

# The Impact of Psychological Adjustment on Private University Students' Academic Achievement: Case Study

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## Abstract

The present study examined the impact of psychological adjustment on private university students' academic achievement. The sample size consisted of 121 university students (42.1% male, and 57.9% female). The results indicated that only 15 % of the study participants showed high levels of psychological adjustment, and 34% of them showed low levels of psychological adjustment, while 51 % of the total sample recorded average levels of psychological adjustment. The findings also indicated relationship between psychological adjustment and students' academic achievement at university in the way it has a significant positive impact on students' academic achievement in private universities. The study concludes with recommending the application of tests that measure students' psychological adjustment with the specialization in which they wish to continue their university study in before they are admitted in any academic specialization.

**Keywords:** psychological adjustment, academic achievement, university, impact

## 1. Introduction

Psychologists focus on psychological adjustment of humans is found to influence humans' activities at all levels of their life in the way it causes different implications to the way they would behave or react with the motives in their surroundings (Mahmood and Iqbal, 2015). In this regard, several researchers have examined the effects of psychological adjustment on different aspects of life, where there are many factors associated with or affect the psychological adjustment or associated with it such as gender, parents, school environment, quality of teachers (Yau & Cheng, 2012; Salhi, 2013; Yau, Sun, & Cheng, 2012).

It is well known that the university stage is the same stage in which most students are at the adolescent level and it is the stage where many of them usually face different challenges and obstacles which negatively affect their adjustment (Yau, Sun, & Cheng, 2012). Some of these challenges could be related to different variables, such as family, friends, school, community, or other common factors.

In fact, when it comes to terms adjustment and psychological adjustment, it can be seen that no unified definition of these terms has been agreed upon by the researchers. For instance, English and English (1958) define adjustment as a relationship with the environment, which ensures the satisfaction of most of its needs and most of its physiological and social requirements. However, psychological adjustment is interpreted as a continuous dynamic process that is acted and practiced by the individual to change his behavior in order to enable him to adjust with himself and with others in the surrounding environment (Mahjob, 2000). Further, Sari (1986) explains that psychological adjustment consists of four aspects: personal, social, emotional, and family, while Zahran (1997) finds out that psychological adjustment consists of only three, they are personal, social, and emotional aspects of the individual's personality.

On the other hand, the term academic achievement is defined separately from psychological adjustment. For instance, Mahmood and Iqbal (2015) define academic achievement as a term that is used in educational and academic institutions that refers to a specific goal that students try or are directed to achieve in a certain period of time. In addition, psychologists find that academic achievement can be influenced by several factors, such as their parents, teachers, administrators, community environments including their school districts, neighborhoods, local economy, political life, and their multiple cultural relationships. Their achievement can even be affected by their personalities (Bertolini, Stremmel, & Thorngren, 2012), Farooq et al. (2011) add to this and specifies that age, gender, socioeconomic status, and parents' educational level can also affect the academic achievement of the university

students. The researchers note that there is a disregard for psychological adjustment or psychological aspects when discussing the factors affecting academic achievement. The age level of university students, for example, is a critical stage for these students since it is still considered the period in which most students are in their adolescence stage, where growth affect their psychological and physical overall growth in life (Battah & Tarawneh, 1999). Therefore, it is fundamental that these changes are recognized and identified as they are believed to influence the current and future status of these individuals in the society and it can determine the direction of their future life after they finish their university study (Battah & Tarawneh, 1999). Yet, very few studies have been carried out and examined these two factors on the university students in the Bahraini community. However, none of these studies have investigated or reported about academic achievement and psychological adjustment are influenced by the specificity and uniqueness that is found in the Bahraini community, such as the diverse backgrounds, as it is found relatively small when compared to other communities, such as Asian, European or American. In addition, government education in Bahrain is considered modern when it is compared to the rest of the world as Bahrain has just celebrated the 100th anniversary of the launch of formal education in the kingdom. Therefore, addressing this issue in other societies may not reflect the Bahrain community. Finally, as far as the researcher is concerned in this regard, no study dealing with this topic was conducted to explore the specified factors in the Bahrain community. The only study found is the one carried out by Alasbool and Fateel (2019) that focused on recommending investigating the impact of psychological adjustment on academic achievement among university students in Bahrain.

