# The Predictive Role of Social Support in Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement among University Students

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## ABSTRACT

This research was designed to find out a predictive role of social support, social adjustment and academic achievement among university students. A sample of 300 (i.e. 150 male and 150 female) participants, age (18-25) was selected from Government College University Faisalabad. It was hypothesized that "Perceived Social Support would be a Predictor of Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement among University Students". Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and Social Adjustment Scale were used to measure the said variables and the Academic Achievement was obtained through percentage/CGPA of the previous semester. The Correlational analysis was used to find the relationship among variables. Multiple Regression explored the prediction and t-test was used to see the gender, age, class and family differences on variables of interest. Results indicated that the research variables are positively correlated with each other and perceived social support significantly predicted social adjustment and academic achievement among university students. Non-Significant class, age group and family systems differences were found on study variables. Moreover, significant differences between male and female students were also found on social support, social adjustment and academic achievement.

## Introduction

The aim of the study is to find out the correlations of social support, social adjustment and academic achievement among University students. When youngsters move from a high school or college to the university life, they find new world around them. They faced lots of psychosocial changes. Those who find support from family, friends and society make healthy adjustment and seem to be more successful in academics and other areas of life. Social support (both formal and informal) in terms of social relationships, has been studied broadly by social scientists since 1970[s] although research involving similar concepts like social network, social capital, social ties, and social integration was prior to 1970[s], it was not until mid-1970[s] that studies on social support as a different concepts came into existence.

Social support is known as the physical and emotional comfort given to us by our family, friends, colleagues and others. Moreover we are also part of a network of individuals who love and care for us, and value and think well of us (Fairbrother, 2011).

Gottlieb (2000) explained social support as process of interaction between relationships which helps to improve coping, self-esteem, belongingness and competence through exchanges of physical or psychological resources either actual or perceived".

Emmanual, John and Sun (2012) studied the relationship between different demographic variables like age and education and social support during parental period. Social support was investigated by the Maternal Social Support Scale (MSSS). Social support scale was found to be

independent relationship among demographic variables like age and education.

Abadi (2012) inspected a cross sectional research which was conducted in Tehran, Iran and Akabarabadi. He studied relationship between many factors such as social support and some demographic variables. The review of his research involved a self-developed demographic form and the social support Questionnaire. Results revealed the significant relationship between social supports along with demographic factors.

Gottlieb, Cohen and Underwood (2000) mentioned 3 major types of social support over and over again sited in the emotional writing (i.e., emotional, informational and physical or instrumental support). Emotional Support is that which provide an individual emotion of being loved and cared for, in those way attractive feelings of sense of worth. Informational support assists in response and support in problem solving by contribution written or verbal in sequence. Substantial support is through support supplied to an individual.

Cohen (1998) explained ideas on upward thoughts associated to social support, trauma and physical conditions. He sight social support as a major term adding many feature of a person's system of social assets. His fundamental hypothesis is supported on the thought that social support, alongside with other issues (i.e., socioeconomic status, mental health, trauma and personality), has a noteworthy effected health.

Pandith, Malik and Gnaie (2012) expressed that the significance of "adjustment" in reference book is that, make reasonable, adjust, organize, change and correspond. Accordingly, when we make an adjustment between two things, we adjust or change either of them to make comparison between each other.

Baker and Siryk (1989); McEwan (2011) stated that social adjustment to an institute level is one of the most important aspect of student's adjustment to assist as well as make a person to function Properly that predicts individual's  accomplishments and achievements in institutional level.

Mounts and Boswell (2006) elucidated that depression, agitation, anxiety, and isolation are the results of poor social adjustment in college as reported by the students.

Pasha and Munaf (2013) presented a study which was led to inspect the relationship between the different dimensions of self esteem and five areas of adjustments of university students. They derived the sample of 83 students from first semester of graduation. Results indicate that there is positive relationship of worldwide self esteem with adjustment through using a bivariate correlational examination and additionally with different territories of adjustment, with the most elevated connection being with academic adjustment. The self esteem variables of skill, adorableness, individual force, moral self endorsement and body working were observed to be altogether identified with every one of the territories of the adjustment. Sociability, body appearance and protective self improvement were essentially identified with a few however not all adjustment zones. Self control and personality basically did not identify any of the regions of adjustment.

Mehmoudi (2011) conduct a study in which an endeavor is made to examine associations of adjustment and academic achievement among adolescent students. A randomly selected 100 adolescent students were selected contemplating in Shiraz city. They were controlled Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1968) which measure adjustment of a person in four ranges (home, family, social and emotional). Academic score were gathered from the individual's schools. In order to check the difference between students with various level of adjustment in different territories and the scholarly accomplishment scores through one way ANOVA. Results uncovered great impact of social adjustment on academic grades. On the contrary, family, social and emotional adjustments have not any notable impact over academic achievement of the selected respondents.

