is, the social, academic, and personal emotional. However, the above study, did not contrast adaptation with any other possible constructs. The writer however, contrasted this adaptation (social, academic, personal-emotional) against self-efficacy in order to determine whether self-efficacy could be used as a gauge to measure the likelihood of higher adaptation, or as an indicator of the likelihood of maladjustment in first year students, by determining the relationship that exists between the two (self-efficacy and adaptation). The writer also kept the quantitative aspect in measuring adaptation.

Another study conducted in Zimbabwe by Mudhovozi (2012) titled ‘social and academic adjustment of first year university students’, sought to investigate the social and academic adjustment experiences of first-year students, and make suggestions on how to reduce adjustment challenges. The study design used by the researcher was phenomenology and 10 students, consisting 7 males and 3 females were interviewed. The study found that the social challenges faced by students were; differences in cculture, separation from family, disengaging high school friends, finance, dress and food. While the academic challenges encountered were; low self-esteem, lack of reference books, no permanent venue for lectures, fear of failure, and trying to adjust to different teaching methods compared to high school. The study found that social networks were the main means through which students coped with stress, in addition to efficacious beliefs, that is, believing that they would achieve their goals through hard work, and determination.

A study conducted in Zambia by Wilson (1994) titled ‘problems of university adjustment experienced by undergraduates in developing countries’ aimed to identify the adaptation problems students were experiencing at UNZA. The study found that the academic load, or rather, overload, scarcity of referenced books, as well as financial problems that made it difficult for students to meet their daily living expenses or purchase academic texts where the main problems affecting the proper adaptation of students.

2.1.4 Literature on Factors that Facilitate Adaptation

First time college or university students will often, at one point or another suffer distress caused by entering a new environment and trying to find a niche in which to fit in or a method of adapting to that environment. It is therefore important to facilitate a smooth transition as HPBs developed at this critical stage of life (young adulthood), often continue into later adulthood (Hu, 2010). Although fewer studies have been conducted relating self-efficacy and adaptation of first year students to college life, over the past two decades, various other aspects have been found to be related to student adaptation to college and these include assertiveness, optimism, intellectual ability, perceived distance from home, stressful events, self-esteem, sense of mastery, and perceived social support (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992; Cantor, Norem, Neidenthal, Langston, & Brower, 1987; Bohnert, Aikins, & Edidin, 2007; Geist & Borecki, 1982; Shaver, Furman, & Buhrmester, 1985; Elliot & Grambling, 1990; Darvill & Johnson, 1991; Felsten & Wilcox, 1992; Brooks & Dubois, 1995; Sternberg & Kaufman, 1998).

As such, means of remedying or lessening the impact of the challenges faced during this stage of life that some are privileged to encounter have also been explored. A study of literature on adjustment and homesickness by Thurber & Walton (2012) recommended prevention and treatment measures to help students' adaptation to the university environment and life.

Providing detailed information about the school such as its history, geography, culture, where to find support resources, a positive promotion of the new environment, initiation of social contacts prior to arrival or social networking, provision of healthy coping options such as sport, exercise and other student activities are some of the preventive measures recommended. Thurber and Walton (2012) also recommended the provision of information about peer or professional support available on and around campus (where to find resident advisors, dormitory affiliates, health centre staff, mental health professionals such as counselors, payment points, schedules), and encouraging self-compassion as a means of lessening or remedying the impact of some of the negative feelings first year undergraduate students may experience.

According to Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) for example, in addition to personal characteristics, social support is one of the main predictors of student adjustment. This social support from peers can take various forms; emotional (encouragement), financial (loans), or instrumental (assisting with moving furniture and other belongings). Such social support or

networks, in addition to mastering how to manage new social freedoms and social life, are essential for a smooth integration at college (Hays & Oxley, 1986; Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994; Gray, Vitak, Easton, & Ellison, 2013).

Furthermore, research by Enochs and Roland (2006) found a higher association between social adjustment and living in on-campus dormitories, this in tandem with the finding that first year college students adjusted much more easily when they could gain high levels of independence in their first year away from home. However, according to Kaya (2004), better chances of students socially adjusting to college existed when they felt their fellow residence hall occupants were cooperative, friendly, or a source of peer support.

A study conducted by Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, and Leonard (2006) on living-learning programmes and first-generation college students' academic and social transition to college found that the most significant predictors of productive academic transition or adjustment were students' perception of resident hall climates, curricular environments, faculty and peer interactions, and college social environments.

Academic success has also been linked to institutional loyalty and is seen to reflect academic integration or adjustment (Bean, 2005). As such, students who are comfortable with the academic whys and wherefores are more likely to continue studying at a particular tertiary education institution than those who fail to meet academic criteria and leave involuntarily, or fail to adapt academically.

On the other hand; provision of a warm, relaxed and fun orientation in which students can socialize and familiarize themselves before classes begin, normalization of feelings of missing home, education about exercising control over circumstances and mindset, and facilitation of culturally sensitive wholesome social activities, provision of dining services, as well as training of resident peer advisors are some of the treatment measures recommended by Thurber and Walton (2012).

A study conducted by Salami (2011) on psychosocial predictors of adjustment among first year college of education students found that self-esteem, emotional intelligence, stress and social support were predictors of adjustment.

The researcher went on to state that these findings ‘implicated the need for college authorities to integrate activities designed to improve students’ adjustment into college co-curricular activities meant for youth development,’ (Salami, 2011: 1). This study however, did not test self-efficacy among those predictors.

Studies have found that for individuals with poor-quality friendships that do not meet their need for intimacy, social support and undermine their social comfort and satisfaction, experience loneliness because of these very factors (Hoza, Bukowski, & Beery, 2000; Jackson, Soderlind, & Weiss, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1993; Pierce, G.R, Sarason, & B.R, Sarason, 1991). As such, participation in organized extra-curricular activities is of great benefit to such individuals, especially those with a history of negative friendship experiences, to develop high-quality friendships and feelings of social acceptance and satisfaction (Bohnert, et.al, 2007). Positive correlations have been found between the intensity (number of hours per week involved in activities) and breadth (number of different types of activities), and better academic and psychological adjustment (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Jacobs, Vernon, Eccles, 2005).

Findings of a study on the role of organized activities in facilitating social adaptation across the transition to college by Bohnert et.al (2007: 203), ‘suggest that the benefits of activity involvement were stronger or isolated to emerging adults at risk for poor social adaptation outcomes ... emerging adults with a poor history of social adaptation may carry forward social information processing biases or social skills deficits that make the transition to college particularly difficult.’ This study further found that involvement in organized extra-curricular activities for such individuals provided a smaller and more structured social context within the larger college environment that could enhance their comfort and feelings of social acceptance due to their competence in those domains.

2.2 Identified Gaps and Justification

In view of the above reviewed literature, the objectives of this study have not been fully addressed, especially with regards the general objective (to determine the relationship that exists between general self-efficacy and student’ s perceived adaptation to their learning environment). The study by Chemers, et.al (2001) for instance examined specific self-efficacy, that is,

academic self-efficacy, for Gajdzik (2005) the focus was social-cultural adaptation, while for Smith (2007), adaptation was taken to mean homesickness. These studies did not take adaptation as that which encompasses the social, academic and personal-emotional adjustment to university life for students. As such, it can be said, that these other elements of adaptation were missing from these studies.

Of the three regional studies reviewed, Peterson, et.al (2009), focused on the pathways taken by adjustment and psychosocial variables (help-seeking, academic motivation, self-esteem, perceived stress, and perceived academic overload), of which, self-efficacy was not included. The study was also conducted in relation to the success of economically and educationally disadvantaged students at university. This study however, will not utilize delimitations based on the economic background of students. The second, Mutambara and Veni (2012), and third Mudhovozi (2012) only focused on the adaptation challenges faced by first-year students and possible means of alleviating the extent of such challenges. Indeed, the local study by Wilson (1994) also focused on identifying the adaptation problems being experienced by first-year students. This study however, in addition to this aspect, also seeks to discover what relationship exists between self-efficacy, and adaptation, and the extent of the relationship, in determining whether S.E can be used to predict the quality of adaptation of students. An aspect not covered in the above studies.

2.3 Summary of Chapter Two

This chapter has explained in detail the various aspects and characteristics of the concepts; self-efficacy, and adaptation. It has also described the factors that influence the adaptation of individuals to a new environment. The chapter has also discussed past studies on self-efficacy and adaptation, highlighting both merging and diverging points, in so doing, outlining the gaps identified within those studies, in comparison to the present study, and which the present study intends to fill. This chapter has further explored a wealth of literature, identifying factors that facilitate or promote adaptation. The proceeding chapter will discuss the methodology utilized for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The preceding chapter explained the various aspects and characteristics of the concepts; self-efficacy, and adaptation. It also described the factors that influence the adaptation of individuals to a new environment. The chapter also discussed past studies on self-efficacy and adaptation, comparing them to the present study, and also explored literature that identifying factors that facilitate or promote adaptation. This chapter comprises the methodology of this study.

The methodology 'includes the design, setting, sample, methodological limitations, and the data collection and analysis techniques in a study,' (Burns & Grove, 2003: 488). Wellington (2000) describes it as an activity involving the selection, evaluation, and justification of methods employed to facilitate or enable data collection. This chapter will thus outline the methods that were used in extracting data; research design, population, sampling, sample, instruments, procedure, and analysis. This chapter will also state the ethical considerations taken during the study.

3.1 Research Design

According to Trochim (2005), a research design is a plan that is used to bind a research project together by delivering structure that ensures that, and illustrates how, major parts of the research interconnect in trying to address the central research question. Due to the nature of the objectives of this study, a mixed method approach was used, in particular, the concurrent triangulation design. The time orientation (concurrent) refers to 'whether the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study occur at approximately the same point in time such that they are independent of one another,' (Onweugbuzie & Collins, 2007: 290).

This design will be used because it allows the researcher to derive both quantitative and qualitative information from participants at the same time. In order to better understand the research problem, this design enables the researcher 'to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic,' (Morse, 1991: 122).

Among the characteristics of this design are that ‘quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed at the same time...Data analysis is usually separate, and integration usually occurs at the data interpretation stage. Interpretation typically involves discussing the extent to which the data triangulate or converge,’ (Hanson, J. W. Creswell, Clark, Petska, J.D. Creswell, 2005:229).

3.2 Population

The population, or universe of a study is the total of a set of elements holding common characteristics based on the sampling criteria established by the researcher (Msabila & Nalaila, 2013). The population for this study was all first year undergraduate students at UNZA approximated to stand at 5, 000. This is based on the 2015/2016 academic year admissions which stood at exactly 5, 724 (according to the office of the registrar, academic affairs at UNZA).

3.3 Sampling Procedure

Sampling is an important phase in research, according to The American Heritage College Dictionary (1993) in Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007: 281), it is the ‘the process of selecting a portion, piece or segment that is representative of a whole.’ In addition, it also helps to inform the quality of inferences that can be drawn by the researcher (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007).

Non-probability sampling was used in this study in particular, purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to target a particular group of potential participants based on their specific characteristics of interest to the researcher. In this study, this was first-year undergraduate students. Indeed, this intentional bias is one of the advantages of purposive sampling (Tongco, 2007).

Probability, random sampling was also utilized in the form of simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a technique that lends a non-biased, or equal chance for every element of a sample to be selected (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011). Simple random sampling in this study was used as a means of selecting which course programmes among the three schools (School of Education, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and School of Natural Sciences) could be

chosen from the sampling frame (courses programmes on offer at the different schools). The lottery technique was then employed to make those selections.

With random sampling as a whole, unlike simple random sampling as a technique thereof, ‘each object does not necessarily have an equal chance of been chosen,’ (Glen, 2014: 1). Random sampling was employed as it pertains to the adopted procedure in this research of voluntary participation on the part of respondents within the lecture theatres. Indeed, no other method could be more random than one which relies on the discretion of the participant him/herself to self-select out of the proverbial statistical bowl.

In lending to the mixed-method aspect of this study, it must be noted that over the years, random and non-random sampling has been associated to either quantitative or qualitative paradigms respectively, however, Onwueguzie and Leech (2005: 182) argue thus;

this represents a false dichotomy. Rather, both random and non-random sampling can be used in quantitative and qualitative studies. Similarly, discussion of sample size considerations tends to be dichotomized, with small samples being associated with qualitative research and large samples being associated with quantitative studies. Although this represents the most common way of linking sample size to research paradigm, this representation is too simplistic and thereby misleading. Indeed, there are times when it is appropriate to use small samples in quantitative research, while there are occasions when it is justified to use large samples in qualitative research.

Teddlie and Yu (2007) highlight the fact that in the majority of the cases, mixed method research relies on the ability of the researcher to creatively combine both probability and non-probability strategies to a study. Indeed, in their quest to find a specific or common criteria (through a review of literature) in the social and behavioural sciences, the writers found that ‘this literature search was often frustrating due to the lack of details presented by many authors with regard to sample selection,’ (Teddlie & Yu, 2007: 89). This, once again highlighting the idea that much of this type of research, relies heavily on the discretion of the researcher, especially, with regards

convenience, cost, and time (Teddle & Yu, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). However, Teddle and Yu (2007:85) also note that;

The mixed-method researcher sometimes chooses procedures that focus on generating representative samples, especially when addressing a quantitative strand of a study. On the other hand, when addressing a qualitative strand of a study, the mixed-method researcher typically utilizes sampling techniques that yield information rich cases. Combining the two orientations allows the mixed-method researcher to generate complementary databases that include information that has both depth and breadth regarding the phenomenon under study.

3.4 Sample

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993), a sample is any group from which information is obtained. The target sample size for this study was 160 first year undergraduate students from three schools of the university, namely, School of Education, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), and School of Natural Sciences (N.S). These three schools were chosen because although the university hosts eight schools, the remaining five are only occupied after quartering is done from the schools of HSS and N.S, at which stage, students are no longer first-year students.

Aside from being an adequate size from which to derive a moderately statistically significant result, this number also left adequate room for an ample size to be maintained even in the case of eventualities such as unfilled questionnaires, or filled questionnaires by respondents which did not meet the inclusion criteria of the study. Indeed, 10 questionnaires were found to fall short of the inclusion criteria.

3.5 Instrumentation

A research instrument according to Parahoo (1997:52), is ‘a tool used to collect data. It is a tool designed to measure knowledge, attitude and skills of research respondents’. In this study the following instruments were employed in order to meet the study objectives.

For a more insightful description of the study sample, demographic information was obtained from participants which included age, sex, school, boarding school experience, previous travelling experience, province of hometown, and residential type through a brief general information section of the questionnaire. These questions were chosen as these factors have been found to have a strong relationship with how students adapt to university.

The New General Self-Efficacy Scale by Chen, et.al, (2001) was used to test self-efficacy as this 8 item scale has been found to have high validity (Chen, et.al, 2016; Scherbaum, Cohen-Charash, & Kern, 2006). The total score for this scale ranges from 8-40. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for internal consistency for this scale was found to be .878 which is an adequate coefficient.

Adaptation of learners was measured through the use of adapted items of the SACQ, reducing them to only those concerning the social, academic and personal-emotional adjustment. The adapted scale contained 21 items, compared to 67 items of the SACQ. This was done in order to reduce respondent fatigue as the length of the original scale proved to be a great challenge to participation and completed responses during a pilot study. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for internal consistency for this 21-item scale was found to be .712, which is a generally accepted coefficient for internal consistency.

In order to meet the third objective of the study (to define and analyze factors that facilitate the adaptation of first year undergraduate students to their learning environment), brief questions were asked of participants requesting their opinions on what they felt would help them adapt more easily with regards social, academic, and personal-emotional aspects.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect information from participants, the researcher presented an introductory letter to lecturers from selected course programmes and explained the purpose of the research. Permission was then sought to use up the first 15 minutes of their lecture time for students willing to participant. In a preliminary investigation conducted by the researcher, a similar method was used, except that tutorial hours were utilized. Implicit coercion of participants by tutors did not arise, as in fact participation was discovered to be very low. In addition, students

were given a week in which to return the filled in questionnaire. However, the return rate of filled in questionnaires was extremely low.

Snowball sampling was also used in which first year students on campus were asked to direct the researcher to other known first year students. The return rate, in this case was not only low, but most parts of the questionnaire were also returned unfilled. In addition, this method created a bias toward those students who are accommodated on campus.

As such, the researcher made the following changes in the data collection strategy, which included;

- 1) Increasing the probability of increased participation by increasing the audience size, hence making use of lecture hours as opposed to tutorial hours.
- 2) Reducing the number of items on adaptation scale, restricting them to only the three areas of interest of the study; academic, social, and personal-emotional, in order to reduce the chances of respondent fatigue, and therefore, increase the response rate.
- 3) Waiting for the questionnaires to be filled out after 15 minutes to counter low response, and return rates.

The researcher also minimised the risk of implicit coercion from lecturers by only seeking permission for time, but introducing herself, and the purpose of her presence herself, along with providing information on how to answer the questions presented in the questionnaire.

The time taken for completion of this stage was one week.

3.7 Data Analysis Instrument and Procedure

Data analysis Data analysis is ‘the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data,’ (Marshall & Rossman, 1999: 150).

For purposes of analyzing the data collected in this study, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to run frequencies and generate descriptive information of the sample. Total self-efficacy and adaptation scores were computed using the sum total function

(this allowed scores to be added even where one or two scores were missing), from which means were derived.

In order to ensure that the statistics derived from the inputted data was accurate, data cleaning was done. Data cleaning is simply a means of ensuring that the values entered are not erroneous, and also fall within the expected range. The ranges in this study were 8-40 for self-efficacy, and 21-189 for adaptation.

For purposes of analyzing qualitative data, thematic analysis was carried out in which the various responses were placed into categories and tallies were made on the various arising themes. Those with higher tallies were ranked as most pressing. As such, the qualitative findings were arranged in descending order, from most common, to least.

Frequencies were also run in order to establish the highest and lowest scores for each item or phrase from the Likert scales (self-efficacy and adaptation). This was done in order to gauge a correspondence between quantitative scores, and qualitative information derived from participants, for the purpose of data triangulation.

In order to determine the type of relationship existing between self-efficacy and adaptation, Spearman (S) product moment correlation was used. Not only because the values entered were ordinal, but also because this test allowed for the relationship to be gauged whether linear (increasing at same time and rate) or monotonic (increasing at same time but not necessarily same rate). As well as whether the relationship was positive (upward direction) or negative (downward direction).

For purpose of determining the predictive value of self-efficacy toward adaptation; to what extent self-efficacy could be said to play a role in the adaptation process of first year undergraduate students, a linear regression test was run. In other words, how much the independent variable (self-efficacy) could account for the dependent variable (adaptation).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

According to Macks, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (2005) research ethics are those that take into consideration the nature of the interaction between the researcher and the persons

he/she is studying. Ethics in research also take into account the conduct of the researcher in carrying out his/her research in relation to method, procedures and purpose (European commission, 2010). In this regard, addressing respect for persons, this study utilized informed consent forms, while also explaining the purpose of the study to potential participants.

In this study, no obvious risks existed to threaten participant's physical, emotional or academic well-being, as the means of data collection were self-assessment questionnaire scales which were used by the researcher alone for data analysis. The study however, was still guided by the following principles.

Voluntary Participation: this is a principle that requires that potential participants not be coerced into participating in the research (Trochim, 2006). In line with this principle and the study objectives, this study utilized voluntary participation.