Based on the above and due to the important relationship between psychological adjustment and academic achievement, the current study was carried out to identify the impact of psychological adjustment on the academic achievement of university students in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

## 2. Literature Review

Many studies focus on psychological adjustment and its relationship with or impact on different factors such as gender, personality, parents, and academic achievement (AlDababseh et al., 2017; Yau & Cheng, 2012; Salhi, 2013; Yau et al., 2012; Syiam, 2010), Ayele (2018) did a study and concluded that male students are better adjusted than female students, Yau et al. (2012) did a study and found that female students perceive psychological adjustment to have more impact on academic adjustment than male students. Devika (2013) did a study and found that males have better emotional adjustment than females. However, the study showed no significant differences between males and females in regard to family, social, and educational adjustment.

Some other studies focused on the psychological adjustment for international students only (Johnson, Seifen-Adkins, Sandhu, Arbles, & Makino, 2018; Bastien & et al., 2018; Jackson, Ray, & Bybell, 2013). In addition,, several studies focused on investigating the effect of some demographic variables on psychological adjustment.

, Sarsan (2007) and Yoo & Miller (2011) and Yau & Cheng (2012) found no significant differences between males and females on psychological adjustment. Salami (2011) and Sivrikaya (2019) suggested to merge the social activities to increase psychological adjustment for university students.

Serebryakova et al. (2016) found out that half of the first-year students have a low level of psychological adjustment. However, Alasbool and Fateel (2019) and Devika (2013) found that university students have an average level of adjustment.

On another aspect, many studies report a strong relationship between psychological adjustment and academic achievement (AlDababseh et al., 2017; Salhi, 2013; Jacobson, 2012; Chen, 2010; Chong, Elias, Mahyuddin, & Uli, 2009). On the other hand, some research find a medium relationship between psychological adjustment and academic achievement (Alam & Halder, 2017), as well as some research found negative relationship between psychological adjustment and academic achievement (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2015; Merilus, 2015). Ayele (2018) did a study and found a positive relationship between adjustment and academic achievement. Al-Msedin, Fauzee, & Kaur (2017) and Abdullah, Elias, Uli, & Mahyuddin (2010) did a study and found that there is a strong positive relationship between social and academic adjustment. Calaguas (2011) found a significant negative relationship between academic achievement & academic adjustment difficulties.

Another strand of the research investigated the impact of the psychological adjustment or one of the psychological adjustment aspects on the students' academic achievement. In this regard, Ayele (2018) and Yau et al. (2012) found that there is a positive impact of psychological adjustment on academic achievement. However, Karadağ (2017) reports a negative impact of psychological adjustment on the academic achievement of the students.

Although most of the reviewed studies investigated the relationship between the psychological adjustment and academic achievement, very few have focused on the impact of this relation on the students' academic achievement,

specifically the university students, hence this study can add to the existing knowledge in this regard. The focus of this study was to measure the impact of the psychological adjustment of private university students on their academic achievement. Through its findings, this study is assumed to propose new ways to increase the psychological adjustment of university students and to assist the policymakers and counselors in higher education institutions to prepare a plan to increase the psychological adjustment for low academic achievement students.

### 3. Aims of the Study

The current study aimed to:

1. To determine the level of psychological adjustment of private university students.
2. To measure the impact of the psychological adjustment of private university students on their academic achievement.
3. To investigate the relationship between psychological adjustment and academic achievement for private university students.
4. Suggest ways of limiting the negative impact of this relation on students' achievement at university and direct them towards better academic achievement.

### 4. Research Questions

The study attempted to answer three main questions, they are:

1. What is the level of psychological adjustment of private university students?
2. What is the impact of the psychological adjustment of private university students on their academic achievement?
3. What is the correlation between psychological adjustment and academic achievement for private university students?

### 5. Methodology

A quantitative methodology was followed in this investigation due to its suitability of the descriptive approach of this study. The psychological adjustment scale was applied as an instrument for data collection.

#### 5.1 Site and Context

Higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain began in 1986, with the establishment of the University of Bahrain, as a government university. After the year 2000, the government began granting licenses for the establishment of private universities, and within a short period, the number of these universities reached (13) institutions of higher education, after a few years some of these institutions were closed, and others opened.

This study was applied to students studying at Ahlia University, one of the first private universities established in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2001. This university consists of five colleges (College of Arts & Science/ College of Business and Finance/ College of Engineering/ College of Information Technology/ College of Medical & Health Science) and offers 17 academic programs. The number of students registered in the university is (2500) students, (46%) male and (54%) female (Ahlia University, 2019).

