

School Adjustment and Its Relationship to Academic Achievement Among Secondary School Students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate

التكيف المدرسي وعلاقته بالتحصيل الدراسي لدى طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في محافظة رام الله والبيرة

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Abstract:

The current study aims to explore the relationship between the level of school adjustment and academic achievement among secondary school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. The study sample consisted of 70 male and female students. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher utilized the School Adjustment Scale adopted from Haifa Hudayeb Al-Rashidi in her master's study applied to secondary school students in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, students' academic results for the 2023/2024 school year in schools within Ramallah and Al-Bireh were examined. After statistical analysis, the study revealed the following findings:

1. There is a statistically significant correlation between the School Adjustment Scale and the academic achievement scores of secondary school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.
2. There are statistically significant differences attributed to the gender variable (male/female) in the level of adjustment, favoring female students in secondary schools in Ramallah and Al-Bireh.

Keywords: Adaptation, School Adjustment, Academic Achievement, Secondary Education.

ملخص:

تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى التعرف على العلاقة بين مستوى التكيف المدرسي والتحصيل الدراسي لدى طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في محافظة رام الله والبيرة، حيث قدرت عينة الدراسة بـ (70) طالب وطالبة. لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة اعتمدنا على مقياس التكيف المدرسي الذي تم تبنينه للباحثة هيفاء هديب الرشيد في دراسة ماجستير والمطبقة على طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في السعودية، مع الاستعانة بنتائج تحصيل الطلبة للعام الدراسي 2024/2023 في مدارس رام الله والبيرة، وبعد احصاء البيانات توصلت الدراسة الى النتائج التالية:

- 1- يوجد علاقة ارتباطية دالة احصائيا بين مقياس التكيف المدرسي ودرجات تحصيل طلبة المرحلة الثانوية لمدارس رام الله والبيرة.
- 2- توجد فروق ذات دلالة احصائيا تعزى لمتغير الجنس ذكر/ انثى في مستوى التكيف لصالح الاناث لدى طلبة المرحلة الثانوية في مدارس رام الله والبيرة.

كلمات مفتاحية: التكيف، التكيف المدرسي، التحصيل الدراسي، المرحلة الثانوية.

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1. Introduction

The first Attention is considered one of the essential processes that connect individuals to their surrounding environment, given the numerous stimuli that attract our focus. Individuals are exposed daily to thousands of sensory stimuli through their senses, yet their physical and mental capacity limits their ability to process all of these stimuli simultaneously. For instance, one cannot listen to two people or perceive two distant images

simultaneously. Attention allows individuals to select desired stimuli and filter out others. (Mohammed Saleh Abdullah, 2022)

In summary, attention refers to the process where individuals perceive stimuli, which then leads to learning. Attention is not merely a foundational process for perception and awareness but extends to more complex levels of information processing. (Iman Ramadan Hamed Ahmed, 2022)

Selective attention involves internal processes and represents the ability of students with developmental learning difficulties to choose and prioritize important goals. This attention occurs when the goal or stimulus is linked to the student's intrinsic motivations, focusing on it and responding to it—whether auditorily or visually—while ignoring less important stimuli. (Fatima Fawzi Mohamed Attia, 2023)

Selective attention significantly impacts cognitive processes such as visual and auditory perception and memory. As selective attention levels rise, other cognitive processes improve, and vice versa. (Ahmed Shaban Hamed, 2020)

The secondary school stage is one of the most crucial phases in a student's educational journey. Students at this stage are characterized by their skills and ability to perform various educational activities and acquire new knowledge. Through their daily interactions within the school environment, students develop various cognitive, psychological, and social capabilities that enable them to adapt and integrate with the school environment, which encompasses peers and friends with diverse beliefs, opinions, and traditions brought from their respective backgrounds. This mutual interaction fosters influence and learning. (Kaabouch Hakima, 2018)