Singh (2006) inspected the adjustment and gender discrimination and hypothesized that the impact social, emotional and environmental impact on the above mentioned variables. Results were concluded that health adjustment at several levels of social emotional atmosphere was high among males as compared to females.

Franks, Cranoon and Oliver (2004) found that social adjustment has been viewed as a critical phenomenon in keeping up the mental prosperity. Social adjustment has been talked about as to the measurement which is unique to the social backing. For example, when different dimension of support are compared such as apparent support when associated with the expected support, it is directly related to psychological health proven in course work over studies. A few studies showed that the recognition is a more grounded indicator of mental discomfort then the measure of the support system.

Ishitani (2003) explored that students who take a first step ahead to go universities very first time form a family. "First generation" students who are the primary people in their close families to go to college to university, a remarkable point to ponder that on the other hand, some researcher additionally considers those people whose guardians went to however did not graduate school to be the "first generation". Similarly Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) stated that the first generation pupil have commonly more trouble to accommodate in institute as compared to associates.

Some of the efficient researchers like Hertel (2002); York, Anderson and Bowman (1991); Stephens, Fryberg, Markus, Johnson, and Covarrubias (2012) state that past examination has scrutinized the variance between first graduation pupils and their associates that support may not be given to the same way on adjustment level.

## Hypotheses

1. Perceived social support, social adjustment and academic achievement would be significantly correlated with each other among university students.
2. Perceived social support would significantly predict social adjustment and academic achievement among university students.
3. There would be a significant role of demographic variables on study variables among university students.

## Materials and Method

### Sample

The population for this study was consisted of the university students. A sample of 300 university students was selected by using convenient sampling technique from Government College University Faisalabad. The sample was divided into two parts 150 BSc and 150 MSc (equally divided into male & female) students. Correlational and comparative research design was used in this research.

## Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria of participants was, only those who are university students studying in BS and MSc classes. MS and PhD students are excluded. Students of schools and colleges also excluded.

## Instruments

1. **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support** Zimet, Dalhan, Zimet and Farely (1988) made a scale named as multidimensional scale of perceived social support. It is a twelve item scale designed to measure social support. Respondents answer each item using a seven point scale, ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree). The items are divided into three subgroups named as family, friend or significant others. The scale has reliability of .85.

2. **Social Adjustment Scale** Kauser and Wafa (2015) made a scale named as social adjustment scale. It is a 27 items scale designed to measure social adjustment. Respondents answer each item using a 5 point scale, ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 5 (very strongly agree).

## Procedure

Initially the topic, variables, scales and population are finalized with the discussion of supervisor. Secondly, permission to use scales was taken from the authors via email. Before data collection author briefly explained the nature, purpose and

their rights to participated in the study. It was ensured them that their privacy will be maintained and the information will be only used for research purpose. Then all two scales were administered to the participants and demographic sheets were filled as well. Demographic sheet was prepared on the basis of previous literature. The process of data collection took almost one month. It was requested to all participants that fill the questionnaire on the spot with their real feelings and return it to the researcher. Researcher was present to answer any query to the participant through the process. All Suitable Statistical Analysis was done by using SPSS version 22.

## Results

The data of present research were analyzed by using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, t-test, and regression were used to analysis of the data. Descriptive statistics were considered to describe the characteristics of the variables; such as mean and standard deviation of the scores. Independent sample T-test was used to compare the two demographic groups with all variables. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to measure the association among all variables.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables (N=300)

| Respondent's Characteristics | | f (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Age | Group A(18-21 Years) | 148 (49.3) |
| | Group B(22-25 Years) | 152 (50.7) |
| Gender | Male | 150 (50.0) |
| | Female | 150 (50.0) |
| Education | BS. Hons | 150 (50.0) |
| | MSc | 150 (50.0) |
| Family Type | Joint Family | 118(39.3) |
| | Separate Family | 182 (60.7) |

Table 1 showed the demographic characteristics of data in current study. In age, 18-21 years (49.3%) and 22-25 years age (50.7%) respondents. Whereas, in gender, sample was collected, male are (50%) and female are (50%). In education sample was collected, BS. Hons education of respondents is (50%) and MSc education of respondents is (50%). Further (39.3%) participants were living in joint family, while (60.7%) participants were living in separate family structure.