Informed Consent: informed consent refers to the notion that participants must be informed fully about the purpose, procedures, and potential risks involved in taking part in a study and be given the opportunity to disagree or agree (consent) to take part (Trochim, 2006). Participants were informed verbally and in writing of the purpose and procedures involved in the study. Those who consented to participation became part of the sample, and those who did not wish to do so were not forced to do so in any way, shape, or form.

Confidentiality: this principle places emphasis on the idea that the identity of participants be thoroughly protected by ensuring that no identifying information is made available to anyone not directly involved with the research (Trochim, 2006). This ensures that participant's anonymity is protected. In this study, this was guaranteed by ensuring that no traceable information such as name, mobile number, student number, room number or any other identifying information was requested.

3.9 Summary of Chapter Three

This chapter discussed the methodology adopted in this study, outlining the reasons for adopting the selected research design (Concurrent triangulation), and sampling techniques (probability and non-probability). The population and sample (150) for the study was also outlined. This chapter

also discussed the instruments used in the gathering of relevant data from participants, as well as the data collection procedure and timeline. In depth description of data analysis instruments and procedures was also presented in this chapter, and finally, but not the least, the ethical principles guiding the study and upheld were also outlined. The next chapter will present the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The foregoing chapter discussed the methodology adopted in this study, outlining the reasons for adopting the selected research design and sampling techniques. The study population and sample was also outlined, and the instruments, data collection procedure and timeline, data analysis instruments and procedures were also discussed. The ethical principles guiding the study were also highlighted.

This chapter will present the findings of the research beginning with the descriptive statistics for the demographic information derived, followed by findings pertaining to the specific questions of the study, and general question. The tables for findings pertaining to question 1 not appearing in the text, but appearing in appendices IV will be presented in brackets. At this stage, it is important that the questions this study sought to answer be reiterated.

General Question

Is there a positively or negatively correlated relationship between high or low self-efficacy and perceived adaptation?

Specific Questions

1. What are the perceived general self-efficacy scores of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia?
2. To what extent do students feel they are comfortably adapting to their new learning environment?
3. What factors that facilitate adaptation do students feel are missing in the University?

4.1 Demographic Findings

The minimum age of respondents in this study was 18, and the maximum 24, of which 78 (52%) were male, and 72 (48%) female. 89 (59%) reported that they resided in medium density areas, 41 (27%) low density, and 20 (13%) high density. The educational level of respondents parents or guardians was found to be thus; tertiary education 71 (47%), upper secondary 39 (26%), primary 20 (13%), lower secondary 12 (8%), and trade skill 8 (5%).

In addressing distance from home, figure 1 shows that the hometown of 72 (48%) of respondents was in Lusaka province, 24 (16%) Copperbelt, 16 (11%) Southern, 13 (9%) Central, 6 (4%) Luapula, 5 (3%) Eastern, 5 (3%) Muchinga, 3 (2%) Western, and North-Western, and 2 (1%) Northern provinces. One participant indicated place of residence to be outside Zambia.

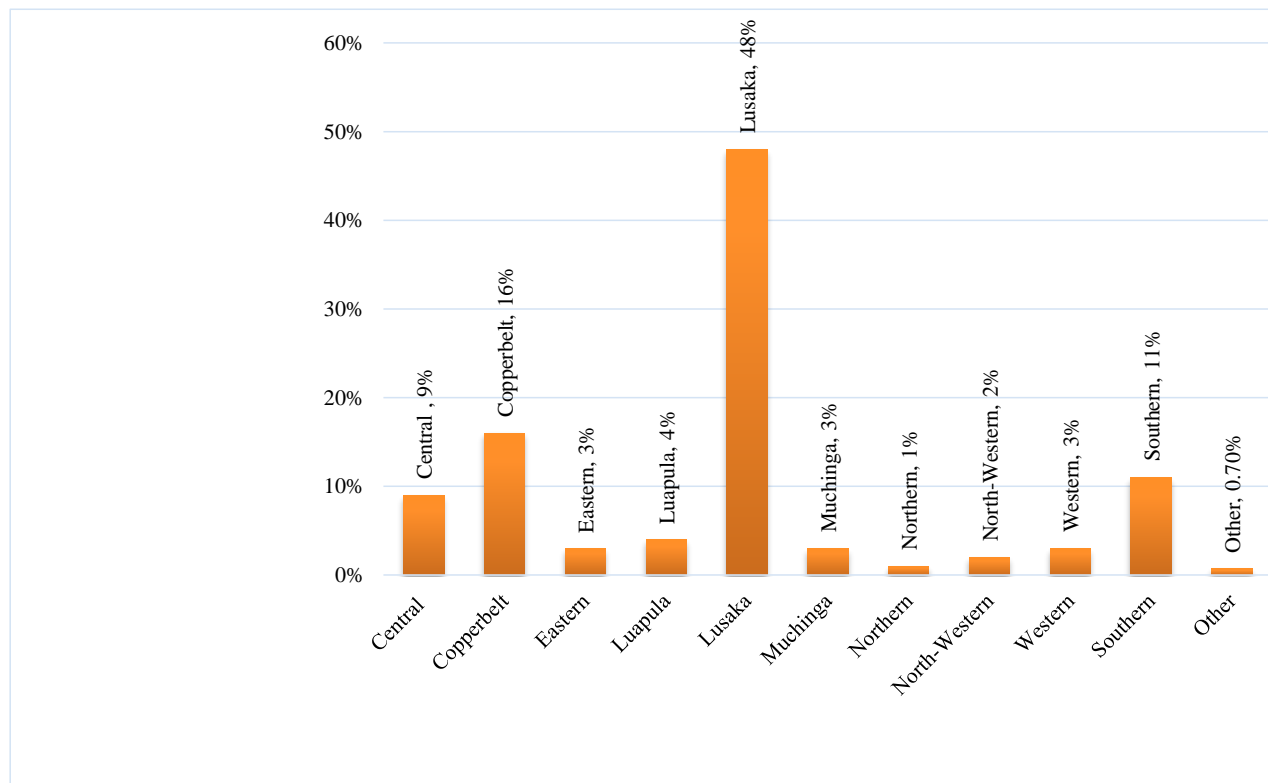


Figure 1: Province of Hometown of Respondents

Figure 2 shows that the source of financial sponsorship was 79 (53%) government bursary, 31 (21%) family, 7 (3%) self, 1 (1%) scholarship, 1 (1%) other sources, and the remaining 31 (21%) comprised those awaiting bursary acceptance or rejection after appeal.

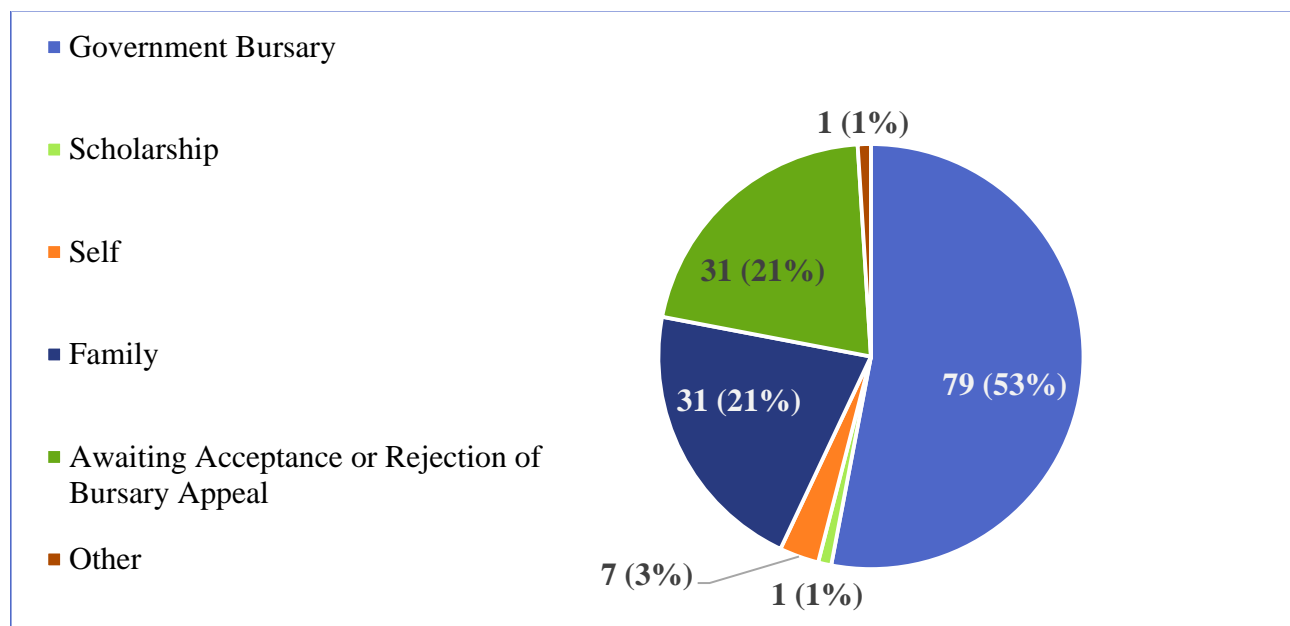


Figure 2: Source of financial support

Figure 3 shows that 34 (23%) of respondents were accommodated at the university campus, 19 (13%) at boarding houses, and 97 (65%) at neither the university campus nor boarding houses, indicating that they either found their way to school from their houses or those of relatives, or were ‘squatters’ (officially unaccommodated but sharing rooms on campus with those who are officially accommodated).

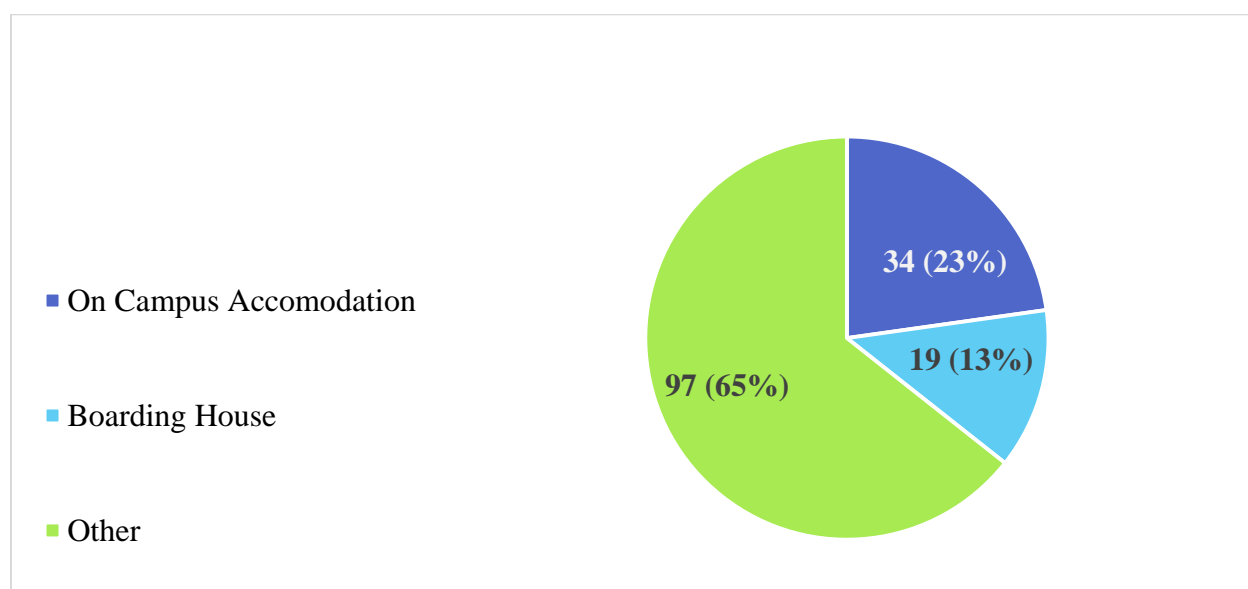


Figure 3: Location of accommodation of respondents

Figure 4 shows that 77 (51%) of respondents had attended boarding school before, while 73 (49%) had not. The figure also shows the previous travelling experience of respondents outside their hometown district, province, or country, of which 129 (86%) reported having previous travelling experience, and 21 (14%) reported not having had any.

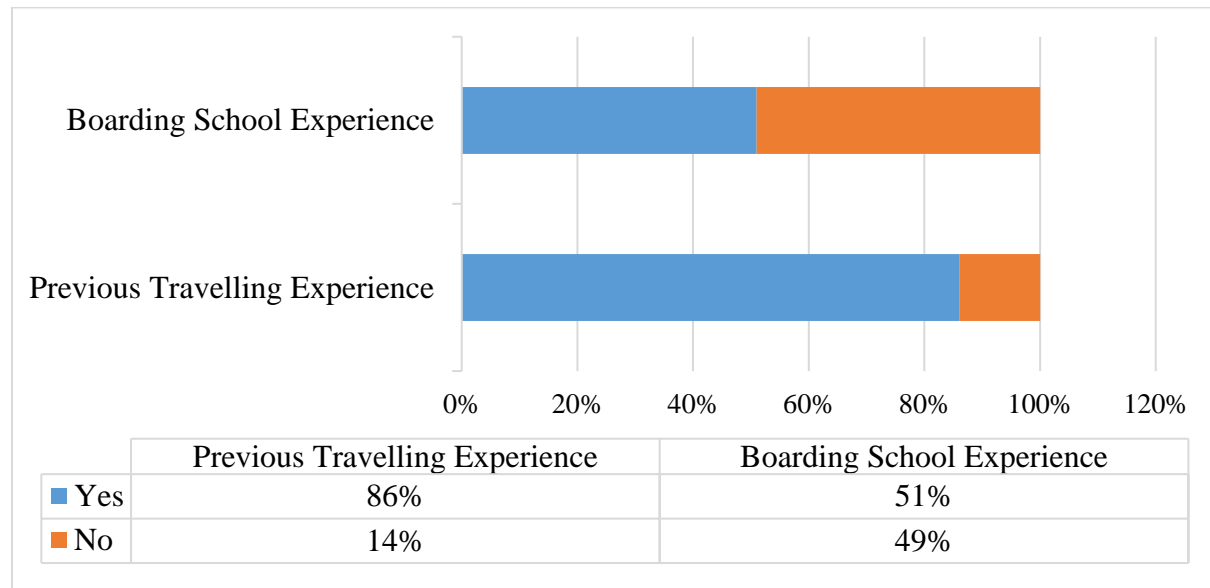


Figure 4: Boarding school and travelling experience

4.2 The general self-efficacy scores of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia

Self-efficacy scores range from 8-40, with those ranging between 27-31 falling in the average, those ranging 24-27, 32-34 below and above average respectively, and those ranging 8-23, 35-40 falling in low and high efficacy ranges respectively.

The minimum self-efficacy score in this study was found to be 12 and the maximum 40 which was also the mode.

Furthermore, as table 1 shows, 2% (3) of respondents were found to fall in the low S.E range, 3% (4) below average, 12% (18) average, 17% (25) above average, and 100 (67%) fell in the high S.E range.

Table 1: Perceived general self-efficacy range respondent distribution

| General self-efficacy Range | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 8-23 Low | 3 | 1.5 | 2.0 |
| 24-27 Below average | 4 | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| 27-31 Average | 18 | 9.1 | 12.0 |
| 32-34 Above Average | 25 | 12.6 | 16.7 |
| 35-40 High | 100 | 50.5 | 66.7 |
| Total | 150 | 75.8 | 100.0 |

Among the items on the self-efficacy scale (1. *I will achieve most of the goals I set for myself*; 2. *When facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will succeed*; 3. *In general I think I can achieve tasks that are important to me*; 4. *I believe I can succeed at most tasks to which I set my mind*; 5. *I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges*; 6. *I am confident I can manage well on many different tasks*; 7. *Compared to other people I can do most tasks well*; 8. *Even when things are tough I can manage quite well*), the strongest agreement was regarding the statements; *I believe I can succeed at most tasks to which I set my mind* at 81% (table 2), *I will be able to achieve most of the goals I set for myself* at 77% (table 3), *in general I think I can achieve tasks that are important to me* at 77% (table 4), and *when facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will succeed* at 65% (table 5).

Table 2: I believe I can succeed at most tasks to which I set my mind

| Degree | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Disagree | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Neutral | 6 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Agree | 20 | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| Agree strongly | 122 | 81.3 | 81.3 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table 3: I will be able to achieve most of the goals I set for myself

| Degree | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Disagree | 3 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Neutral | 5 | 3.3 | 3.4 |
| Agree | 25 | 16.7 | 16.8 |
| Agree strongly | 115 | 76.7 | 77.2 |
| Total | 149 | 99.3 | 100.0 |
| Missing System | 1 | .7 | |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | |

Table 4: In general I think I can achieve tasks that are important to me

| Degree | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Disagree | | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Neutral | | 12 | 8.0 | 8.1 |
| Agree | | 20 | 13.3 | 13.4 |
| Agree strongly | | 115 | 76.7 | 77.2 |
| Total | | 149 | 99.3 | 100.0 |
| Missing | System | 1 | .7 | |
| Total | | 150 | 100.0 | |

Table 5: When facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will succeed

| Degree | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------|--|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Disagree | | 4 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| Neutral | | 13 | 8.7 | 8.7 |
| Agree | | 34 | 22.7 | 22.7 |
| Agree strongly | | 98 | 65.3 | 65.3 |
| Total | | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The statement; *compared to other people, I can do most tasks well* recorded the highest neutral score at 31 (21%), while 66 (44%) of respondents agreed strongly to this statement (appendix IV, table 6).

With regard the statement; *I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges*, 96 (64%) of respondents agreed strongly, while 3 (2%) disagreed strongly (appendix IV, table 7).

59% of respondents expressed that they were confident they could manage well on many different tasks, and although 3% disagreed with this statement, none of the respondents strongly disagreed (appendix IV, table 8).

Table 9 shows the response distribution for the statement; *even when things are tough I can manage quite well*. 45% agreed strongly to the statement, and only .7% disagreed strongly.

Table 9: Even when things are tough I can manage quite well

| Degree | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|--------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Disagree | 5 | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| Neutral | 20 | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| Agree | 56 | 37.3 | 37.3 |
| Agree strongly | 68 | 45.3 | 45.3 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

4.2.1 Summary

67% of the respondents fell in the high self-efficacy range, while 2% fell in the low self-efficacy range. The remaining 17% were above average range, 3% below it, and 12% fell within the average range itself.

The minimum self-efficacy scored by respondents was found to be 12 and not 8 (lowest possible score), and the maximum found to be 40, the highest possible score.

The statements *I believe I can succeed at most tasks to which I set my mind* (81%), *I will be able to achieve most of the goals I set for myself* (77%), *in general I think I can achieve tasks that are important to me* (77%), and *when facing difficult tasks I am certain I will succeed* (65%), recorded the highest scores. The statement; *compared to other people I can do most tasks well* recorded the highest neutral score of 21% among all the 8 statements. While the

statement; *I am confident I can manage well on many different tasks* is the only one that did not record any strong agreement among all the 8 statements.

4.3 Extent to which students feel they are comfortably adapting to their new learning environment

The scores produced to measure adaptation in this study ranged from 21 (lowest) to 189 (highest). The lowest score was found to be 53, and the highest 189. The mean score was found to be 114, and it is against this average that the minimum range of the scale 53-81 (very low), 82-113 (low), 115-149 (high), and 150-189 (very high) were found.

Therefore, using 114 which was the mean as the average, scores below 114 were taken to indicate lower adaptation, and those above 114 were taken to indicate higher adaptation.