#### 5.2 Participants and Sample Size

The participants were undergraduate students who volunteered to be a part of the study. Two hundred undergraduate students were invited to do the questionnaire. 121 students completed the survey, 51 (42.1%) male, 70 (57.9%) female, and 41 (33.9%) low academic achievement, 62 (51.2%) average academic achievement, 18 (14.9%) high academic achievement.

#### 5.3 Instrument

The psychological adjustment scale used in this study was prepared by Sari (1986), which consists of four dimensions and forty items. The first dimension assesses personal adjustment (1-9). The second dimension assesses social adjustment (10-20). The third dimension assesses emotional adjustment (21-30). The fourth dimension assesses family adjustment (31-40). This scale was prepared for the Iraqi environment and used a two-point type scale yes (1) and no (0). The scale consists of 20 positive items and 20 negative items as follows:

Positive items: 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 40.

Negative items: 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28, 30, 33, 36, 37, 38, 39.

The researcher set a criterion to judge the total score of the axes:

- A) If the total score is less than seventeen (17); it is counted as low.
- B) If the total score is between seventeen (17) and less than thirty-four (34); it is counted as average.
- C) If the total score is thirty-four and above, it is counted as high.

Despite the similarity of the environment between Bahrain and Iraq, Alasbool and Fateel (2019) verified the validity and reliability of the scale by presenting it to three specialists in the field of psychology and verified the reliability by using Cronbachs' Alpha coefficient on a tribal sample of 30 students. The value of the Cronbachs' Alpha coefficient was (0.765), thus reassuring the researcher to use the scale of Psychological Adjustment in the Bahraini environment. The psychological adjustment scale was used by (Amamura, 2018; Alasbool & Fateel, 2019).

The researcher used the student's Grade Point Average (GPA) as the bases for evaluating and classifying the students' academic achievement in the way that if the GPA was less than 2 out of 4 it will be considered low, and if 2 to 3 it will be considered is average, and if higher than 3 it will be classified as high.

#### 5.4 Statistical Treatment

The researcher used SPSS V.25 to analyze the gathered data. Percentages and frequencies were calculated to analyze the demographic data of the respondents, the correlations' value was used to find the relationship between psychological adjustment and academic achievement, and regression analysis was done to find the impact of psychological adjustment on academic achievement.

### 6. Findings & Results

The findings presented in the next three sections report thematic quantitative analysis.

Table 1. Means & Std. Deviation of psychological adjustment distribution by academic achievement Variable

<i>Academic achievement</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
Low	41	15.22	5.26
Average	62	22.61	7.32
High	18	25.33	6.12
Total	121	20.51	7.55

Table 1 shows that university students generally have an average means of psychosocial adjustment, and the psychological adjustment rises with higher achievement rates. More explicitly, the higher the academic achievement of the student is, the higher the psychological adjustment rate. The results show that approximately 34 % of the students recorded low levels of psychological adjustment, approximately 51 % of the students recorded average levels of psychological adjustment, approximately 15 % of the students recorded high levels of psychological adjustment.

Table 2. Regression Analysis-Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
n0 1	.497 <sup>a</sup>	.247	.240	6.58423

a. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Achievement

Table 2 shows the summary results of the regression analysis for the independent variables (academic achievement) and the dependent variable (psychological adjustment). The model derived correlation coefficient of (R=.497), which indicates a strong linear relationship between the criterion variable, which are psychological adjustment and academic achievement, which is the predictor variable.

The coefficient of determination derived ( $R^2=.247$ ), which means that approximately 25% of the total variability in the criterion variable is accounted for by the predictor variable. In other words, psychological adjustment explains approximately 25% of the amount of variation in academic achievement. The calculated adjusted R square derived .240, indicating the model explained that 24% of the impact on academic achievement, and 76% provides explanations outside the model. Moreover, the model showed that 76% might be due to other factors that cannot be explained by the model.

Table 3. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
1	(Constant)	10.448	1.720	6.075	.000
	Academic Achievement	5.561	.891	.497	6.242

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Adjustment

Table 3 shows the results of the coefficient of the predictor of psychological adjustment in Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. The model shows that, the academic achievement was a significant predictor of psychological adjustment, ( $\beta = -.497$ ,  $t = 6.242$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $R^2 = .247$ ). The results showed that academic achievement has a significant positive impact on psychological adjustment.

Again, there is evidence that the independent variable helps to predict the dependent variable ( $p < 0.05$ ) and that there is some explanatory power in the model.