**Table 2.** Pearson Product Moment Correlation indicates Correlation for Perceived Social Support, Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement (N=300)

| Variables | Perceived Social Support | Social Adjustment | Academic Achievement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Social Support | - | .416** | .048 |
| Social Adjustment | | - | -.085 |
| Academic Achievement | | | - |

**.**Correlation is significantat 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 showed that there is highly significant correlation between Social Support and Social Adjustment but both of these variables are not highly correlated with Academic Achievement.

**Table 3.** Multiple Regression Analysis (enter method) predicting social adjustment and academic achievement from social support (N=300)

| Variable | $\Delta R^2$ | β |
|---|---|---|
| Model-1 | .035** | |
| Model-2 | .147** | |
| Social adjustment | | .391** |

| Academic Achievement | | |
|---|---|---|
| N | 280 | |
| Total R$^2$ | .181 | |

Note; $\Delta R^2$ = R square change; β = Standardized beta

Table 3 showed the result of Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis. In this table there are two models that Predicted Social Support. In first model all the demographic variables were entered and controlled. In first model about three percent predicted social support. While in the second model the variables of interest were added. In second model it predicted about 15% of social support. The unique contribution of social adjustment to predict social support is 39% which is significant. Similarly the unique contribution of academic achievement is 4% which is non-significant.

**Table 4.** Independent Sample t-test between BS Hons and MSc Students on Social Support, Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement (N=300)

| Variable | BS Hons (n=150) | | MSc (n=150) | | | 95%CI | | | *Cohen's d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *LL* | *p* | *UL* | |
| Social Support | 62.7 | 14.6 | 64.5 | 12.3 | -1.0 | .289 | -4.8 | 1.4 | 0.5 |
| Social Adjustment | 100.3 | 16.0 | 103.2 | 13.6 | -1.5 | .128 | -6.6 | .84 | 0.20 |
| Academic Achievement | 80.4 | 9.7 | 78.7 | 8.7 | 1.6 | .111 | -.39 | 3.8 | 0.18 |

Note. M=mean; SD= standard deviation; t=t test value; p=significant value; CI= confidence interval; LL=lower limit; UP= upper limit.

Table 4 showed that there was non-significant class difference on social support, social adjustment and academic achievement among university students. That means BS Hons students have equally developed social support and social adjustment as well as they have equal academic achievements as compare to MSc students.

**Table 5.** Independent Sample t-test between male and female students on social support social adjustment and Academic Achievement (N=300)

| Variable | Male (n=150) | | Female (n=150) | | | 95%CI | | | *Cohen's d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *T* | *LL* | *p* | *UL* | |
| Social Support | 61.3 | 12.4 | 65.9 | 14.1 | -2.9 | .004 | -7.7 | -1.5 | 0.30 |
| Social Adjustment | 99.7 | 15.5 | 103.7 | 14.1 | -2.4 | .037 | -7.7 | -.24 | 0.27 |
| Academic Achievement | 76.4 | 9.3 | 82.7 | 8.0 | -6.1 | .00 | -8.2 | -4.2 | 0.72 |

Note. M=mean; SD= standard deviation; t=t test value; p=significant value; CI= confidence interval; LL=lower limit; UP= upper limit.

Table 5 showed that there was significant gender difference on social support at (p=.004), social adjustment at (p=.037) and on academic achievement at (p=.00). Women scored more on social support, social adjustment and academic achievement as compared to men.

**Table 6.** Independent Sample t-test between Group 1 (18-21 years) and Group 2 (22-25 years) on Social Support, Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement (N=300).

| Variable | Group 1 (n=149) | | Group 2 (n=151) | | | 95%CI | | | *Cohen's d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *LL* | *P* | *UL* | |
| Social Support | 62.6 | 14.8 | 64.6 | 12 | -1.2 | .219 | -5.1 | 1.1 | 0.15 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social Adjustment | 100.1 | 14.4 | 103.4 | 14.9 | -1.7 | .086 | -7.0 | .47 | 0.20 |
| Academic Achievement | 81.2 | 9.2 | 77.9 | 9.0 | 3.1 | .002 | 1.2 | 5.3 | 0.36 |

Note. M=mean; SD= standard deviation; t=t test value; p=significant value; CI= confidence interval; LL=lower limit; UP= upper limit.

Table 6 showed that there was non-significant age differences on social adjustment at (p=.086) and on social support at (p=.219). Moreover, the table showed significant differences on academic achievement at (p=.002). That means both age groups have equal social support and social adjustment.