Table 10 shows the distribution of adaptation range score of respondents. 77 students representing 51% were found to be below average, 71 representing 47% above average, and 2 representing 1% stood on the average mark itself.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents' perceived adaptation range scores

| Adaptation Range | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 53-113 | Lower | 77 | 51.3 | 51.3 |
| 114 | Average | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| 115-185 | Higher | 71 | 47.3 | 47.3 |
| Total | | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

4.3.1 Social Adaptation

Among the 7 statements regarding social adaptation; 1. *I am finding it difficult to make friends* 2. *I am very involved with social activities at UNZA* 3. *I have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting* 4. *I have difficulties interacting with people of the opposite sex* 5. *I am satisfied with the extra-curricular activities at UNZA* 6. *Most of the time I feel lonely* 7. *I feel different from others in an undesirable way.*

Feeling different from others in an undesirable way at 60% (figure 5), lonely most of the time at 53% (figure 6), experiencing difficulties interacting with people of the opposites sex at 47% (figure 7), and difficulty making friends at 46% (figure 8) recorded strong disagreement. Meaning that more respondents did not experience these difficulties. However, 19% indicated that they did feel different from others in an undesirable way, 19% indicated that they did feel lonely most of the time, 15% indicated that they were having difficulties interacting with people of the opposite sex, and 19% indicated that they were in fact having difficulties making friends. Below are the charts showing this situation.

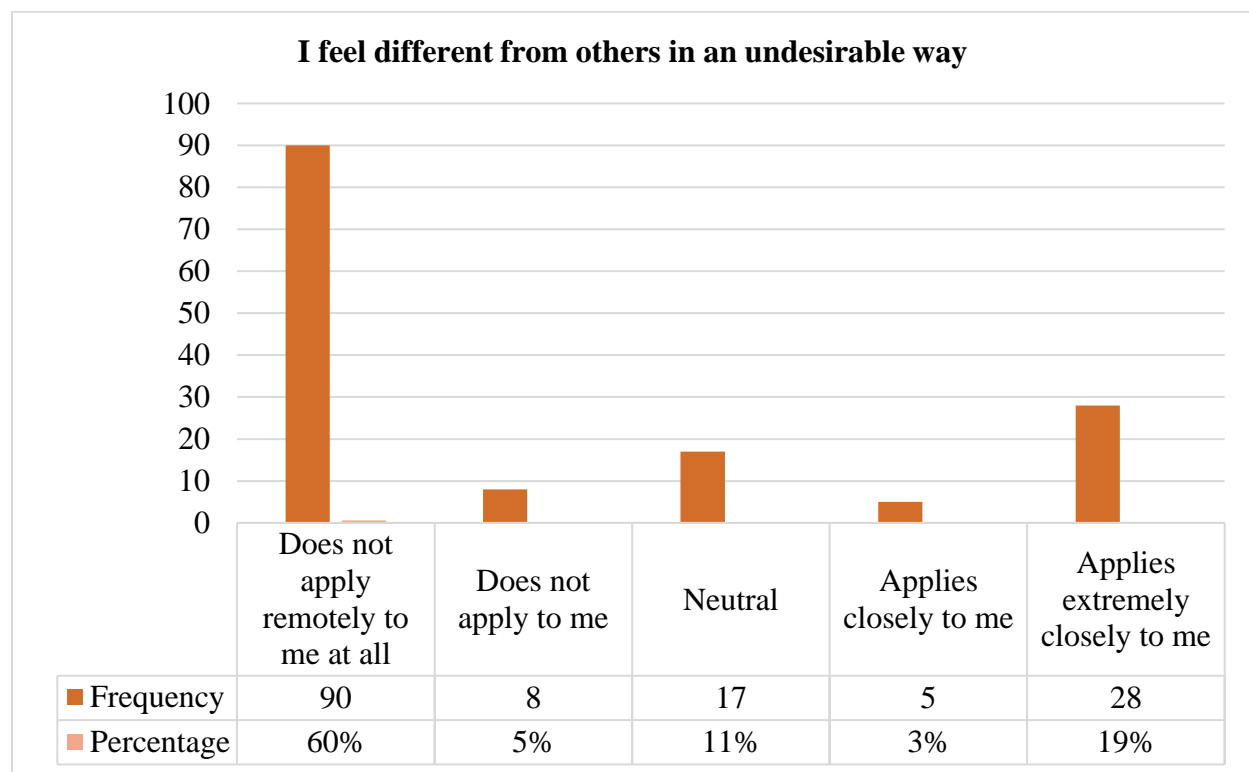


Figure 5: Response distribution for the statement I feel different from others in an undesirable way

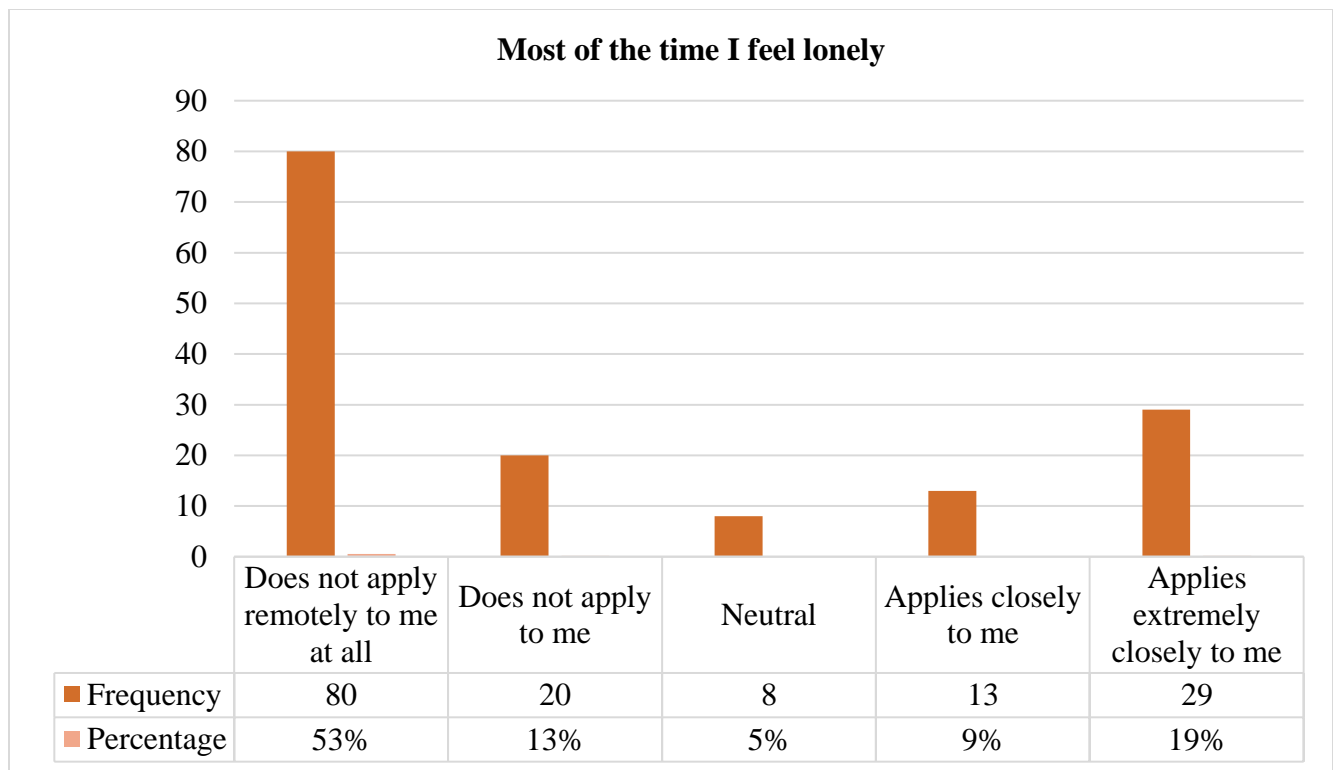


Figure 6: Response distribution for the statement most of the time I feel lonely

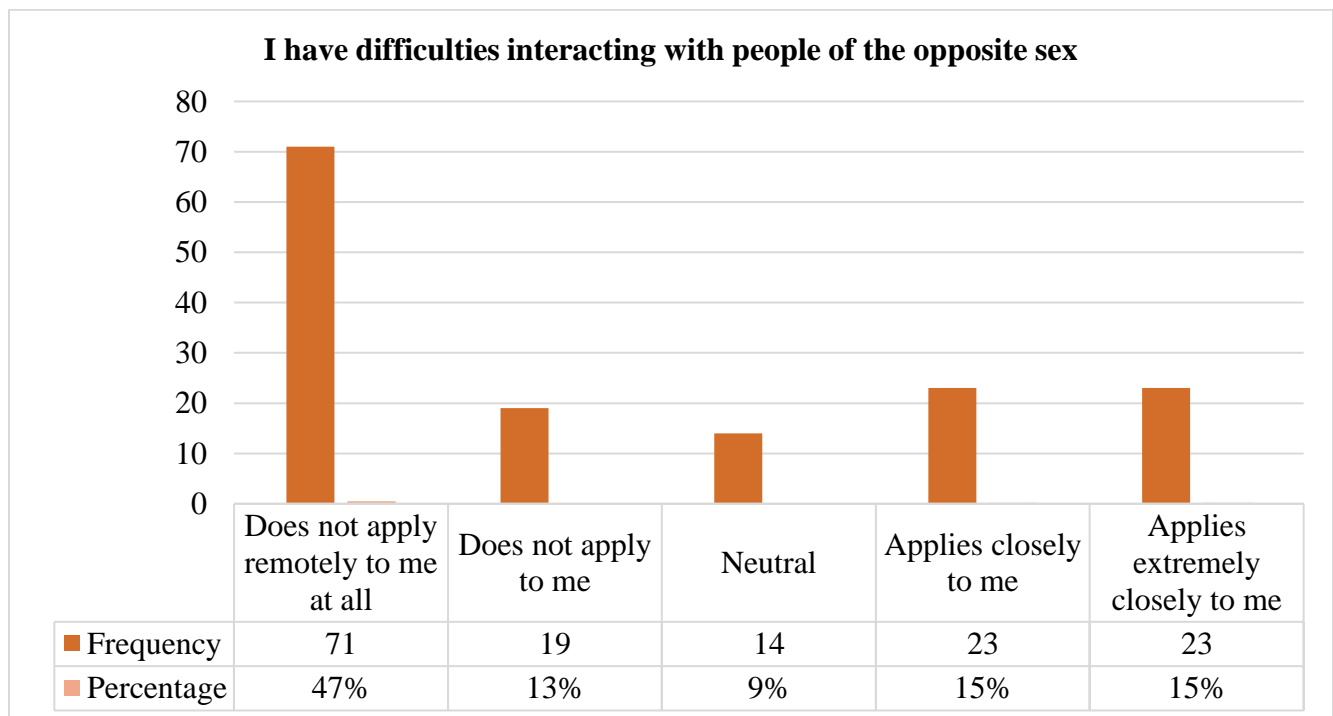


Figure 7: Response distribution for the statement I have difficulties interacting with people of the opposite sex

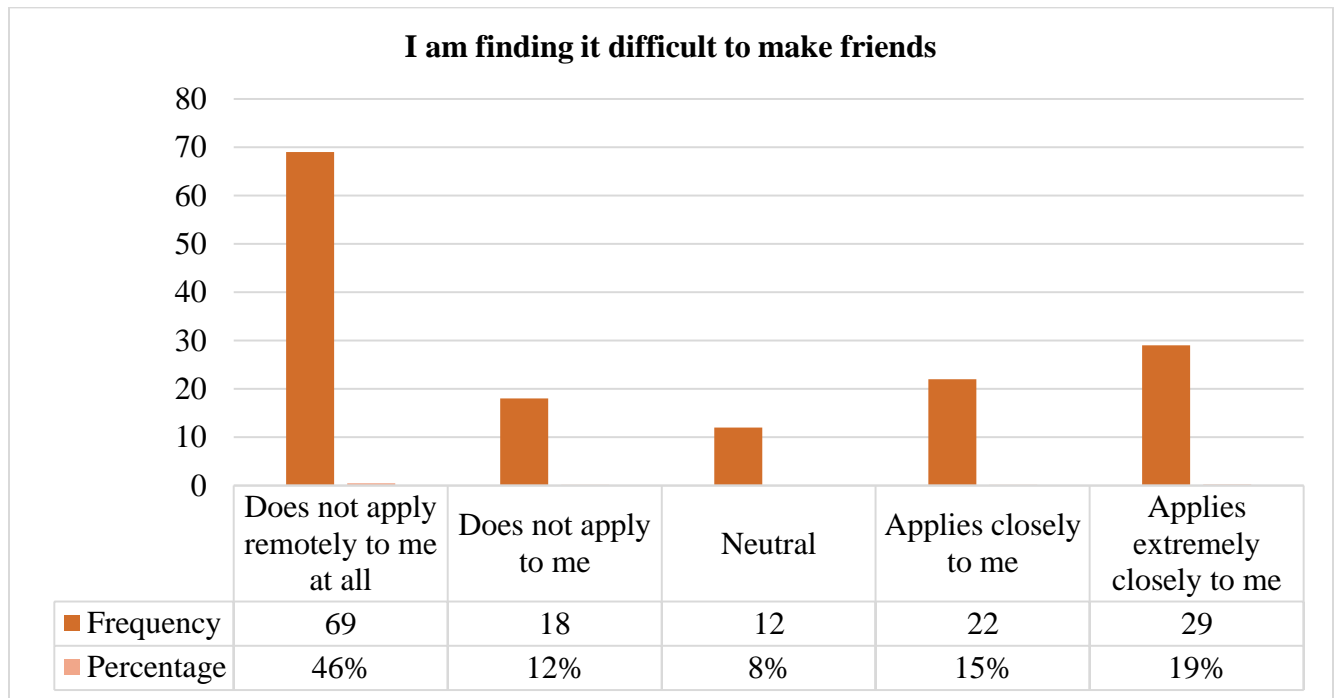


Figure 8: Response distribution for the statement I am finding it difficult to make friends

Figure 9 below regarding the statement, *I am satisfied with extra-curricular activities at UNZA*, shows that 33% of respondents indicated that they were, while 26% indicated that this did not apply to them at all.

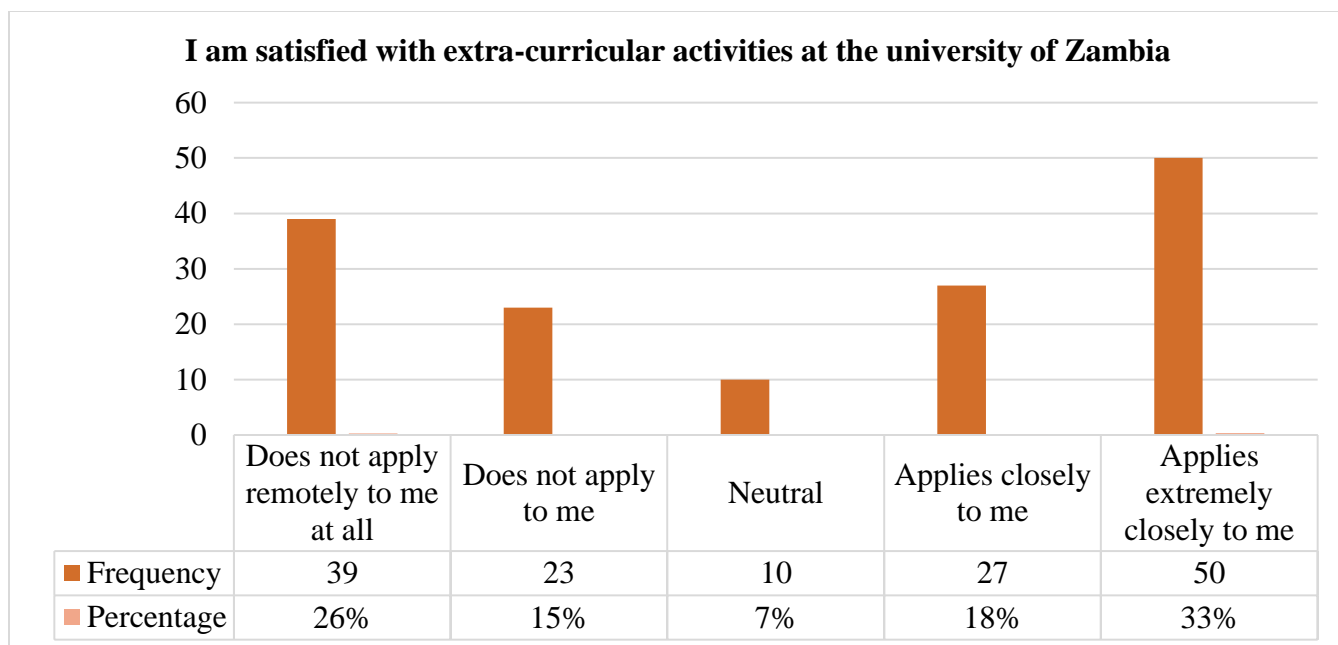


Figure 9: Response distribution for the statement I am satisfied with extra-curricular activities at the University of Zambia

Figure 10 shows that 51% of respondents indicated that they were very much involved in social activities at UNZA, while 15% indicated that this did not apply to them at all.

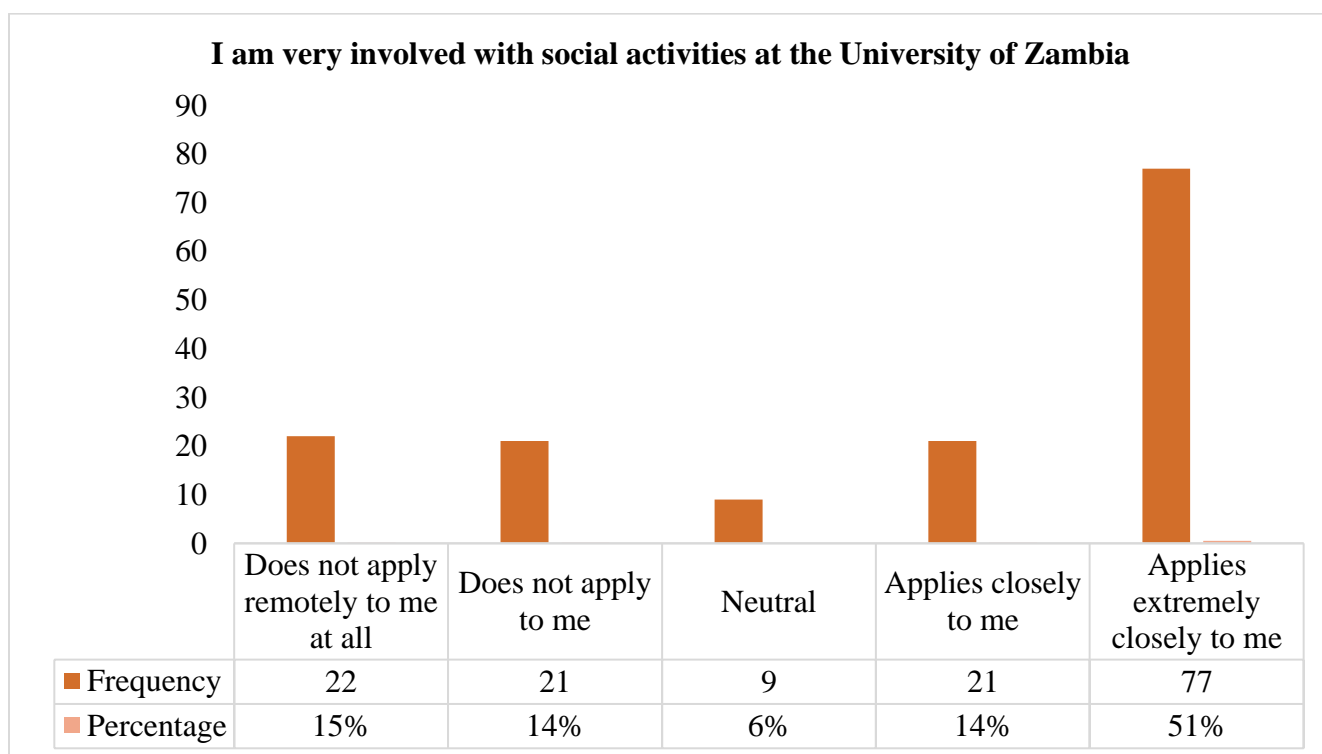


Figure 10: Response distribution for the statement I am very involved with social activities at the University of Zambia

Figure 11 shows that 23% of respondents indicated that they had enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting, while 41% indicated that this did not apply to them at all.