School adjustment is a prerequisite for students' success in the educational process, as it involves creating a supportive environment conducive to learning. Schools provide individuals with a sense of relevance between their studies and their personal development, leading to emotional stability. This stability ensures that efforts to control the environment align with peers' efforts and that individual progress is achieved through collaborative activities. (Naamat Abdelmaged Mousa Abu Al-Leif & Manal Mahrous Abdelhameed, 2015)

School adjustment reflects a student's integration into the school community, making them an active participant in a group that supports their physical, mental, and emotional development. A well-adjusted student, whether at home or school, enters life with confidence in themselves and others. (Safia Mouqaddam, 2023)

Academic achievement holds significant importance in a student's life, as it measures the amount of knowledge acquired by students. It is one of the primary indicators used by educational systems to assess the extent of learning, reflecting the achievement of educational objectives. Academic achievement refers to the degree of success achieved by students in their studies and their ability to apply acquired knowledge and skills in present or future contexts. (Salah El-Din Allam, 2013)

Given the importance of selective attention in enhancing cognitive capacities and academic performance, and the critical role of school adjustment in achieving psychological, social, and academic stability, this study aims to investigate the relationship between selective attention, school adjustment, and academic achievement among secondary school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate.

2 .Study Questions:

1. Is there a correlation between school adjustment and academic achievement among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in the level of school adjustment among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools attributed to the gender variable (male/female)?

3 . Hypotheses:

1. There is a correlation between school adjustment and academic achievement among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.
2. There are statistically significant differences in the level of school adjustment among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools attributed to the gender variable (male/female).

4. Study Objectives:

1. To identify the relationship between selective attention and school adjustment among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.
2. To explore the relationship between selective attention, school adjustment, and academic achievement among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.
3. To determine the extent of the influence of selective attention on school adjustment and academic achievement among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.

5 . Study Significance:

Theoretical Significance:

1. This study derives its importance from addressing a significant topic in the school life of students.
2. The study highlights the limited prior research—based on the researcher’s knowledge—that investigates the relationship between selective attention, school adjustment, and academic achievement among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.
3. The significance lies in the age group targeted by the study, namely high school students, and the changes associated with this period, which may affect their future lives.

Practical Significance:

1. The findings of this study may contribute to designing appropriate counseling or training programs to enhance the level of school adjustment among high school students.
2. The preparation of standardized tools to measure both selective attention and school adjustment, which can benefit future studies.

6. Study Terms:

School Adjustment:

Researchers in education and psychology have focused on the concept of school adjustment due to its association with various factors influencing an individual’s life, particularly mental health and school

success. Whether it relates to social, familial, or academic levels, a sense of self-efficacy enhances positive personal traits in students, improving their academic performance, self-confidence, and self-esteem.

General Definition:

School adjustment refers to an individual's harmony with their environment and is considered a sign of mental health. It is a dynamic and continuous process that occurs between an individual and the social environment they live in. It aims to modify the individual's behavior to align with their environment, fostering good relationships with others and enabling the individual to achieve a balance between themselves and the surrounding world. On the other hand, academic adjustment is one aspect of general adjustment, closely tied to the individual's mental health and resulting from their interaction with educational settings and university life (Abu Sakran, 2009).

Definitions in Literature:

1. School adjustment is defined as an individual's success in educational institutions, their cognitive and social development, appropriate academic achievement, and problem-solving capabilities, such as addressing low academic performance (Hamed Al-Deeb, 2000).
2. It is described as a continuous dynamic process by which a student achieves compatibility with the school environment and its core components, such as their ability to connect with school, peers, and teachers, as well as participating in various school activities. School adjustment is related to meeting students' personal needs, their cognitive abilities, academic skills, childhood experiences, cognitive and social development, and their ability to solve issues like poor academic performance (Ashraf Al-Lafi Ziada, 2019).

Operational Definition:

School adjustment refers to the integration and success of students in adapting to teachers and peers. This is reflected in strong relationships with classmates and participation in school activities. It is measured by the scores obtained by sample members on the School Adjustment Scale.

