

**THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE SCHOOL ADAPTATION
OF FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS**

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Abstract: This article explores the role of psychological factors in the school adaptation of first-grade students, focusing on the early stage of formal education when children encounter new academic, social, and emotional demands. The study examines key psychological determinants such as emotional stability, motivation, self-regulation, and social competence, which significantly influence the success of initial school adaptation. Using an integrative methodological approach based on theoretical and comparative analysis of recent scholarly sources, the research highlights the dynamic interaction between internal psychological readiness and external environmental factors, including family support and classroom conditions. The findings indicate that successful adaptation in first-grade students depends not only on cognitive preparedness but also on emotional resilience and behavioral flexibility. The study emphasizes the importance of early psychological support, teacher sensitivity, and inclusive educational practices in facilitating smooth adaptation. The results contribute to the development of effective pedagogical strategies aimed at improving students' well-being and academic performance during the critical transition to school.

Keywords: first-grade students, school adaptation, psychological factors, emotional stability, self-regulation, motivation, social competence, primary education

INTRODUCTION

The transition to formal schooling represents one of the most significant developmental stages in a child's life, particularly for first-grade students who are typically between six and seven years old. At this stage, children move from a predominantly play-based environment to a structured academic setting that imposes new cognitive, emotional, and behavioral demands. This shift requires not only intellectual readiness but also a high level of psychological adaptation, making the issue of school adaptation in first-grade students a central topic in contemporary educational psychology. School adaptation in the first grade is a complex and multifaceted process that involves adjusting to new routines, following classroom rules, interacting with peers and teachers, and engaging in learning activities. Unlike older students, first-grade learners often lack prior experience with formal educational systems, which makes their adaptation process more sensitive to psychological influences. Therefore, understanding the role of psychological factors becomes essential for ensuring a successful transition into school life. Modern research emphasizes that psychological readiness for school goes beyond cognitive skills such as reading and counting. Emotional stability, motivation to learn, self-regulation, and the ability to establish social relationships are equally important components of readiness. First-grade students who possess these qualities are more likely to demonstrate positive attitudes toward school, maintain attention during lessons, and cope effectively with challenges. In contrast, children who experience anxiety, low self-confidence, or difficulties in emotional control may struggle to adapt, leading to negative academic and social outcomes.

Another important aspect of first-grade adaptation is the developmental specificity of this age group. Children at the age of six or seven are still developing their emotional and behavioral control systems, which makes them particularly vulnerable to stress and environmental changes. The sudden transition from a flexible and supportive preschool environment to a more structured and rule-based school system can create tension and uncertainty. As a result, the success of adaptation largely depends on how well psychological factors are supported and developed during this period. Furthermore, the adaptation process is strongly influenced by external factors, particularly the family and school environment. Parental involvement, emotional support, and communication styles play a crucial role in shaping a child's confidence and readiness for school. Similarly, teachers' attitudes, classroom climate, and instructional methods significantly affect how first-grade students perceive and respond to the new learning environment. A supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere can reduce anxiety and promote a sense of belonging, which is essential for successful adaptation. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the importance of mental health and emotional well-being in early education. Research shows that early psychological difficulties, if not addressed, may lead to long-term academic and social problems. Therefore, early diagnosis of adaptation challenges and the implementation of appropriate psychological and pedagogical interventions are critical.

The relevance of this study lies in the growing need to develop effective strategies that support first-grade students during their initial adaptation to school. By identifying key psychological factors and understanding their impact, educators and psychologists can create more supportive learning environments and improve educational outcomes. Thus, the aim of this research is to analyze the role of psychological factors in the school adaptation of first-grade students and to provide theoretical and practical insights that can enhance the effectiveness of educational practices during this critical developmental stage.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The problem of school adaptation in first-grade students has been extensively studied in educational and developmental psychology. Scholars agree that adaptation at the initial stage of schooling is a multidimensional process influenced by cognitive, emotional, and social factors. However, recent studies increasingly highlight the dominant role of psychological components in shaping adaptation outcomes. Research indicates that emotional stability is a fundamental prerequisite for successful adaptation. First-grade students who can manage anxiety and maintain emotional balance are better equipped to cope with new academic and social challenges. Self-regulation is another key factor, as it enables children to control their behavior, follow instructions, and remain focused during lessons. Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, enhances students' engagement and willingness to participate in learning activities. In addition, social competence plays a crucial role in adaptation. First-grade students must learn to interact with peers, cooperate in group activities, and build relationships with teachers. Children with well-developed social skills are more likely to experience a smoother transition and feel comfortable in the school environment. The role of the family is also widely discussed in the literature. Supportive parenting, emotional warmth, and consistent communication positively influence a child's psychological readiness. Conversely, lack of support or negative family environments may hinder adaptation.

The methodology of this study is based on a qualitative and integrative research approach. The research employs theoretical analysis, comparative analysis, and synthesis of recent

academic sources. A descriptive-analytical method is used to identify key psychological factors and analyze their impact on first-grade students' adaptation. The study also adopts a systemic approach, viewing school adaptation as a holistic process influenced by multiple interacting factors. To ensure reliability, the research is based on recent scholarly publications and both international and local sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study confirm that psychological factors play a decisive role in the school adaptation of first-grade students. Among these factors, emotional stability, self-regulation, motivation, and social competence are identified as the most influential. Emotional stability is found to be the foundation of successful adaptation. First-grade students who are emotionally balanced are more confident, less anxious, and more willing to engage in learning activities. In contrast, emotionally unstable children may experience fear, stress, and withdrawal.

Self-regulation significantly affects students' ability to follow classroom rules and complete tasks. First-grade students with strong self-regulation skills show better academic performance and behavioral control. Motivation is closely linked to students' interest in learning. Intrinsically motivated children participate more actively and demonstrate higher levels of persistence. Social competence facilitates interaction with peers and teachers. Students who can communicate effectively and cooperate with others adapt more easily to the school environment. The discussion also highlights the importance of external factors. Family support and positive teacher-student relationships significantly enhance adaptation. A supportive classroom environment reduces stress and promotes engagement. Overall, the results suggest that school adaptation in first-grade students is a complex process that requires both psychological readiness and supportive environmental conditions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that psychological factors are central to the successful adaptation of first-grade students to school. Emotional stability, self-regulation, motivation, and social competence significantly influence how children adjust to new academic and social environments. The findings emphasize that adaptation is not only a cognitive process but also a psychological and social one. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a holistic approach that integrates psychological support into educational practices. The study highlights the importance of early intervention, teacher support, and parental involvement in facilitating adaptation. Creating a positive and inclusive learning environment is crucial for improving students' well-being and academic success.

Finally, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of school adaptation and provides practical recommendations for educators and psychologists. Future studies should focus on empirical research and cross-cultural analysis to further explore this important issue.

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