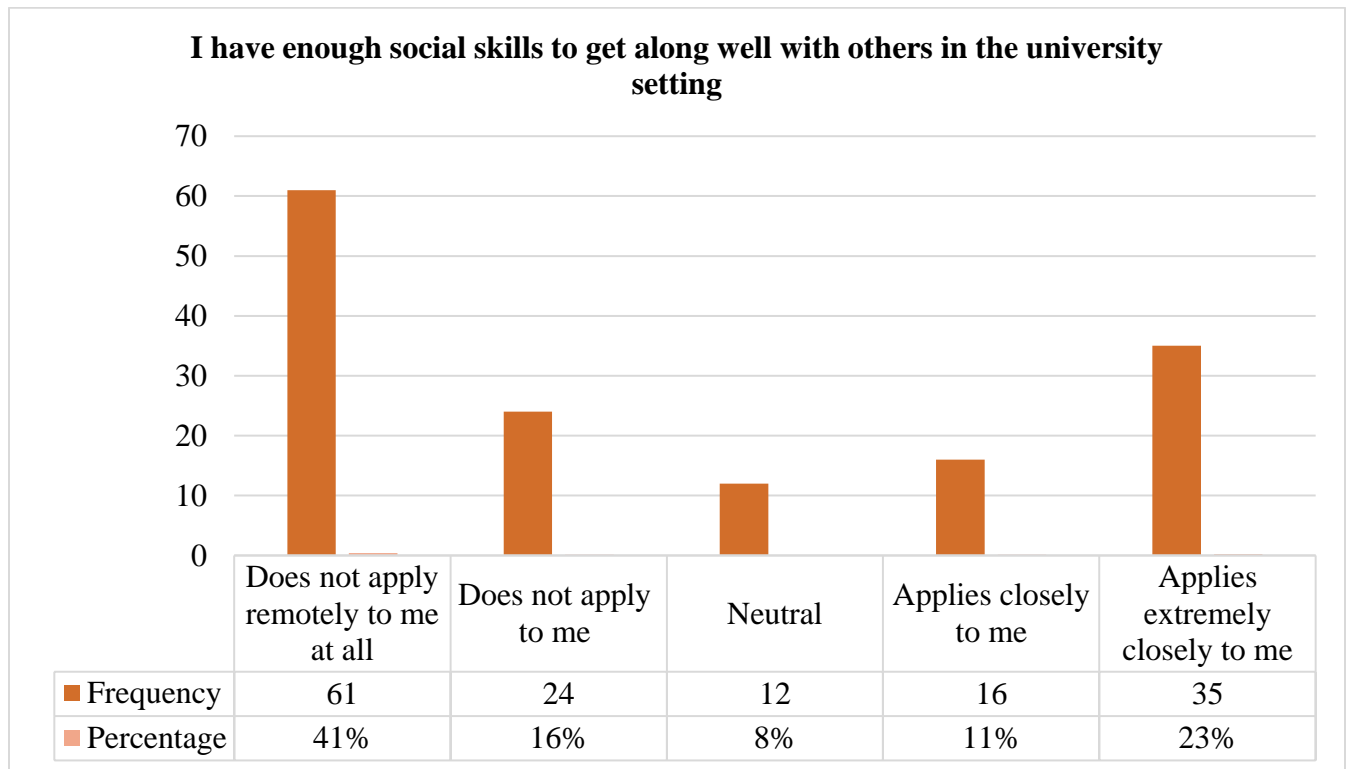


Figure 11: response distribution for the statement I have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting

4.3.2 Emotional Adaptation

Among the 7 statements regarding emotional adjustment (1. *Being independent has not been easy* 2. *I have having difficulties sleeping lately* 3. *I have lost or gained a lot of weight recently* 4. *I am often tired lately* 5. *I have been feeling tense and nervous lately* 6. *I worry a lot about my university expenses* 7. *I get angry too easily lately*), the statements *I worry a lot about my university expenses* at 51% (figure 12), *I am often tired lately* at 47% (table 19) recorded strong agreement. However, 21% and 19% respectively indicated that this situation did not apply remotely to them at all.

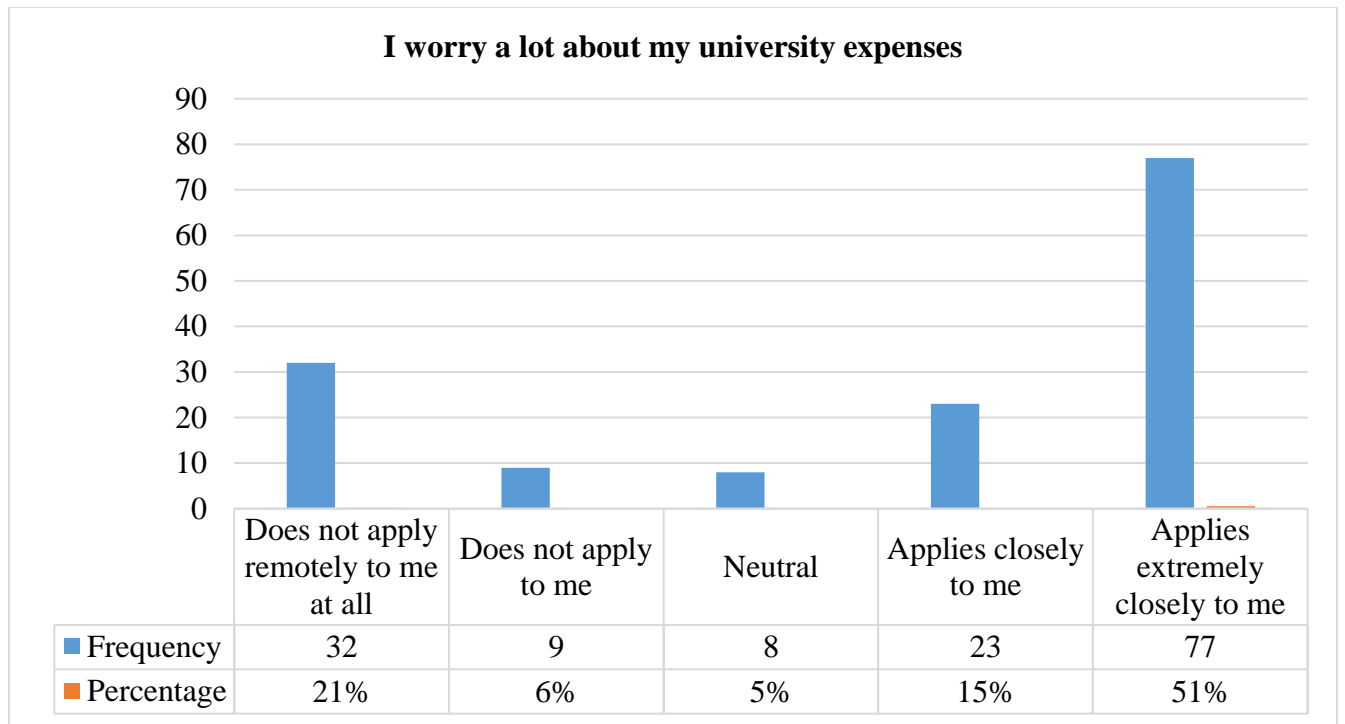


Figure 12: Response distribution to the statement I worry a lot about my university expenses

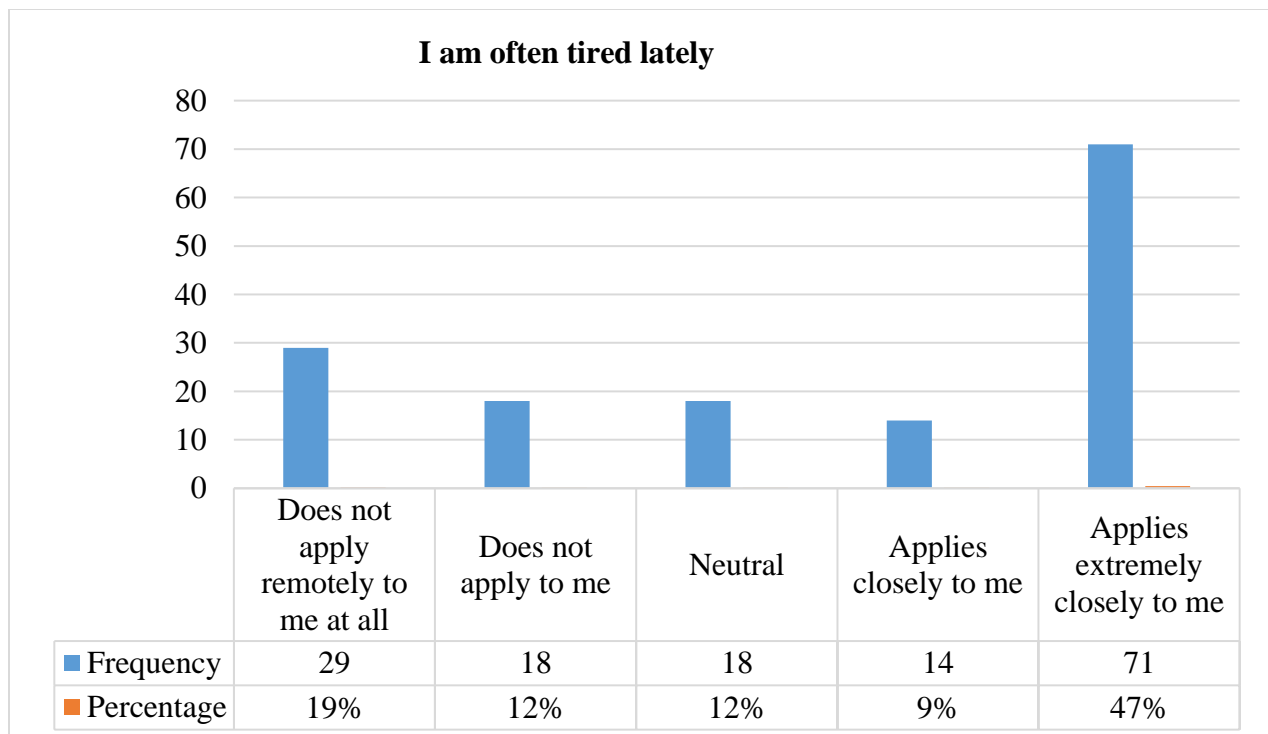


Figure 13: Response distribution for the statement I am often tired lately

Regarding the statement, *being independent has not been easy*, figure 14 shows that 36% of the respondents disagreed strongly while 34 % indicated that this situation applied very closely to them.

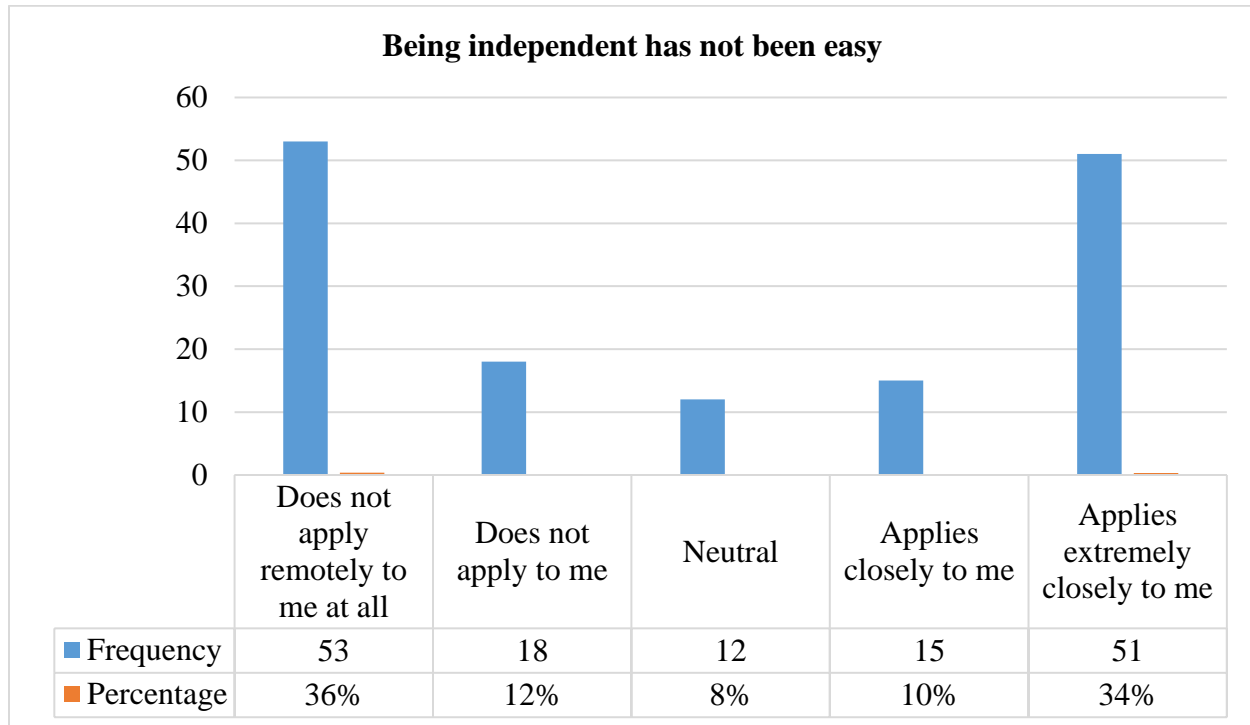


Figure 14: Response distribution for the statement being independent has not been easy

With regards the statement, *I have been having trouble sleeping lately*, 47% expressed that they had no trouble sleeping lately, while 22% indicated that they had in fact been having trouble sleeping lately (table 22).

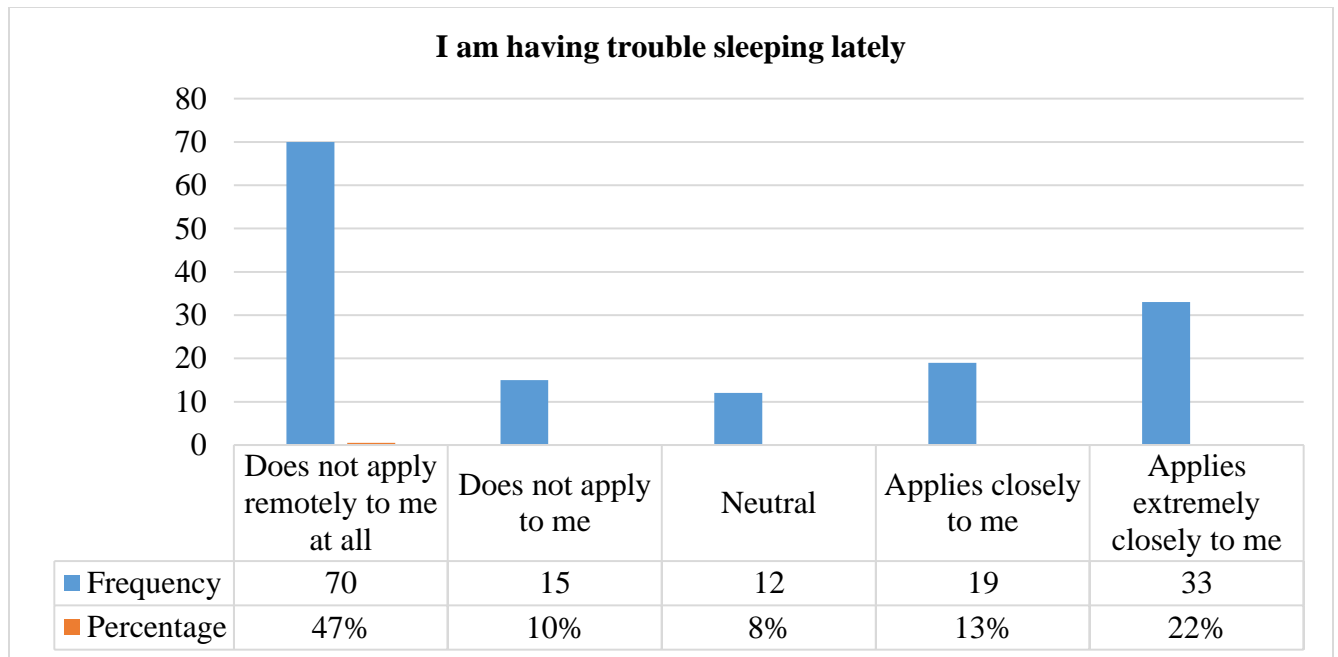


Figure 15: Response distribution for the statement I am having trouble sleeping lately

Figure 16 shows that 53% of respondents indicated strong disagreement to the statement *I get angry too easily lately* while 17% indicated that lately they had been getting angry too easily.

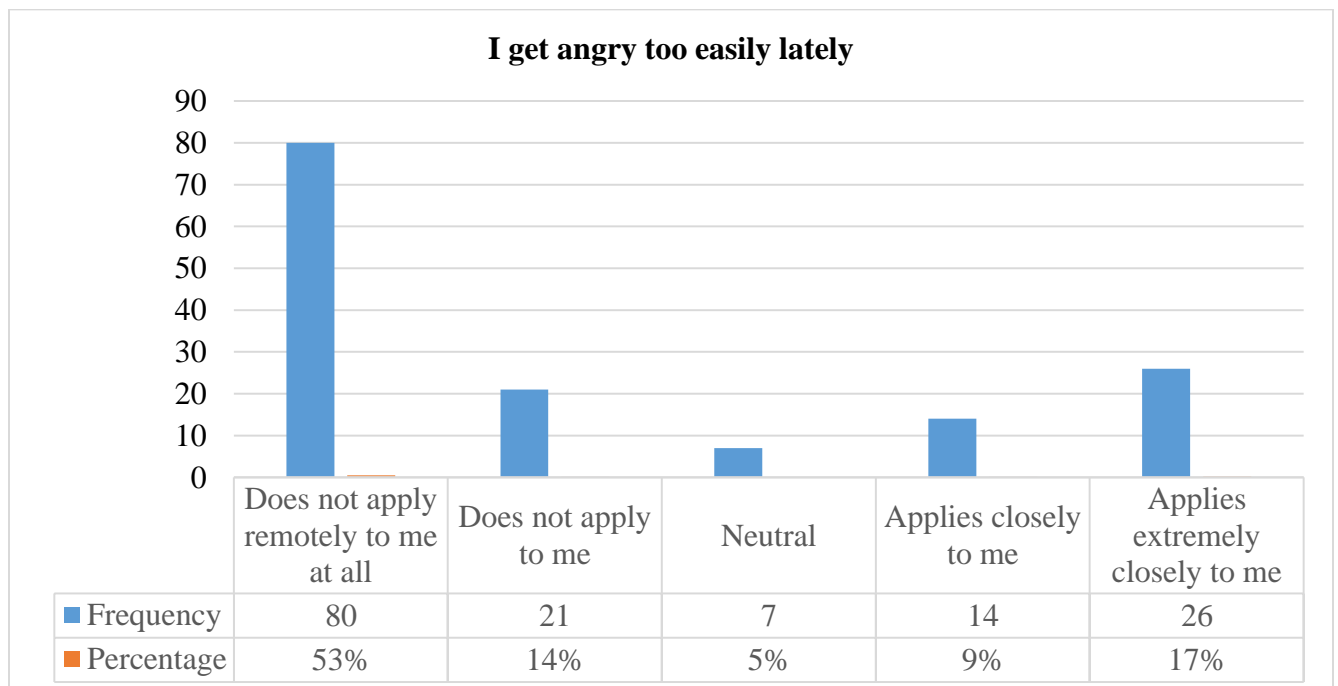


Figure 16: Response distribution for the statement I get angry too easily lately

At 29% as shown in figure 17, nearly the same number of students indicated that they had been feeling tense and nervous lately, as those who indicated that they had not at 30%.