Academic Achievement:

Academic achievement refers to the set of cognitive experiences and skills that a student can comprehend, memorize, and recall when necessary, using various factors such as understanding, attention, and distributed repetition over specific time intervals (Hamza Afifa, 2024).

Definitions in Literature:

1. Academic achievement is one of the most important cognitive activities performed by students. Through it, students demonstrate their academic excellence and level of understanding of educational materials (Mansour Mustafa, 2018).
2. It is defined as the total results of the courses studied by a student over one or several semesters, represented by the cumulative grade point average (Ibrahim Bukhari, 2016).
3. Academic achievement represents the total knowledge and skills acquired by students at the end of a semester, indicating their understanding of the material and subjects studied (Tatli & Ayas, 2013).
4. It can also be described as the proficiency in a specific skill or knowledge acquired in various academic subjects, reflected in test scores or grades assigned by teachers (Raja Abu Alam, 2010).

Operational Definition:

Academic achievement refers to the total grades students achieve in the results of the courses they study, representing their level of understanding and awareness of these courses.

7 . Methodology and Tools:**Research Methodology:**

The researcher employed the descriptive method in this study, which is a form of systematic scientific analysis and interpretation used to describe a specific phenomenon or problem quantitatively. It involves collecting standardized data and information about the phenomenon or problem, categorizing, analyzing, and subjecting it to rigorous study (Abdulrahman Sayed Suleiman, 2014).

Study Population:

High school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools.

Sample:

The study sample consists of 70 male and female students from high schools in Ramallah and Al-Bireh.

Study Tools:

The study utilized the School Adjustment Scale and students' academic achievement scores for the 2023/2024 academic year.

School Adjustment Scale**1. Scale Description:**

The scale consists of 42 statements distributed across four main dimensions as follows:

1. **First Dimension: General Behavior in School:** Comprising 12 statements.
2. **Second Dimension: Behavior in the Classroom:** Comprising 9 statements.
3. **Third Dimension: Student Adjustment with Teachers:** Comprising 9 statements.
4. **Fourth Dimension: Student Adjustment with Peers:** Comprising 12 statements.

2. Scoring Method for the School Adjustment Scale:

The scale consists of 42 statements, scored on a four-point Likert scale (Very High, High, Moderate, Low).

- **4 points** for selecting "Very High."
- **3 points** for selecting "High."
- **2 points** for selecting "Moderate."
- **1 point** for selecting "Low."

The total score on the scale ranges between **42 and 168 points**, where:

- The highest possible score is **168**, indicating a high level of school adjustment.
- The lowest possible score is **42**, indicating a low level of school adjustment.

The scale's statements are written in clear and simple Arabic, avoiding ambiguous, suggestive, or complex phrasing.

3. Psychometric Properties of the School Adjustment Scale:

The researcher verified the validity, reliability, and internal consistency of the scale in the current study using a sample of 100 high school students from Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools (not included in the main study sample). The verification process is outlined as follows:

1. Validity Verification:

A. Content Validity (Expert Judgment):

The scale's validity was assessed through content validity. Initially, the scale contained 46 statements, which were presented to 9 experts specializing in educational psychology and mental health. The scale was accompanied by clear instructions explaining its purpose, the target sample, and the objective of its use. The experts were asked to evaluate the clarity of the instructions, the phrasing of the items, the scale's relevance to its intended purpose, and the appropriateness of its items for the target sample.

The following table summarizes the experts' agreement rates on the evaluation criteria:

Table 1: Experts' Agreement Rates on the Evaluation Criteria for the School Adjustment Scale (N = 9)

Criterion	Agreement Rate (%)
Accuracy of item phrasing	100%
Linguistic correctness of statements	88.8%
Relevance of each item to its intended purpose	88.8%
Appropriateness of items for the sample	100%
Correctness of responses based on scoring key	100%

The table indicates that experts' agreement on the scale's statements ranged between **88.8% and 100%**. Based on their feedback, some statements were rephrased, and others were removed. Consequently, the final version of the scale included 42 statements.