**Table 7.** Independent Sample t-test between family systems (joint & separate) on Social Support, Social Adjustment and Academic Achievement. (N=300).

| Variable | Joint (n=120) | | Separate (n=180) | | | 95%CI | | | Cohen's d |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | t | P | LL | UL | |
| Social Support | 63.6 | 14.5 | 63.6 | 12.8 | .053 | .958 | -3.1 | 3.3 | 0.1 |
| Social Adjustment | 101.6 | 13.6 | 101.8 | 15.7 | .087 | .930 | -3.6 | 4.0 | 0.1 |
| Academic Achievement | 78.4 | 9.1 | 80.3 | 9.3 | 1.67 | .09 | 1.0 | 3.9 | 0.2 |

Note. M=mean; SD= standard deviation; t=t test value; p=significant value; CI= confidence interval; LL=lower limit; UP= upper limit.

Table 7 showed that there was non-significant family system (separate and joint) difference on social support, social adjustment and academic achievement among university students. That means joint family members have equally developed social support, social adjustment and they have same academic achievement as joint family members.

## Discussion

Current study was designed to explore the associations of social support, social adjustment and academic achievement among university students. Population consists of BS Hons and MSc students of age range from 18-25 years. Total sample was 300 students, including 150 MSc and 150 BSc students. The sample was further divided into two sub categories 75 males and 75 females in both groups. Following scales were used for data collection: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Social Adjustment Scale and Academic Achievement were defined through marks percentage. Scores on these scales indicate measure of social support and social adjustment. Data was entered into SPSS and analyzed for finding results. Further results are discussed in detail.

Firstly it was hypothesized that perceived social support, social adjustment and academic achievement would be significantly correlated with each other among university students. Pearson' r was calculated to test this hypothesis. Result revealed that social support and social adjustment and significantly correlated with each other at (0.01significance level) but the academic achievement is not significantly correlated with each other at (0.01 significance level). It means if the social support increase then social adjustment will also increase but the academic achievement will not effected due to these two variables. These findings are consistent with Sheryl, Jones & Barker (2007) whose study showed a significant relationship between social support and adjustment. Further they stated that high level of social adjustment is related to higher level of social support. But according to the findings of current study academic achievement is not significantly correlated with social support and social adjustment these findings are in line with an other study of Megan & Laura (2007) they studied social support, loneliness and academic performance among freshman college students. Their study revealed that academic performance is not correlated with social support.

It was hypothesized that Social Support would significantly predict Social Adjustment and

Academic Achievement among university students. Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis. In this table there are two models that are Predicted Social Support. In first model all the demographic variables were entered and controlled. In first model about three percent predicted social support. While in the second model the variables of interest were added. In second model it predicted about 15% of social support. The unique contribution of social adjustment to predict social support is 39% which is significant. Similarly the unique contribution of academic achievement is 4% which is non-significant. These findings are similar to the findings of Laura and Graham (2007) in which they used regression analysis to predict university adjustment from social support similar as in my study. The results of their research showed that social support is a predictor of social adjustment at different points of a student's life.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant role of demographic variables on study variables among university students. The demographical variables which I investigated were age, class, gender and family structure (joint family, separate family). Independent Sample t-test was used to study these differences. Results show that there is a significant gender differences on social support and social adjustment. Women scored more on social support and social adjustment as compare to men. That means women have increased social support and social adjustment as compare to men. When considering social support, some researchers (Allen & Stoltenberg, 1996; Oslon & Schultz, 1994) have reported women perceive more social support as compare to men. Another study conducted by Gottlieb, (1983 & 1985) revealed that women provide better social support as compared to men and relations with women are more beneficial than men. Social support is more among females as compared to males. In further study (Megan & Laura, 2007) also revealed that women reported more support from family and friends as compare to men. So according to the above described studies this hypothesis is strongly supported by the previous researches.

I also studies the age differences on social support and social adjustment among university students,

for this age was divided into two groups first (18-21 years) and second (22-25 years). Results showed that there was significant age differences on social adjustment at (p=0.86). Students of second age group scored more on social adjustment as compared to group 1 students. Moreover, the result showed non-significant age differences on social support. That means both age groups have equal social support. A study conducted by Sheryl, Jones & Barker (2007) on the young and mature university students' age range from 17-21 years, the findings of this study suggested that young age or new students face more difficulties at the time of their university start. They compare the both young and mature students and the results shows that the mature students are more adjusted at their academic setting as compare to young age or new comer students.

According to third hypothesis I also studied the family and class differences among university students. Family system was further divided into two parts joint family system and separate family system and class was also have two subtypes BSc and MSc. Statistical analysis indicates that there was non-significant difference on family system (joint & separate) and class (BSc &MSc) on social support and social adjustment. That means joint family members have equally developed social adjustment and social support as separate family members. And people of both classes (BSc & MSc) have equal social support and social adjustment.

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