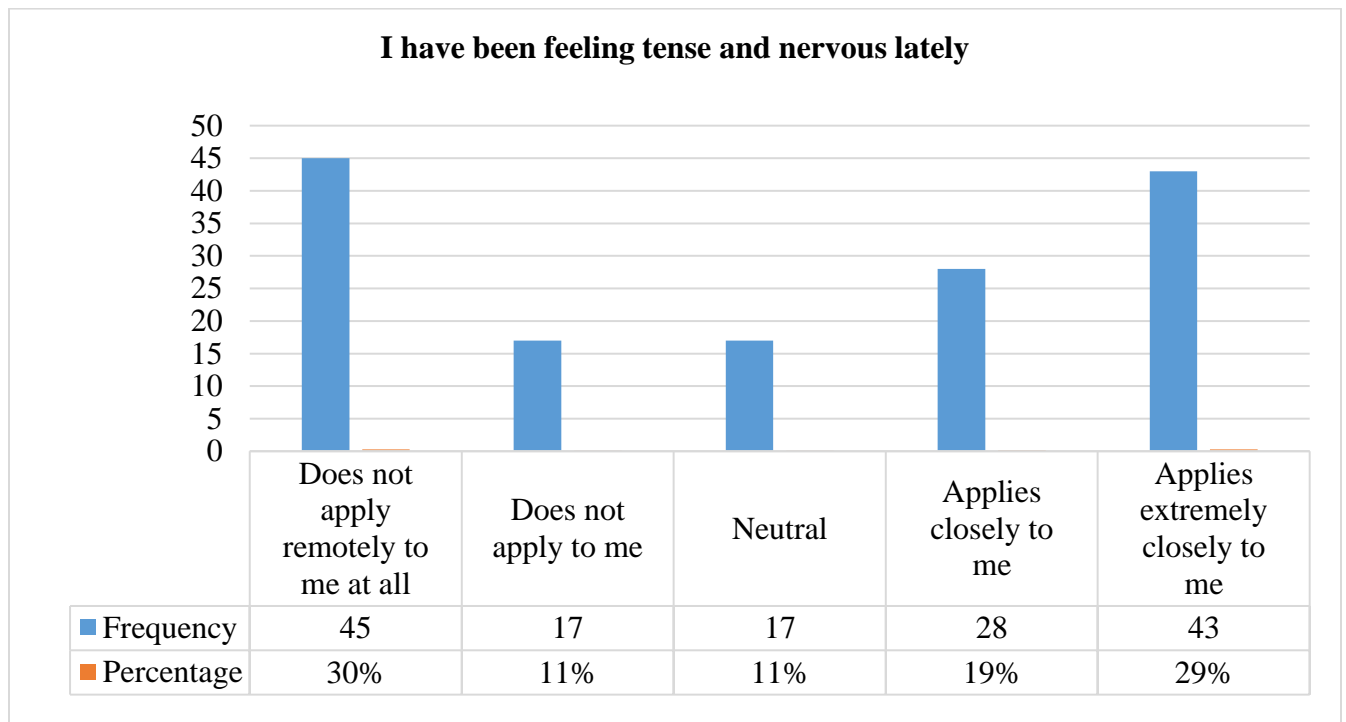


Figure 17: Response distribution for the statement I have been feeling tense and nervous lately

Figure 18 shows that 31% in response to the statement *I have lost or gained weight recently* felt the situation applied extremely closely to them, while 28% felt it did not apply remotely to them at all.

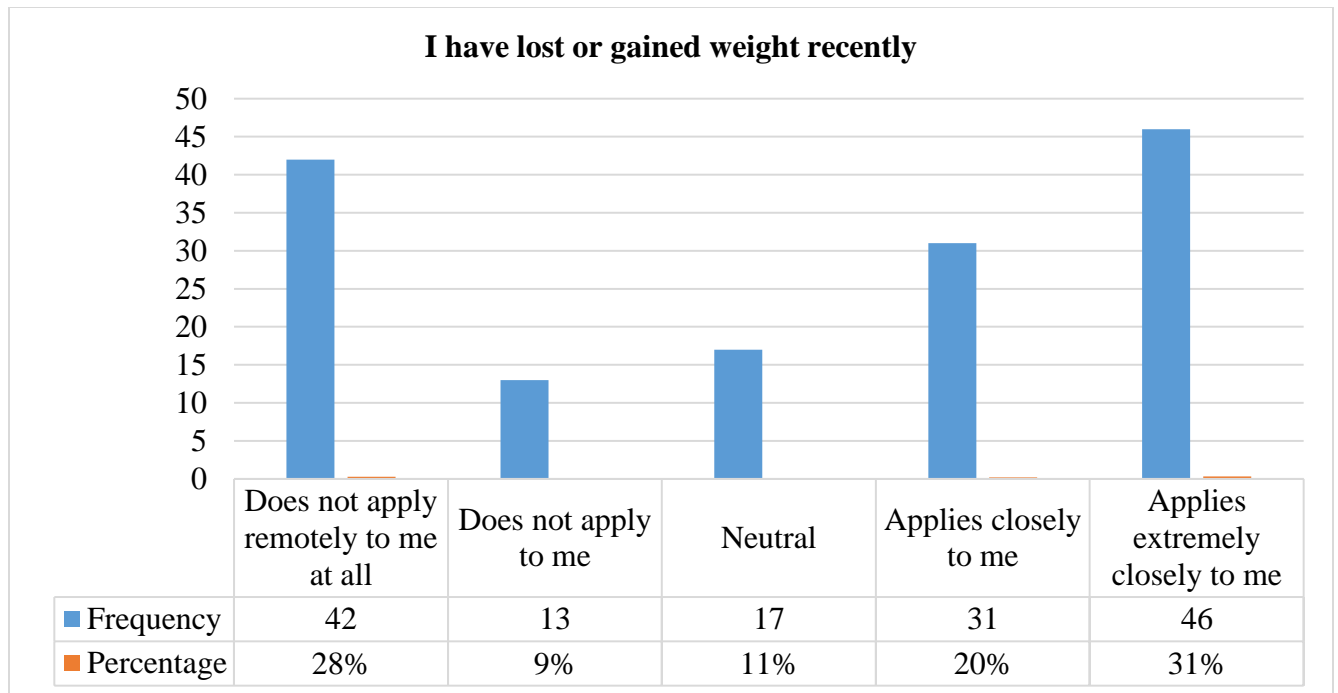


Figure 18: Response distribution for the statement I have lost or gained weight recently

4.3.3 Academic Adaptation

In responding to the statements regarding academic adjustment that were phrased as such; 1. *I am satisfied with the quality of my course* 2. *I am satisfied with the academic situation* 3. *I am satisfied with my lecturers and professors* 4. *I am satisfied with the variety of courses* 5. *I enjoy writing course assignments* 6. *I am finding academic work very difficult* 7. *I do not use my study time efficiently.*

Satisfaction over the variety of courses at 51% (figure 19), over the quality of courses at 47% (figure 20), with lecturers and professors at 46%, (bar graph 16), and lack of enjoyment in the writing of course assignments at 42% (figure 22), recorded strong disagreement. However, 14%, 19%, 15%, and 21% respectively, indicated that they were in fact very satisfied. This situation is highlighted in the graphs below.

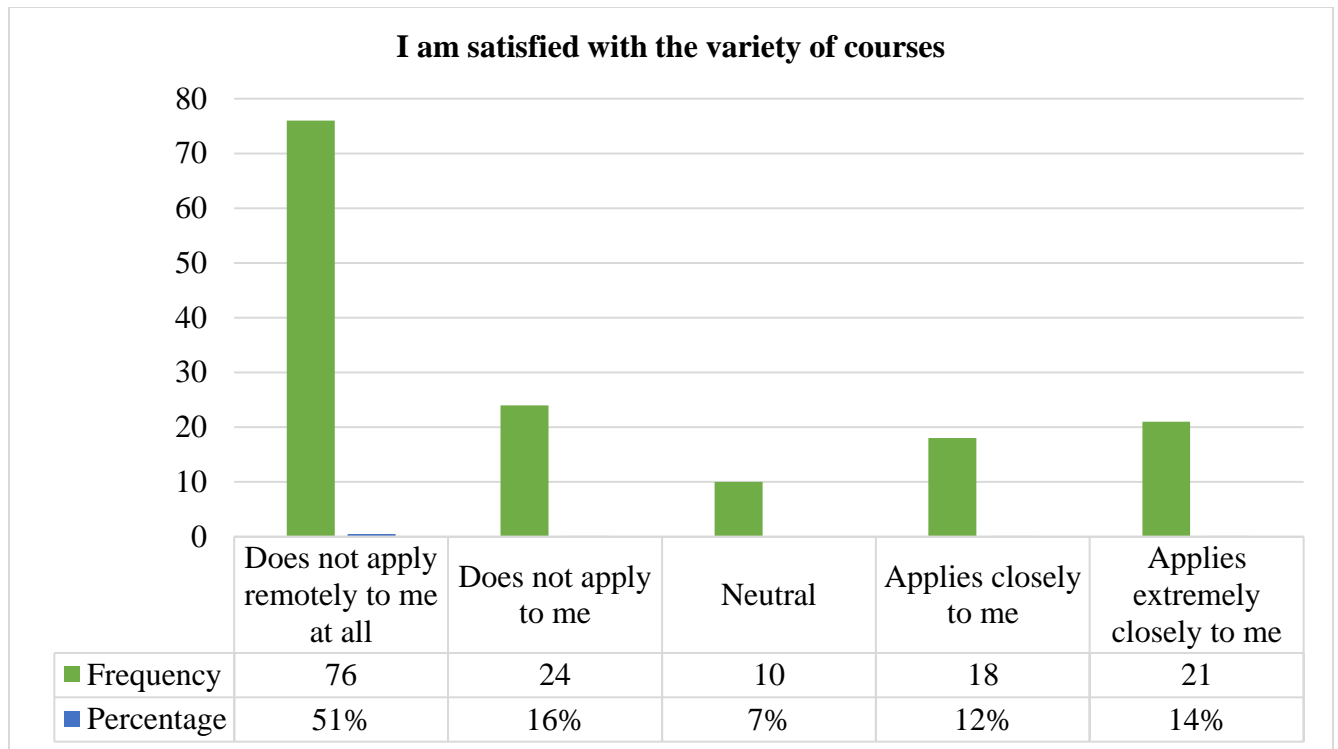


Figure 19: Response distribution for the statement I am satisfied with the variety of courses

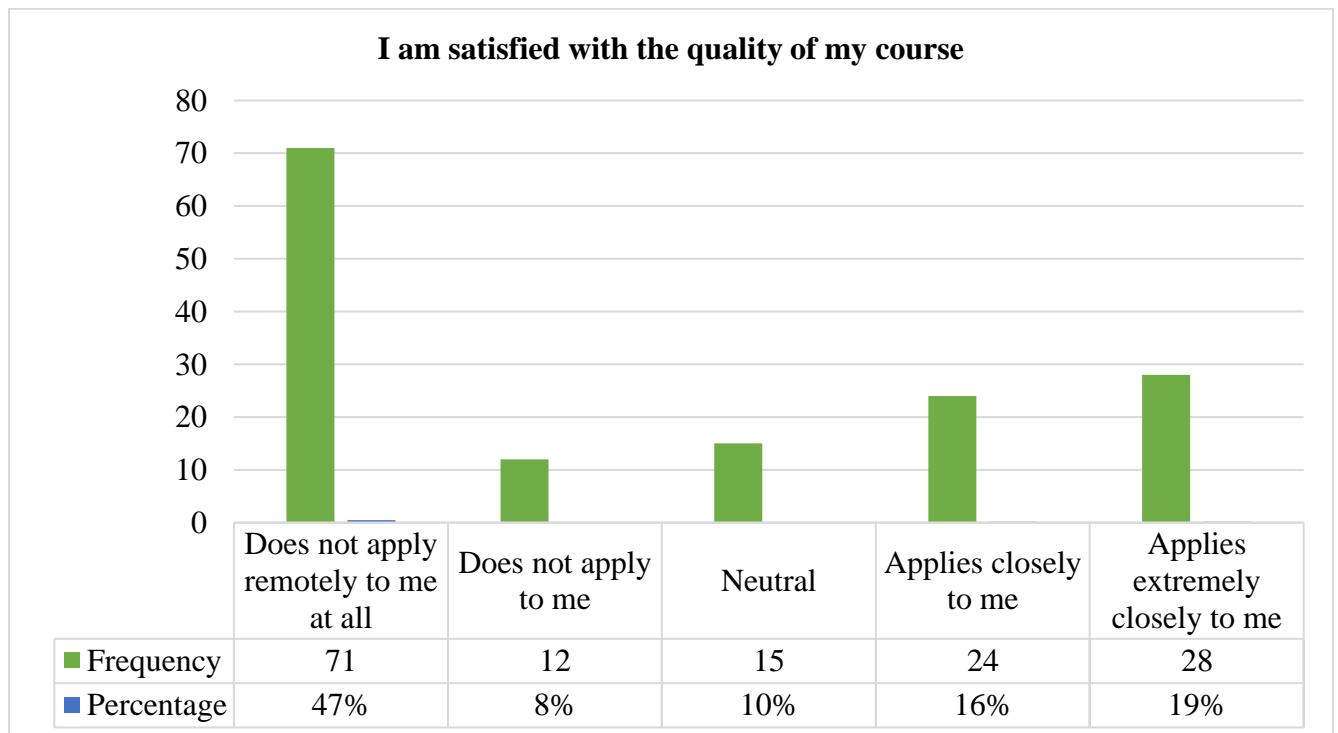


Figure 20: Response distribution for the statement I am satisfied with the quality of my course

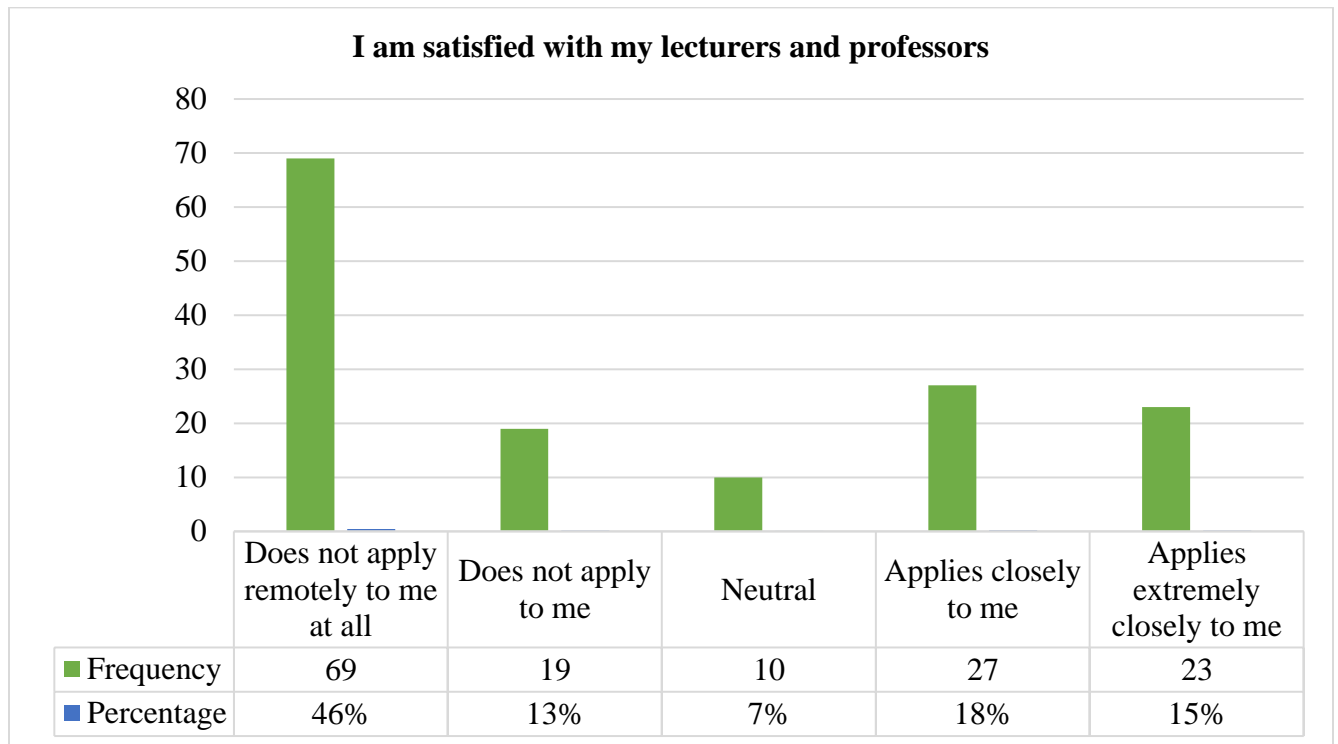


Figure 21: Response distribution for the statement I am satisfied with my lecturers and professors

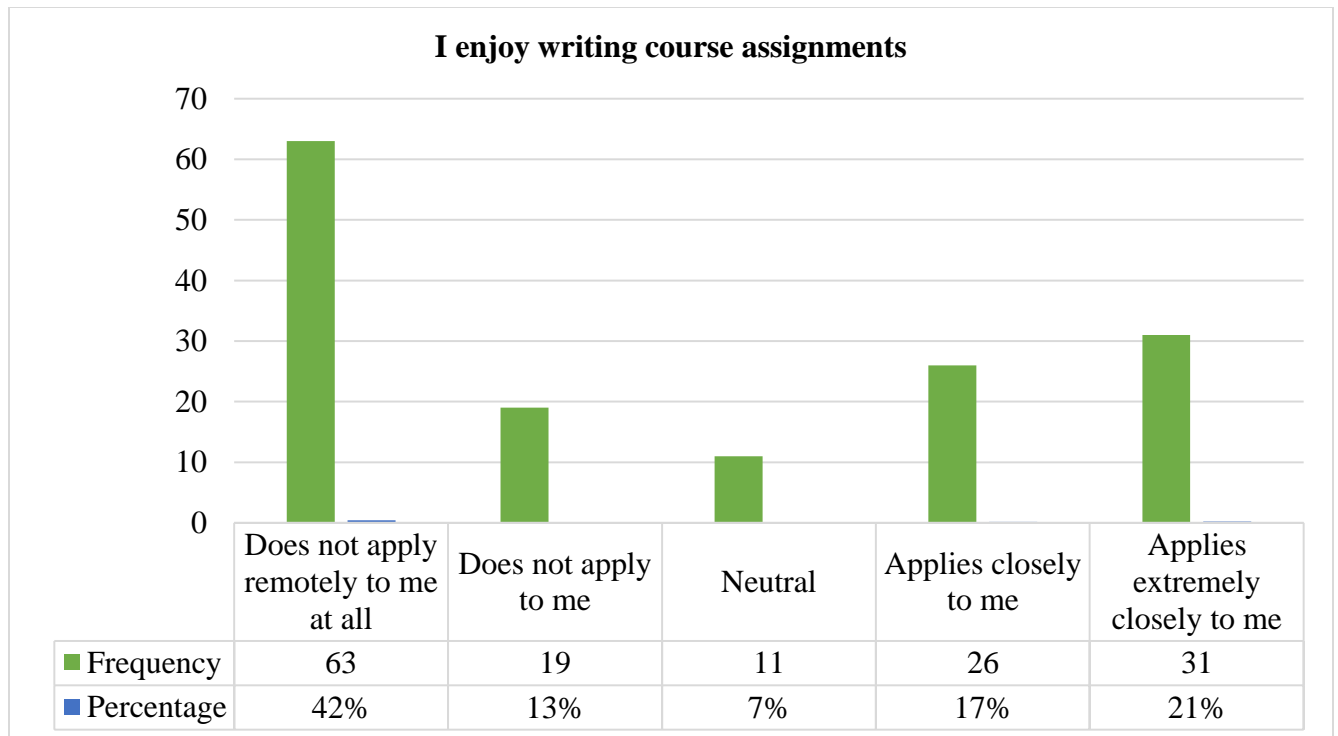


Figure 22: Response distribution for the statement I enjoy writing course assignments

Referring to the statement *I am satisfied with the academic situation*, 38% indicated that this did not apply remotely to them at all, while 17% indicated that it applied extremely closely to them as shown in figure 23.