Table 4. Indicating Pearsons' correlation between the psychological adjustment on the academic achievement

		<i>Academic Achievement</i>
Psychological Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	121

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows the Pearson value was used to measure the relationship level between the psychological adjustment and academic achievement for university students. From the values, it can be interpreted that there is a significant positive correlation between the psychological adjustment students have to their academic achievement ( $r = .497$ ,  $n = 121$ ,  $p > .01$ ).

## 7. Discussion

The result shows that private university students generally have an average level of psychosocial adjustment, and this result agrees with Alasbool and Fateel (2019) and Devika (2013). The researcher concludes that the students in private university from high or average socio-economic status family makes their interest in psychological adjustment average or weak; because they know at the end, they will get the necessary support from their parents or families to work or create their own business. In addition to that, these students at the adolescence level, the availability of new technology among university students, and the level of exposure to social media among university students, all of these things, as well as other factors, affect their levels of psychological adjustment, such as the educational level of parents, or family problems.

The result also shows that there is a strong positive relationship between the psychological adjustment and the academic achievement of students, and this corroborates with the results of other studies (Alam & Halder, 2017; AlDababseh et al, 2017; Salhi, 2013; Jacobson, 2012; Chen, 2010; Chong et al, 2009; & Daminabo, 2008). Mahmood and Iqbal (2015) disagree with the results of many studies and report that the majority of the students of the universities in which they studied belong to a high socio-economic level, and do not care about academic achievement, because of the availability of all the requirements they need. Mudhovozi (2017) suggests that the students require to be exposed to different situations to empower them to quickly and easily adjust to their new life at university. Xiong and Zhou (2018) recommend providing support and activities for students to reduce their stress. Al-Msedin et al. (2017) conclude that the reasons behind the strong positive relationship between social adjustment and academic adjustment are the positive relationship between students and their teachers, Kyalo and Chumba (2011) recommend to encourage the social activities by the university.

In addition, the result indicate that there is a significant positive impact of the psychological adjustment on the academic achievement of students. These results emphasize the importance of the role of psychological adjustment in raising the results of the academic achievement of university students. Therefore, policymakers in the Kingdom of Bahrain can develop policies that oblige educational institutions to use psychological measures in identifying how to avoid the obstacles faced by students. Results of the study disagree with Karadağ (2017), which conducted a study trying to identify the impact of social adjustment on academic achievement found a negative impact of the psychological adjustment on academic achievement, but the researcher pointed out that the social student will adjust

easily than with the school environment better than nonsocial students. Abdullah et al. (2010) also concluded to use of intervention plans to improve adjustment among university students, and Alasbool & Moosa (2019) suggest to set a new standard for student admission to the university. Devika (2013) recommend that to increase the level of adjustment among the university student should prepare the orientation programs for the students, organize social activities, and create a comfortable atmosphere for students.

To sum up, the obtained results imply that psychological adjustment should remain the focus of educators, and this can be maintained through training social supervisors or consultants in educational institutions on how to measure psychological adjustment and how to deal with cases that need attention due to poor psychological adjustment. Further, social counselors can support students by raising the level of psychological adjustment for students.

The results indicate In addition, the analysed results emphasize the importance of psychological adjustment on the academic achievement of university students in general. The educational institutions should consider the importance of psychological adjustment of students, and try to resolve their problems, so these problems do not affect their life or academic achievement negatively. The current study provides further support for previous research works reporting that psychological adjustment has a strong positive impact on academic achievement (Alasbool & Fateel, 2019; AlDababseh et al, 2017).

Finally, the results of the current study indicate there is a positive impact of the psychological adjustment on academic achievement among university students. The results indicate that if the environment prepares the student in all aspects of personal, social, emotional, and family, he can achieve academic achievement. The study findings enhance the understanding of psychological adjustment and its impact on academically in both educational institutions and the labor market. Based on the results and discussions that followed, the following recommendations are suggested: to apply tests that measure students' psychological adjustment with the specialization in which they wish to study before accepting them in an academic specialization. The teacher preparation programs should include courses on how to measure some psychological aspects, such as psychological adjustment, personality, behavior, and other things; so that the teacher can predict the behavior of the student and then address the problem before it reverts to other aspects of the students' life. Future studies should focus on examining the impact of technology on the psychological adjustment and academic achievement of university students.

#### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author declare that he has no competing interests.

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