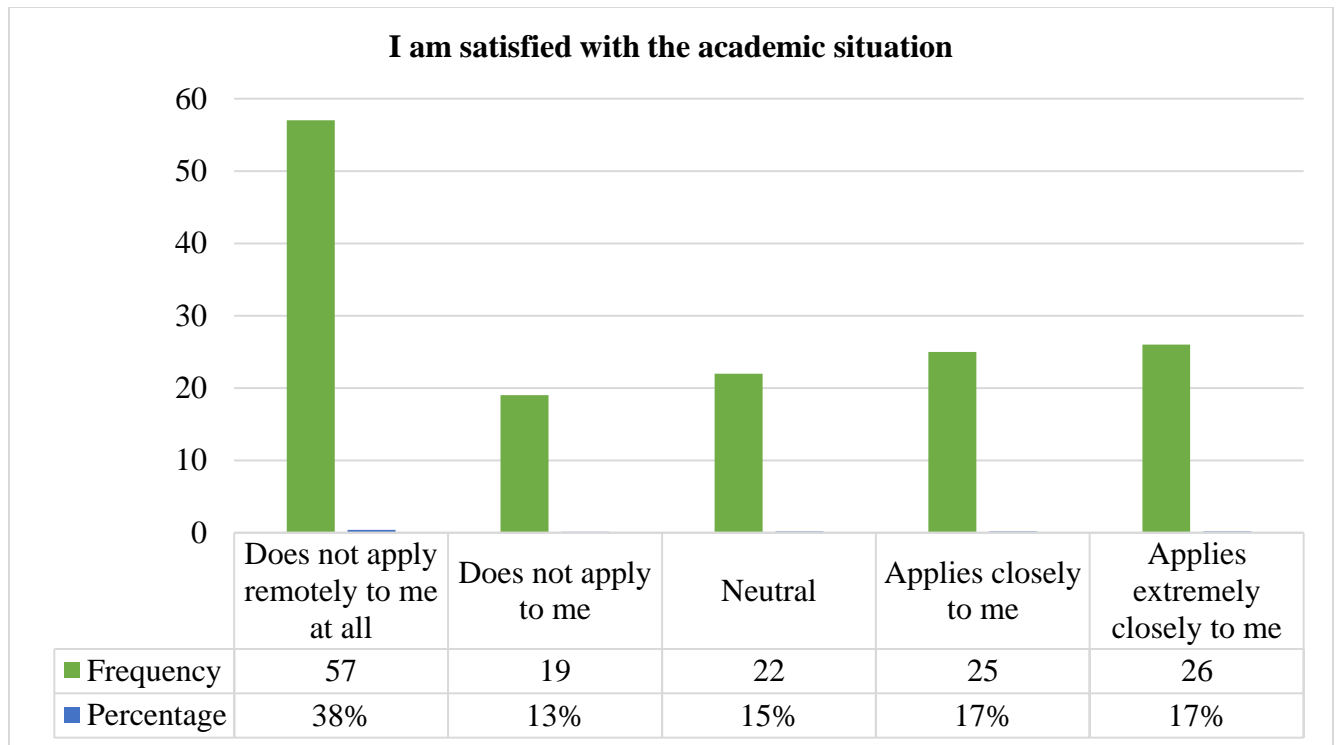


Figure 23: Response distribution for the statement I am satisfied with the academic situation

Regarding the statement, *I do not use my study time efficiently*, bar graph 18 below shows that 31% of respondents indicated that this did not apply to them at all, while 19% indicated that it applied extremely closely to them.

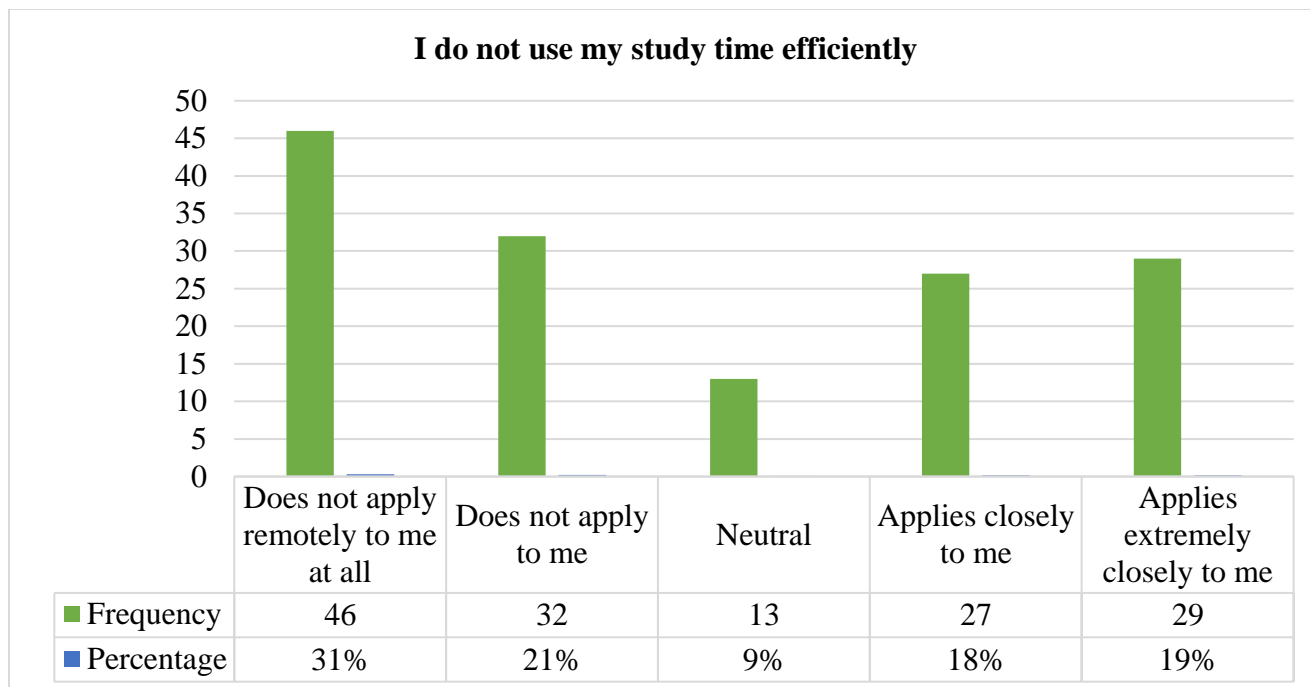


Figure 24: Response distribution for the statement I do not use my study time efficiently

As shown in figure 25, 31% of students indicated that they were not finding academic work to be very difficult at all, while 24% indicated that they were finding it to be very difficult.

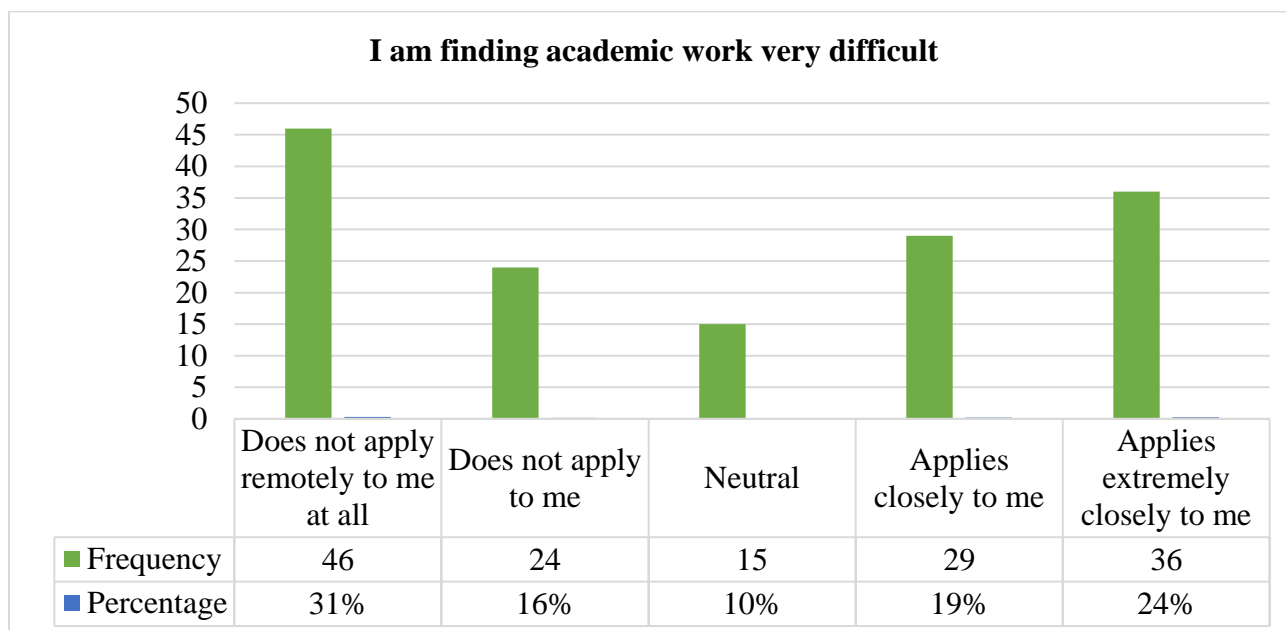


Figure 25: Response distribution for the statement I am finding academic work very difficult

4.3.4 Summary

The minimum adaptation scored by respondents was found to be 53, the mean found to be 114, while the maximum score was found to be 189. 51% (77) of respondents were found to fit into the lower adaptation range, while 47% (71) were found to be in the higher range. 2 (1%) were found to be among the average.

Academic adaptation was found to have the highest negative scores of which dissatisfaction was expressed for 5 out of 7 statements. The highest of which was 51% recorded for the statement *I am satisfied with the variety of courses*. Meaning that 51% of respondents were dissatisfied.

Although 5 out of 7 statements were positively scored for emotional adaptation, a highest score of 51% was among the 2 negatively scored statements was recorded. This score of 51% was recorded for the statement *I worry a lot about my university expenses*.

Social adaptation was found to have recorded positive scores for 6 out 7 statements of which the highest score of 60% was recorded for the statement *I feel different from others in an undesirable way*. Meaning that 60% of respondents disagreed strongly with this statement. The only negative score of 41% was recorded for the statement *I have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting*. Meaning 41% disagreed with the statement.

4.4 Factors students feel are missing in the University that facilitate positive adaptation

In order to meet this objective, participants were asked, what they felt would facilitate their academic, social, and emotional adaptation. The themes that emerged cut across this categorization, with some feeling that being accommodated would assist with their academic adjustment, others feeling that accommodation would assist their social adaptation, and others still feeling that it would assist their emotional adaptation for instance. As such, the following are the general major themes that emerged.

Accommodation

Accommodation was isolated as a major ingredient necessary for adaptation, with many stating that accommodation would help them adapt to university life academically, socially, and emotionally.

One of the respondents thus stated

If I were accommodated I would not miss classes sometimes

Another said

If boarding houses were cheaper or I was accommodated on campus I would more easily adapt to academic life

Yet another respondent stated

If better and more accommodation to have a place to properly rest between classes were available, I would comfortably get used to academic life at UNZA

Financial support

A majority of the 150 participants stated that if financial assistance were available, they would more easily adapt to university life, as incapacity to meet financial requirements to attend the university was a great source of worry and anxiety that affected not only their academic, but also their social life. In responding to the question of source of financial support, one participant stated

I do not know as at now but all I know is that no B.C no tertiary education for me.

Similarly, another participant stated thus;

I was denied a bursary with my six points. Am an orphan

In another vain, one participant stated

I applied for bursary but got left and appealed but names are not yet out

Academic Material

A need for better availability and quality of academic material in form of books and simplified notes also arose as a major theme. A resonating need even among these was for the university library to stock books recommended by lecturers as recommended readings, and for computers and internet to be more widely accessible.

One participant stated thus

If the library had recommended and up-to-date books I would comfortably get used to academic life at UNZA

Another suggested that adapting to life at the university would be made easier

If more intellectual groups which offered recommended books were available

A respondent also suggested

There should be more computers in the library basement, and internet should be available everywhere

Extra-Curricular Activities

Respondents also expressed a desire for more extra-curricular activities to be made available or improved in order to facilitate their adaptation. One participant stated

If full time debate participation and involvement in debate were available or improved, I would more comfortably socialize

Yet another participant had this to say

Clubs like writing clubs, poetry clubs, drama, and such would help

One participant stated in response to what was thought could help to lessen stress or anxiety while at school.

Nothing, there is nothing you can do to kill stress at UNZA

Recreational Facilities and Activities

A number of participants also stated that they would adapt more easily to life on campus if more recreational facilities and activities were available. As one participant said

If a variety of sports activities were available, I would adapt more easily

Yet another participant stated

The sports ground should be bigger

Further, another participant pointed out that adaptation would be made easier

If recreational activities were available that do not clash with class time were available

Social Conduct

Respondents also highlighted aspects of social conduct that they felt were a hindrance to their adaptation, echoing the opinions of others, one participant stated that

If people were not so rude, social adaptation would be easier

Another stated

If some lecturers were kind, I would feel less anxious or stressed.

In addition, another participant suggested that

If a moral code of conduct were available or improved, social adaptation would be more comfortable

Another participant stated thus

Male students should not be allowed to enter girls' hostels

Friends and Family

Another theme that emerged was that of friends and family, with a number of respondents attributing better social and emotional adaptation to the availability of friends and family. As one such respondent stated

If friends were available, I would more comfortably socialize at UNZA

Another still stating that

If my sister and parents were available, I would more comfortably socialize and feel less stress and anxiety

Improved Administrative Methods

Another theme that emerged was to do with methods utilized. A number of students expressed a wish for lecturers to be more slow-paced as they conducted lectures. In addition, students also expressed a wish for more tutorials and one-on-one interactions with tutors and lecturers. As one such respondent stated

If some of few lecturers could get involved with their students, students would be helped through guidance and proper time management

Another stated that

If lecturers would use a slower pace I would more easily adapt to academic life

While others felt that the work load be moderated, as one such respondent stated that less anxiety and stress would be felt

If assignments and presentations are not a lot in a short period

Others suggested that channels of information be better structured so that they knew where to easily access information. While others suggested that timetables be more easily understandable and available, as stated by one respondent

*If the final draft of the timetable were more easily accessible instead of the first and second draft,
I would adapt more comfortably to academic life at UNZA*

Another respondent further stated thus

If the syllabus wasn't so compressed, I would comfortably get used to academic life at UNZA

Study Space and Lecture Theatres

Respondents also expressed a need for not only more lecture theatres, and lecture theatres with more sitting capacity, as well as space or places where they could study. A respondent stated

*If there were more lecture rooms, or the rooms were bigger adaptation to academic life would be
more comfortable*

One such respondent said

*If more rooms to study in where books were allowed were available, academic adaptation would
be easier*

Another student said

*If more study rooms apart from the library were available, I would comfortably get used to
academic life at UNZA*

Similar to the above statements, one respondent stated

If another library were built academic adaptation would be easier

4.4.1 Summary

Factors identified by respondents as capable of facilitating better adaption were found to be the need for accommodation, financial support, academic material, extra-curricular activities,

recreational facilities and activities, a desire for improved social conduct, friends and family, improved methods, and more study space and lecture theatres. Although neither one of these factors could be said to be superior to the other, owing to the fact that themes were generated via tallying, the order in which these factors have been presented indicates that the most pressing factors were accommodation, financial support, academic material, followed by the others.

4.5 Whether there was a positively or negatively correlated relationship between high or low perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation

Spearman's ranked order correlation test was run, and a positive, but weak relationship was found between self-efficacy and adaptation; $r = .157$, $p = .056$ ($p < .1$). Table 11 shows this finding.

Table 11: Correlation between respondents' perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation

| Perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation | | | Adaptation | Self-efficacy |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Spearman's rho | Adaptation | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .157 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | .056 |
| | | N | 150 | 150 |
| | General self-efficacy | Correlation Coefficient | .157 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | .056 | . |
| | | | 150 | 150 |

Figure 26 shows the direction of the relationship between perceived G.S.E and adaptation, which was found to be non-linear. Entailing that high G.S.E did not necessarily correspond to better or higher adaptation. The trend line rising from left to right also indicates that the relationship between the two variables was found to be positive.

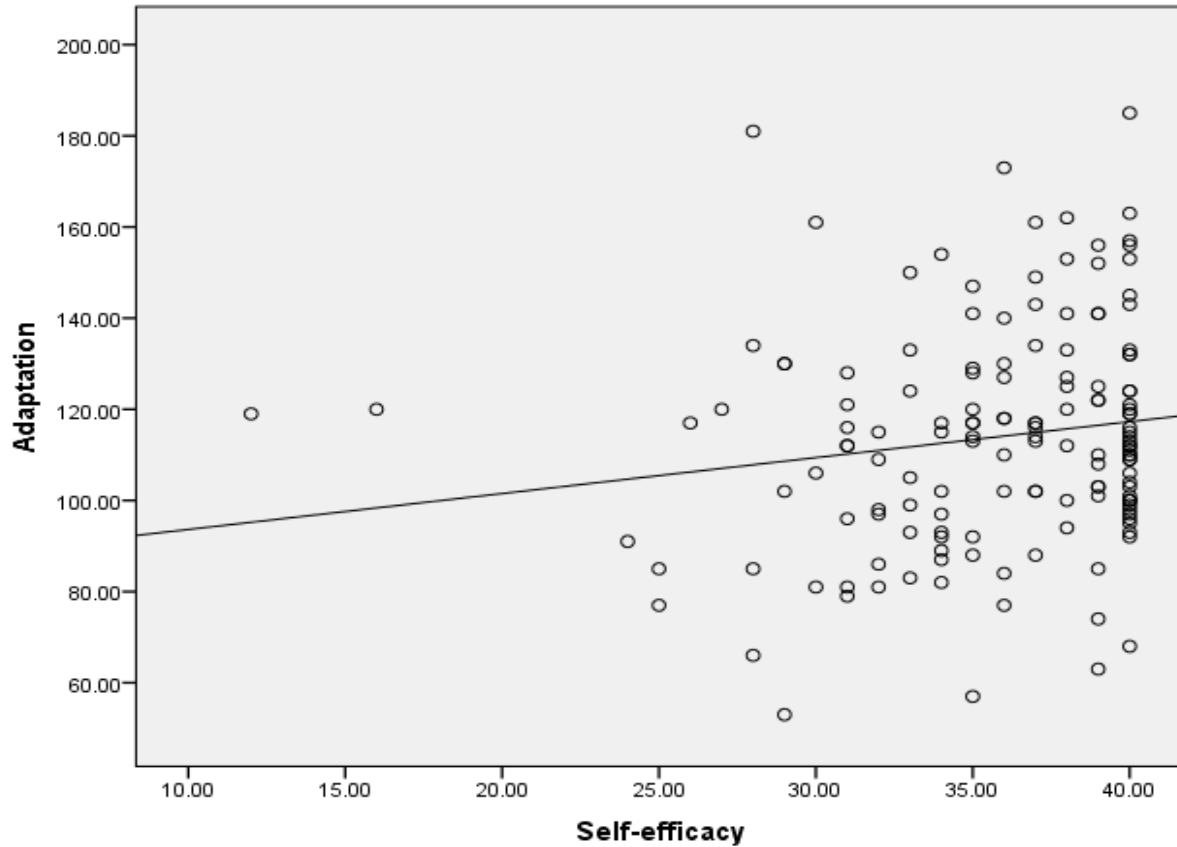


Figure 26: Correlation between first-year undergraduate students' perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation at the University of Zambia

Regression test findings in table 12 showed that R Square stood at .023, indicating that self-efficacy accounted only for 2% of variation in adaptation. Meaning that other factors accounted for the remaining 98%.

Table 12: Variation of perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1 | .152 ^a | .023 | .017 |

Predictors: (Constant), self-efficacy

4.5.1 Summary

Spearman's ranked order correlation test revealed a positive, but weak relationship between general self-efficacy and adaptation; $r = .157$, $p = .056$ ($p < .1$). Test of regression at .023 revealed that G.S.E accounted for 2% of adaptation, implying that other factors lent to the remaining 98%.

4.6 Summary of Chapter Four

67% (100) of the respondents fell in the high self-efficacy range, while 2% (3) fell in the low self-efficacy range. The remaining 17% (25) were above average range, 3% (4) below it, and 12% (18) fell within the average range itself. The minimum self-efficacy scored by respondents was found to be 12 and not 8 (lowest possible score), and the maximum found to be 40, the highest possible score.

The minimum adaptation scored by respondents was found to be 53, the mean found to be 114, while the maximum score was found to be 189. 51% (77) of respondents were found to fit into the lower adaptation range, while 47% (71) were found to be in the higher range. 2 (1%) were found to be among the average. Academic adaptation was found to have the highest negative scores of which dissatisfaction was expressed for 5 out of 7 statements.

Factors identified by respondents as capable of facilitating better adaption were found to be the need for accommodation, financial support, academic material, extra-curricular activities, recreational facilities and activities, a desire for improved social conduct, friends and family, improved methods, and more study space and lecture theatres.

Spearman's ranked order correlation test revealed a positive, but weak relationship between G.S.E and adaptation; $r = .157$, $p = .056$ ($p < .1$). Test of regression at .023 revealed that G.S.E accounted for 2% of adaptation, implying that other factors lent to the remaining 98%. The following chapter will comprise a discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Guided by the study questions, the prior chapter laid out the findings of the study. This chapter will now elucidate these findings. According to David and Sutton (2004) the discussion must tie together the main research findings, main elements of the literature review...as well as reflect on the research limitations. In line with this, this chapter will discuss the findings revealed in the previous chapter, allowing for interpretation of these findings in line with not only the research objectives, and reviewed literature, but also guiding theories. Limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for future research will also be made.

5.1 Perceived general self-efficacy range of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia

The majority of students at 67% were found to have high self-efficacy, while only 3% fell in the low self-efficacy range. At this point it is important to be reminded what general self-efficacy is. Chen, et.al (2001) define it is that which ‘captures differences among individuals in their tendency to view themselves as capable of meeting task demands in a broad array of contexts.’

In assessing the individual statements on the G.S.E scale, highest G.S.E scores were recorded for the following statements; *I believe I can succeed at most tasks to which I set my mind* (81%), *I will be able to achieve most of the goals I set for myself* (77%), *in general I think I can achieve tasks that are important* (77%). Indeed, G.S.E strongly influences the goals an individual sets for him or herself through self-appraisal, as Ramachaudran (1998: 4) posits ‘the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer is their commitment to them.’ In addition, although only 88 (59%) (appendix IV, table 8) of respondents expressed that they were confident they could manage well on many different tasks, this was the only statement in which none of the respondents strongly disagreed either.

This, in line with the tenets of the social cognitive theory in which individuals are seen to not merely function in response to the environment, as an external pressure producing an internal and then external behaviour automatically, but have the capacity to themselves create an impression on the environment and possibly influence or change the types of experiences that

they have. Bandura (2001: 4) puts it thus, ‘they are agents of experiences rather than simply under-goers of experiences.’

This highlights not only the motivational aspect of G.S.E, but also situational outcome-expectancies, and action-outcome expectancies espoused by Bandura in his social cognitive theory, and the role that they play in driving an individual’s belief in his/her capabilities. Although Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, to a larger extent, points at the influence of the environment on the individual, it also acknowledges that the ‘form, power, content and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the characteristics of the developing person; of the environment – both immediate and more remote – in which the processes are taking place,’ (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 39). In other words, although the environment and consistent interactions within that environment have an influencing role on an individual, the effects or impacts of that environment vary systematically depending on the characteristics of the individual experiencing that environment.

Furthermore, regards the statements; *I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges* 64% (96) of respondents agreed strongly, and 65% (98) agreed strongly to the statement *when facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will succeed*. This is in line with Schunk (1994) who found that students with high G.S.E not only studied harder, but persisted longer when they faced or approached difficulties.

Additionally, although the statement, *even when things are tough I can manage quite well* only had 45% (68) of respondents agree strongly, only .7% (1) strongly disagreed with this statement. As Jerusalem and Mittag (1995) and Jerusalem and Schwarzer (1992) found, individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely than not to view a potentially stressful situation as a challenge rather than a threat, compared to those with low self-efficacy. Bandura (1994) also asserts that this persistence at a task develops a higher know-how and interest toward it, resulting paradoxically, in an intrinsic interest towards the task.

The part that previous travelling experience, and boarding school experience might have played in garnering this result of the majority high G.S.E must be acknowledged. 86% (129) of respondents indicated having travelled outside their hometowns before (figure 4), while 51%

(51) indicated that they had attended boarding school before (figure 4). This in line with Bandura (1997) who postulates that self-efficacy beliefs stem from four processes among which are experience, and vicarious experience, processes that tend to influence or increase self-efficacy.

5.2 Students' perception of how they are adapting to their learning environment

51% (77) of respondents were found to fall below the average mark for adaptation meaning that they had lower adaptation than the average, in which only 1% (2) fell. The remaining 47% (71) of respondents fell above average. The majority of students therefore, though by a small margin, were experiencing challenges with adaptation.

Social

Social support plays a significant role in the transition into university life for first time students and their adaptation to it (Schlossberg et.al, 1995; Bejerano, 2014). It is an interactive process which couples the function and quality of social relationships with the aid and assistance received from others, thereby helping individuals to cope or exchange resources (Hu, 2010: 12). In fact, 'the main or direct effect model hypothesizes that social support is beneficial for everyone, even those not under stress,' (Hu, 2010: 29). Studies in communication research have indeed found that social interactions are a fundamental source of support and play an integral role in the process of adaptation of students to university (Crede & Niehorster, 2012; Kranstuber et.al 2012; Wang, 2012).

Although six out of seven statements to do with social adaptation received positive scores, the statement '*I have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting*' received a higher negative score (bar graph 7). That is, 41% of respondents indicated that the stated situation did not apply remotely to them, while 23% indicated that it applied extremely closely to them. Meaning that more students doubted their capability to positively interact with other persons in the university setting, whether student, or staff. This brought to the fore the idea that the majority of the students were not necessarily plagued by a lack of adequate social support, but instead doubted their own capabilities to be such a social support for others, or their peers.

Emotional

Regarding emotional adaptation, four out of seven statements received higher positive scores. However, among the three statements that received negative scores, the statement, 'I worry a lot about my university expenses' recorded the highest negative score at 51%. Meaning that 51% of students indicated that they were experiencing anxieties regards finances, compared to the 21% who indicated that this concern did not apply remotely to them at all. This finding agrees with findings by Kasayira, et.al (2007) who found that aside from peer pressure and time management, one of the main sources of stress for students in developing countries, especially those who did not stay on-campus is the lack of finance to meet basic needs.

The statement *I am often tired lately* recorded the second highest negative score of 47% (bar graph 9). Meaning that 41% of students indicated that they were experiencing tiredness lately compared to the 19% who indicated that this situation did not apply remotely to them at all. Furthermore, regarding the statement, *I have lost or gained too much weight recently*, 31% of respondents indicated that the situation applied extremely closely to them, while 28% indicated that it did not apply remotely to them at all (bar graph 14). This perhaps should not be surprising as studies have found that poor adjustment results in psychological and psychosomatic (poor physical health caused by internal conflict or stress) problems (Shin & Abel, 1999; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988). These findings as such indicate that respondents in this study were experiencing difficulties with regard certain aspects of emotional adaptation to their learning environment. This perhaps, exacerbated by the fact that respondents' ages ranged from a minimum of 18, to a maximum of 24. A young chronological age has been linked to increased distress during the transition into college or university (Poyrazli, 2007).

Academic

The academic aspect of adaptation had five out of seven statements record higher negative scores, meaning that there was more dissatisfaction in this area than the other two (social and personal-emotional). The statements that recorded these negative scores were; I am satisfied with the variety of courses at 51% (figure 19), I am satisfied with the quality of my course at 47% (figure 20), I am satisfied with my lecturers and professors at 46% (figure 21), I enjoy writing course assignments at 42% (figure 22), and I am satisfied with the academic situation at 38% (figure 23).

This situation may be explained by Inkelas, et,al (2006) who found that aside from students' perceptions of resident hall climates, and college social environments, the most significant predictors of productive academic adjustment for college students were curricular environments, and faculty and peer interactions.

Although the general or overall adaptation of respondents was found to fall in the lower range, a number of variations existed at the sub-levels, so that it was seen that respondents faced more challenges adapting academically compared to socially and emotionally. Furthermore, this difference between the higher and lower adaptation was minimal at 4%. This minimal difference may be attributed to the fact that the educational level of respondents parents or guardians was found to be highest for tertiary education (47%), and upper secondary school (26%). Various studies reveal that being the first to attend college in a family does not only negatively affect mental health, but also deteriorate an individual's ability to cope and attain a degree ((Davis, 2010; Jenkins, et.al, 2013; Rubin, 2012; Ward et al., 2012). This is especially so because the level of education of a parent or guardian has an effect on the social economic status of a student. It is due to this idea perhaps that Pierce and Sarason (1996) in Tunde and Adesokan (2013) postulate that coping involves personality characteristics, personal relationships and *situational parameters*. If these three elements positively combine, they produce individuals who have more confidence, persistence, assertiveness, and expectations of success.

5.3 Factors that affect and facilitate the adaptation of first year undergraduate students to their learning environment

Accommodation

Accommodation was isolated by respondents as a major ingredient necessary for adaptation, with many stating that accommodation would help them adapt to all three spheres of university life under focus in this study (academic, social, emotional). This perhaps comes as no surprise, since demographic findings indicated that 97 (65%) of respondents were not accommodated on campus, while 19 (13%) were accommodated at boarding houses. Indeed, research by Enochs and Roland (2006) found a higher association between social adjustment and living in on-campus dormitories, this is in tandem with the finding that first year college students adjusted

much more easily when they could gain high levels of independence in their first year away from home. Kaya (2004) in addition, found that better chances of students socially adjusting to college existed when they felt their fellow residence hall occupants were cooperative, friendly, or a source of peer support. With this aspect as such missing to a greater extent, possibly coupled with concerns over commuting costs to and from campus, it is no wonder that respondents felt that adequate availability of on-campus accommodation would make it easier for them to adapt to university life.

Financial support

A great number of respondents stated that if financial assistance were available, they would more easily adapt to university life as the incapacity to meet financial requirements to attend the university was a great source of worry, and anxiety that affected not only their academic, but also their social life. Wilson (1994) and Mudhovozi (2010) found that worries over finances were a major source of concern and anxiety for students in developing countries. These financial worries ranged from tuition fees to worries about day to day expenses. This is also supported by findings of the statement *I worry a lot about university expenses* (figure 12) to which 77 (51%) of respondents indicated that they did worry a lot about university expenses. Furthermore, at the time of the study, although 79 (53%) of the respondents were on government sponsorship, and 31 (21%) family sponsored, another 31 (21%) were on appeal lists awaiting acceptance or rejection of their bursary applications. Government or family sponsorship also did not guarantee that day to day, and even unexpected costs could be covered adequately. This situation perhaps could also explain why lack of satisfaction with the academic situation was widespread (figure 23).

Academic Material

A need for better availability and quality of academic material in form of books and simplified notes also arose as a major theme. A resonating need even among these was for the university library to stock books recommended by lecturers as recommended readings, and for computers and internet to be more widely accessible. It becomes apparent that this is a concern that has resonated at UNZA for more than two decades as a study by Wilson (1994) at the institution found that the scarcity of reference books, among other problems such as academic load was

among the problems negatively affecting the proper adaptation of students. However, as times have changed and the library is not the only place from which students can garner academic materials, there was as such a call by students, for internet or wi-fi to be made available on the whole university campus. As well as for more computers to be made available in the library. Indeed, Mudhovozi (2012) also found among other factors, that the non-availability of referenced books was one of the academic challenges faced by first-year students at a university in Zimbabwe. This opinion by respondents for better availability of academic materials, including internet availability and computers in the library to better assist their adaptation to university life may be linked to the fact that the majority, highlighted concerns over finances.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Given the chance to state their opinion on what they felt would make their adaptation to university life easier, respondents also expressed a desire for more extra-curricular activities to be made available or improved. Such activities have been found to have social and psychological benefits generally, but even more so for those individuals who find it especially difficult to make friends (Hoza, et.al, 2000; Jackson, et.al, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1993; Pierce, et.al, 1991). This need for more extra-curricular activities could have been driven by the fact that although, in reacting to the statement *I am finding it difficult to make friends*, 46% indicated having no such problems, a total of 33% indicated that they were experiencing this difficulty (figure 8). Participation in organized extra-curricular activities is of great benefit to such individuals, especially those with a history of negative friendship experiences, to develop high-quality friendships and feelings of social acceptance and satisfaction (Bohnert, et.al, 2007). Indeed, positive correlations have been found between the intensity (number of hours per week involved in activities) and breadth (number of different types of activities), and better academic and psychological adjustment (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Jacobs, et.al, 2005) to not only university, but any new situation.

Studies have also found that for individuals with poor-quality friendships that do not meet their need for intimacy, social support, and undermine their social comfort and satisfaction experience greater loneliness (Hoza, et.al, 2000; Jackson, et.al, 2000; Parker & Asher, 1993; Pierce, et.al, 1991).

This desire for more extra-curricular activities is also in line with the findings in which 50 (33%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with extra-curricular activities at UNZA, but a close 39 (26%) indicated that this was not the case (figure 9). Furthermore, even those not having difficulties in this aspect, could still feel a need for extra-curricular activities in order to broaden not only their social interactions, but also their knowledge, and skills.

Recreational Facilities and Activities

Participants also stated that they would adapt more easily to life on campus if more recreational facilities and activities were available. Indeed, communication research studies have found that social interactions are a fundamental source of support and play an integral role in the process of adaptation of students to college. Specifically, interactions from and among members of student's social networks (Crede & Niehorster, 2012; Kranstuber et.al 2012; Jones, 2008; Thompson & Mazer, 2009; Wang, 2012). Recreational activities as such, provide an apt occasion through which such social networks can be built more easily.

Furthermore, in order to cater for those individuals with lesser social skills, findings of a study on the role of organized activities in facilitating social adaptation across the transition to college by Bohnert et.al (2007: 203), 'suggest that the benefits of activity involvement were stronger or isolated to emerging adults at risk for poor social adaptation outcomes ... emerging adults with a poor history of social adaptation may carry forward social information processing biases or social skills deficits that make the transition to college particularly difficult.' This study further found that involvement in organized social activities for such individuals provided a smaller and more structured social context within the larger college environment that could enhance their comfort and feelings of social acceptance due to their competence in those domains. As such, the availability and promotion of appropriate social activities within the learning environment can play an important role in enhancing a smooth social adaptation of students, by providing them a means through which they can express themselves and find common standing with others who share common hobbies, talents, interests, and skills.

Fredricks and Eccles (2006); Jacobs, et.al (2005), and Salami (2011) in addition, expound that better availability or provision of constructive recreational activities could play a role in minimizing stress and anxiety. The presence of such stress and anxiety as such, could be among

the reasons that respondents felt that the provision and availability of recreational facilities and activities would help them adapt better.

Social Conduct

One unexpected finding (in view of reviewed literature), was that a number of participants highlighted aspects of social conduct that they felt were a hindrance to their adaptation. Several respondents highlighted that they wished fellow students weren't so rude, that a moral code of conduct be put in place at the university, and even that members of the opposite sex be not allowed in dormitories. This is in line with Inkelas, et.al (2006) who found that generally, among the most significant predictors of productive academic transition or adjustment were students' perception of faculty and peer interactions, college social environments, and resident hall climates. This indicates the important role that social conduct can play in promoting a smoother transition to college life and general warm school climate. This perhaps should come as no surprise since 61 (41%) of respondents in reacting to the statement *I have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting* indicated that they did not feel that they did have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting. This is in comparison to the 35 (23%) who indicated that they did have enough social skills to get along well with others in the university setting (figure 11).

Furthermore, respondents also highlighted a desire for some lecturers to be kinder, as this would help them better adapt to the university environment, especially academically. This agrees with findings by Bejerano (2014); Ellis (2000); Schrodt et.al (2009) and Jones (2008), who found that interaction with teachers or lecturers is particularly influential in shaping positive student outcomes. This desire for better quality social conduct and interactions may indeed be among the reasons that respondents also felt that availability of more extra-curricular, and recreational activities would better help with their adaptation to university life.

Friends and Family

Another theme that emerged was that of friends and family, with a number of respondents attributing better social and emotional adaptation to the availability of family and high school friends. This is in line with a study conducted by Thurber and Walton (2012) who found that homesickness was among the major socio-emotional challenges faced by first-year students.

Thurber and Walton (2012) as such highlight the provision of preventive measures to help lessen the impact of homesickness on students. These measures include; providing detailed information about the school such as its history, geography, culture, where to find support resources, a positive promotion of the new environment, initiation of social contacts prior to arrival or social networking, provision of healthy coping options such as sport, exercise and other student activities. They also recommend the provision of information about peer or professional support available on and around campus, and encouraging self-compassion as a means of lessening or remedying the impact of some of the negative feelings first year undergraduate students may experience. This can also be said to tally with demographic findings in which a total of 78 (53%) of respondents' hometowns were outside Lusaka Province (figure 1). Although 72 (48%) of respondents' hometowns were within Lusaka Province, the novelty itself of being away from home and completely independent could explain why this aspect emerged. As such, the idea of utter independence, could have been among the major reasons for this impression by respondents that if friends and family were more readily available, or closer, they would find adaptation to university life easier.

Family and friends represent social support, a factor that according to Bejerano (2014: 3) 'can also undermine the transition process by making it harder for students to adjust if the resources they are drawing from are insufficient,' (Bejerano, 2014: 3). In other words, the lack of adequate social support in the college or university for the new students can undermine proper adaptation. Mutambara and Veni (2012) in fact found that friends on campus were the main source of support regards adjustment. Healthy socialization enhancing processes both within and outside lecture theatres need to be promoted, as they have been found to help students with their academic and social adjustment (Mutambara & Veni, 2012).

Although peer interactions and socialization have however, been mostly viewed favourably in terms of their positive effects, negative or unhealthy and unproductive peer influence and pressure must not be overlooked. As such, there is need for students to be informed of the negative aspects of peer support in terms of reliance and influence (Bejerano, 2014). Bejerano (2014) further expound that students must not be left to deal with or seek counselling to deal with issues such as depression or other factors that contribute to it such as low self-esteem, on their own. As 'students do not often use the support services that are available to them,' (Benson,

Hewitt, Devos, Crosling, & Heagney, 2009 In Bejerano, 2014: 120). Mattanah et al (2010) found that participation in peer-led support groups by first-year students themselves, and together resulted in reduced loneliness and higher perceptions of social support with regard to the college transition.

Improved Administrative Methods

Another theme that emerged was to do with methods utilized. A number of students expressed a wish for lecturers to use a slower pace as they conducted lectures. In addition, students also expressed a wish for more tutorials and one-on-one interactions with tutors and lecturers. As well as availability of the final academic timetable (aside from drafts), and a less compressed syllabus. This is in line with recommendations made by Thurber and Walton (2012), in which they suggest that information such as where to find resident advisors, mental health advisors such as counselors, payment points, and class schedules be made more available as a means of lessening the impact of some of the negative feelings that first-year undergraduate students may face. It is perhaps, no wonder as such, that many respondents highlighted challenges in academic adaptation, and indicated greater dissatisfaction with various aspects of the academic situation.

Study Space and Lecture Theatres

With regards the school environment, respondents expressed a need for not only more lecture theatres, but lecture theatres with more sitting capacity, as well as space or places where they could study. This is in line with a study conducted by Inkelas, et.al (2006) on living-learning programmes and first-generation college students' academic and social transition to college, who found that among the most significant predictors of productive academic transition or adjustment were students' perception of curricular environments.

It can be noted that these findings pertaining to the third objective of the study (to define and analyze factors that facilitate the adaptation of first year undergraduate students to their learning environment), to a larger extent fall in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Particularly the mesosystem which has been described as 'a pattern of activities, social roles and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face to face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in the immediate

environment,' (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 3). In this study, it was found that the lack of adequate accommodation, financial support, academic materials, extra-curricular activities, recreational facilities and activities, study space and lecture theatres, as well as a yearning for improved social conduct, academic methods, and family and friends from home, were inhibiting a smoother engagement in such stated sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in the immediate environment, or simply put; adaptation.

Despite the fact that the majority 77 (51%) respondents were found to fall in the lower adaptation range, the majority were also found to possess high G.S.E, despite these external, or environmental influences upon their person and welfare. Thus, lending credence to Bandura's conception that human beings evoke their own cognitive or rational impressions that guide their actions, or facilitate their choice of action in spite of circumstances within a prevailing environment in which they find themselves. This may simply be viewed as a persistent faith in ones' capabilities that prevent the individual from surrendering to the challenges posed by an environment.

5.4 Relationship that exists between perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation to their learning environment

The Spearman correlation test revealed that a positive relationship existed between general self-efficacy and perceived adaptation. This is in line with various studies that have found positive correlations between self-efficacy and student adaptation to their university life (Lai, 2014; Sherer & Adams, 1983; Leung & Berry, 2001; Black, et.al, 1991; Harrison, et al., 1996; Hirose, et.al, 1999).

However, at $r = .157$, $p = .056$ ($p < .1$) this relationship in this study was found to be weak. This, unlike Chemers, et.al (2001) who found that self-efficacy showed a powerful relationship with not only adaptation, but academic performance as well. This apparent difference with this study may be due to the fact that the study by Chemer et.al (2001) focused on the academic performance in terms of GPA (Grade Point Average), whereas, this study made use of students perceived general adaptation among the three spheres of social, emotional and academic adaptation. However, the study by Chemers et.al (2001) did reveal that generally, students who

enter college with confidence in their capability to perform well especially academically do perform significantly better than do less confident students.

Gajdzik (2005) in a study of the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and adjustment of international graduate students and American graduate students found that there was no significant relationship between general self-efficacy and international student's adaptation. Although the study by Gajdzik focused on social cultural adaptation, similarities with this study cannot be overlooked as respondents held from varied ethnic backgrounds. However, Gajdzik did acknowledge that this disparity with the majority other findings may have been due to the fact that his sample population consisted graduate students while most other research focused on undergraduate students.

In this study, possible reasons for this disparity in terms of a linear relationship between G.S.E and adaptation compared to most other studies reviewed in this paper, will be attributed to socio-economic disparities. Respondents from the majority other countries sampled in the literature hailed from comparatively more developed countries, and may not necessarily share basic concerns presented here such as a gross lack of on-campus accommodation, finance, lack of adequate academic material, lecture theatres and study space. As such, they may have more room left for efficacy concerns, which can be said to be top-level in a needs hierarchy. Nonetheless, the relationship found to exist between perceived G.S.E and adaptation in this study; however small, must not be ignored. For perhaps, it is only when reaching the top is the aim, that the more basic of needs can be set as goals and attained.

Following regression analysis, G.S.E in this study, was found to be .023, accounting for only 2% of variation in adaptation. Implying that other factors accounted for the remaining 98% of adaptation of first-year undergraduate students. It can be deduced that the findings from the third objective of the study (accommodation, finance, extra-curricular activities, recreational facilities and activities, social conduct, friends and family, study space and lecture theatres) are among this remaining 98%. However, it cannot be ascertained to what degree exactly as this was beyond the scope of this study.

5.5 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Practice

Limitations are those foreseen factors that can act as impediments or restrictions and may affect the validity and objectivity of the study findings (Puhan, Akl, Bryant, Xie, Apolone, & Riet, 2012). The following have been identified as possible limitations in this study.

The major limitation to this study was the limited availability of information or data regarding the topic of G.S.E and adaptation. This meant that the study had to rely heavily on dated literature regarding the subject. However, as the findings of the study to a larger extent fell in line with the findings of other similar research, it can be said that this time factor did not necessarily act as a hindrance to the obtaining of findings that support findings of those previous studies, and are supported by them as well.

General self-efficacy and adaptation can both be said to be abstract constructs, and as such may be hard to adequately measure. However, both these constructs manifest themselves in resultant attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours that can be gauged by asking the right questions. As such, the study made use of the New General Self-Efficacy Questionnaire developed by Chen, Gully and Eden (2001), as this scale has been found to have a higher and stronger reliability and factor validity respectively compared to other self-efficacy scales (Alexopoulos & Asimakopoulou, 2009; Scherbaum, et.al, 2006). The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk (1984) and consisting 67 items was also used as a guide from which to adapt relevant phrases concerning social, emotional and academic adjustment. This scale has demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, reliability, as well as criterion-related validity (Sandberg & Lynn, 1992).

Another limitation for this study was in the sample size. Although this sample size was adequate to derive information about the phenomenon under study, the size itself was not large enough to derive generalizations to the whole population which stood at an approximated 5, 000 first year under-graduate students. It is on this basis, that it is suggested that the University of Zambia (DOSA) office conduct this type of research, as part of the procedures to be undertaken by students during their first few weeks in order to garner more precise information that can be used in bettering the welfare of students at the institution.

5.6 Summary of Chapter Five

This chapter has discussed the findings presented in chapter four. This discussion has been done in relation to the findings of other studies reviewed and presented in chapter two, as well as the theories presented in chapter one that were adopted in this study. These theories were Bandura's Social Cognitive theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory. Possible reasons for the divergent findings in some cases, compared to those of reviewed literature were also highlighted. The next chapter will be a conclusion drawn from the findings, discussion, and theories adopted in this study. It will also outline the subsequent recommendations drawn thereof.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter discussed the findings presented in chapter four in relation to reviewed literature in chapter two, as well as the theories employed for the study. This chapter will present a summary of the study purpose, objectives, methodology, findings and discussion before drawing a conclusion based on the findings and discussion. Recommendations will also be drawn thereof and outlined as the final part of this final chapter.

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate what relationship existed between students' perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation to their learning environment. The study was conducted at the University of Zambia in Lusaka District. In addition, the study also focused on defining and analyzing factors that students felt would facilitate better adaptation. This was prompted by a study conducted by Wilson (1994) at UNZA and the findings thereof that indicated that students were facing various challenges with adapting to university life among which were a lack of adequate finances, accommodation, and academic material. This study sought to determine whether self-efficacy could be used as a predictor of probable adaptation by discovering what relationship exists between the two. In doing so, the study hoped to play a role in facilitating the institution (UNZA), and perhaps other learning institutions to develop strategies to help students to better adapt to their new learning environment, and subsequently improve their social, academic, and emotional well-being.

The general objective of the study was to determine the relationship that existed between perceived general self-efficacy and adaptation to their learning environment, while the specific objectives of the study were 1) to determine the perceived general self-efficacy of first year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia; 2) to investigate first year undergraduate student's perception of how they are adapting to their learning environment; and 3) to define and analyse factors that facilitate the adaptation of first year undergraduate students to their learning environment.

A mixed method research design was adopted, specifically, concurrent triangulation. Data collection was done through a semi-structured questionnaire comprising four sections

(demographic information, qualitative questions, Self-efficacy, and adaptation scale). A total of 160 students were sampled, however, because 10 of these did not meet the inclusion criteria of the study, only 150 were analyzed.

The objective of this study was fulfilled and research question answered. The findings from the study revealed that the majority of the respondents fell in the high S.E range (67%), while majority (51%) fell in the lower adaptation range. A relationship between G.S.E and adaptation was also found to be positive, but non-linear and statistically weak at $r = .157$, $p = .056$ ($p < .1$). G.S.E was also found to account for only 2% variation in adaptation, meaning that other factors accounted for the remaining 98%. These other factors highlighted by respondents were found to be concerns over accommodation, finances, a lack of adequate academic materials, a desire for more and better extra-curricular activities, recreational facilities and activities, improved social conduct, a yearning for friends and family from home, and a desire for improved methods, as well as for more study space and lecture theatres.

This study in line with other studies therefore, concludes that there is a relationship between G.S.E and adaptation. However, unlike such studies, this study found that this relationship was weak, and that the relationship was non-linear. This is supported by the fact that G.S.E was only found to account for 2% variation in adaptation. In addition, the findings also showed that the difference between higher and lower adaption was only 4%, and many were especially facing challenges regards academic adaptation compared to social and personal-emotional adaptation. An unexpected factor that emerged among the factors students felt would better facilitate their adaptation, was a desire for better social conduct on the part of fellow students and lecturers, specifically regards kindness and politeness. Another social aspect that emerged in line with this was with regards a desire for more upright moral conduct.

The fact that a weak and non-linear relationship was found between G.S.E and adaptation, may be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents were experiencing lower adaptation, but also fell in the high G.S.E range. The 51% of respondents in the lower adaptation range, or even the 1% average must not be looked upon as mere statistics because the negative effects of poor adaptation are vast as highlighted in the literature review section. As such, adaptation promoting activities must be promoted, through the promotion of efficacy promoting activities. This is

because the factors found to promote adaptation also build or enhance self-efficacy, and vice-versa.

Such activities may include those highlighted by respondents themselves that are in line with those of findings from other studies. These include activities such as improved extra-curricular activities and recreational activities. HPBs must also be encouraged or inculcated during this sensitive period of life for young adults. As Hu (2010) expostulates, coping mechanisms adopted during this phase of life, often continue past this phase into later adulthood.

A play-off between the social cognitive theory and ecological systems theory was also found to be that although the environment acts on the human being, in this case factors such as the lack of accommodation, finance, study space and lecture theatres, study materials, to mention a few, the human being within that environment also has the cognitive ability to act and determine his/her will upon that environment, to an extent of overcoming it by enduring it. How this endurance is done, must become of keen interest to institutional administrators as the young adults within the campus, become the adults in society who carry with them the coping behaviours and cultures developed or learnt at this stage, so that the fostered micro-system, whether productive or unproductive, shapes the macro-system of future generations whether productively or unproductively. Learners have demonstrated that they in fact know what would enhance their adaptation, what must not be denied them, is the opportunity of choice, to choose healthy options. In other words, provisions must be made to bridge the distance between what students feel they need to enhance their adaptation, and meeting of those needs. It is in this vain that the study makes the following recommendations.

6.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study. The final recommendation is a recommendation for future research:

- (i) The Ministry of Higher Education through the UNZA should expedite the process of construction of more hostels to alleviate the shortage of on campus accommodation

- (ii) The creation of more extra-curricular activities and recreational facilities must not only be facilitated by the UNZA administration, through DOSA, but also promoted or advertised adequately, and even campaigned for, where need be.
- (iii) UNZA management should facilitate or negotiate industrial sponsorship for students who find themselves in dire straits, especially vulnerable students who cannot afford to pay school fees, and where not selected for government sponsorship
- (iv) UNZA administration should strive to decompress or normalise the academic calendar in order to not only lessen the burden of stress and academic pressure on both students and lecturers, but also promote quality assurance.
- (v) Further research might also be conducted on the same subject with the employment of one or more of the factors identified as promoting adaptation used as an intervention in order to gauge its/their exact extent on adaptation to the learning environment.

6.3. Summary of Chapter Six

This chapter has provided a summary of the study purpose, objectives, methodology, while also drawing an overall picture of the outcome of the findings and discussion in relation to reviewed literature, and theories utilized. The chapter has also outlined recommendations based on the study findings, and is as such the final chapter of this study.

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APPENDICES
Appendix I



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Telephone: 291381
Telegram: UNZA, LUSAKA
Telex: UNZALU ZA 44370

PO Box 32379
Lusaka, Zambia
Fax: +260-1-292702

Date: 15th MARCH, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam


RE: FIELD WORK FOR MASTERS/ PhD STUDENTS

The bearer of this letter Mr./Ms. MERCY M. MWANZA..... Computer number. 2015130884..... is a duly registered student at the University of Zambia, School of Education.

He/She is taking a Masters/PhD programme in Education. The programme has a fieldwork component which he/she has to complete.

We shall greatly appreciate if the necessary assistance is rendered to him/her/.

Yours faithfully


Emmy Mbozi (Dr)
ASSISTANT DEAN POSTGRADUATE STUDIES- SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 32379, LUSAKA

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA
ASSISTANT DEAN (PG)
15 MAR 2016
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 32379, LUSAKA

cc: Dean-Education
Director-DRGS

Appendix II

CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to take part in the research study “**Relationship between self-efficacy and adaptation among first-year undergraduate students at the University of Zambia in Lusaka**”.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without affecting your relationship with the researcher. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to terminate the interview at any point you so choose at any point during the process; additionally, you have the right to request that the interviewer not use any of your interview material.

Confidentiality

This study is anonymous. The researcher will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. No information will be asked of you that might lead to your identity being discovered; only your signature and date of interview will be required. The information gathered from this study will be used for purely academic purposes. No harm will befall you as a result of taking part in this study, to ensure this you are guaranteed of total anonymity.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

You have the right and are encouraged to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by the researcher before, during or after the research. If you have any further questions about the study, at any time feel free to contact the researcher, Mercy Mwanza at email m_mwanza@ymail.com or by mobile phone number 0968-405 446.

Sign _____

Date: _____

Appendix III

SELF-EFFICACY STATEMENT TABLES

Table 6: Compared to other people I can do most tasks well

| Degree | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | 4 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| Disagree | 6 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Neutral | 31 | 20.7 | 20.8 |
| Agree | 42 | 28.0 | 28.2 |
| Agree strongly | 66 | 44.0 | 44.3 |
| Total | 149 | 99.3 | 100.0 |
| Missing System | 1 | .7 | |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | |

Table 7: I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges

| Degree | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree strongly | 3 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Disagree | 1 | .7 | .7 |
| Neutral | 15 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Agree | 35 | 23.3 | 23.3 |
| Agree strongly | 96 | 64.0 | 64.0 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table 8: I am confident I can manage well on many different tasks

| Degree | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Disagree | 4 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| Neutral | 15 | 10.0 | 10.0 |
| Agree | 43 | 28.7 | 28.7 |
| Agree strongly | 88 | 58.7 | 58.7 |
| Total | 150 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Appendix IV

QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A

1. How old were you on your last birthday? ____

2. What is your sex:

Male ____ Female ____

3. School:

School of Education ____ Humanities and Social Sciences ____ Natural Sciences ____

4. Province/hometown: _____

5. Residential area:

Low density ____ Medium density ____ High density ____

6. I have attended boarding school before: Yes ____ No ____

7. I am accommodated: at UNZA ____ at a boarding house ____ Neither ____

8. Have you ever travelled to countries, provinces, or towns outside of your hometown?

Yes ____ No ____

9. Highest level of education attained by parent/guardian. Please answer based on parent/guardian with highest level of education _____

10. Source of financial support. (Check all that apply):

Family ____ Self ____ Bursary ____ Scholarship ____

Other (specify) _____

Part B

Please answer the following by filling in the blanks

1. If
were available/improved I would comfortably get used to academic life at UNZA.
2. If.....
were available/improved I would more comfortably socialize at UNZA.
3. If.....
were available/improved I would feel less anxious/stressed at UNZA

Part C

On a range of 1 to 5, please tick a box with 1 representing disagree strongly, and 5 representing strongly agree

| | Agree Strongly | ← | → | Disagree Strongly | |
|--|-------------------|---|---|----------------------|---|
| 1. I will be able to achieve most of the goals I set for myself | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. When facing difficult tasks, I am certain I will succeed | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. In general I think I can achieve tasks that are important to me | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I believe I can succeed at most tasks to which I set my mind | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. I am confident I can manage well on many different tasks | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. Compared to other people, I can do most tasks well | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. Even when things are tough, I can manage quite well | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Part D

On a range of 1 to 9, please tick one box with 1 representing applies very closely to me and 9 representing does not apply to me at all

Applies very
closely to me ← → Does not apply
to me at all

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am finding it difficult to make friends | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 2. I involve myself with social activities at UNZA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 3. I have adequate social skills to get along well with others in the university setting | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 4. I have difficulties interacting with people of the opposite sex | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 5. I am satisfied with extra-curricular activities at UNZA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 6. Most of the time I feel lonely | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 7. I feel different from others in an undesirable way | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 8. Being independent has not been easy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. I am having trouble sleeping lately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10. Lately I have lost/gained a lot of weight | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 11. I am often tired lately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 12. Of late I have been feeling tense and nervous lately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 13. University expenses are a big worry for me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 14. I get angry too easily lately | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 15. I am satisfied with the quality of my course | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 16. I am satisfied with my lecturers and professors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 17. I am satisfied with the academic situation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 18. I am satisfied with the variety of courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 19. I enjoy writing course assignments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 20. Academic work has been difficult for me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 21. I do not use my study time efficiently | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