B. Internal Consistency:

Internal consistency was assessed using Pearson's correlation coefficient. The correlation of each statement's score with the score of its corresponding dimension and the overall scale score was calculated. This is presented in **Table 2** (not included here).

Table (2): Internal Consistency of the School Adjustment Scale (N=100)

General Behavior in School	Classroom Behavior	Student Adjustment with Teachers	Student Adjustment with Peers
Item	Correlation with Dimension Score	Correlation with Scale Score	Correlation between

			Dimension and Scale
1	0.792**	0.771**	0.867**
2	0.629**	0.732**	—
3	0.654**	0.816**	—
4	0.672**	0.596**	—
5	0.708**	0.771**	—
6	0.769**	0.723**	—
7	0.717**	0.804**	—
8	0.733**	0.628**	—
9	0.743**	0.831**	—
10	0.737**	0.584**	—
11	0.698**	0.771**	—
12	0.705**	0.732**	—

Statistically significant at 0.01 () and significant at 0.05 (*). **

Findings from Table (2):

The results indicate that the items on the School Adjustment Scale have statistically significant correlations with their respective dimensions and the overall scale score. This suggests the items are consistent and contribute to measuring school adjustment.

Additionally, the correlation between each dimension score and the total scale score is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, demonstrating the scale's high internal consistency.

C. Extreme Group Validity:

The scores were calculated, and two extreme groups (27th percentile and 73rd percentile) were identified based on the total scale score. The sample was divided into three groups, and an extreme group comparison was conducted between the highest (top 27%) and lowest (bottom 27%) groups. The following table illustrates the computation of extreme group validity using a **t-test** to compare two independent groups.

Table (3): Extreme Group Validity for the School Adjustment Scale Using t-Test (N=100)

Dimension	Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Degrees of Freedom	Statistical Significance
General Behavior in School	High	27	43.85	1.83	32.271	52	Significant at 0.01 level
	Low	27	26.85	2.03			
Classroom Behavior	High	27	32.96	1.68	31.352	52	Significant at 0.01 level
	Low	27	18.59	1.69			
Student Adjustment with Teachers	High	27	32.96	1.63	17.983	52	Significant at 0.01 level
	Low	27	21.07	3.02			

Student Adjustment with Peers	High	27	44.11	1.89	35.291	52	Significant at 0.01 level
	Low	27	27.33	1.59			
School Adjustment (Overall)	High	27	157.59	21.26	15.472	52	Significant at 0.01 level
	Low	27	93.85	2.51			

The results in **Table (3)** indicate statistically significant differences between the means of the two groups across all dimensions. This validates the extreme group comparison method, confirming the scale's validity and suitability for application. The findings show that the scale is highly valid and accurately measures what it was designed to assess.

2. Reliability of the Scale:

A. Test-Retest Reliability:

The scale was administered and then re-administered to a pilot sample of 30 participants after three weeks. Pearson's correlation coefficient between the two administrations was calculated as an indicator of the scale's reliability. Results are presented in **Table (4)**:

Table (4): Test-Retest Reliability Coefficients for the Scale

Dimensions	General Behavior in School	Classroom Behavior	Student Adjustment with Teachers	Student Adjustment with Peers	Overall Scale
Test-Retest Correlation	0.792**	0.788**	0.802**	0.815**	0.836**

Statistically significant at the 0.01 level ().**

The high correlation coefficients indicate the scale's reliability and its suitability for application.

B. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability:

The reliability of the scale was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability of each dimension was assessed by removing individual items, and the overall reliability of the scale and its sub-dimensions was determined. Results are summarized in **Table (5)**:

Table (5): Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for the Scale

Dimension	General Behavior in School	Classroom Behavior	Student Adjustment with Teachers	Student Adjustment with Peers
Item	Alpha Without Item	Item	Alpha Without Item	Item

1	0.765	1	0.767	1
2	0.766	2	0.766	2
3	0.765	3	0.761	3
4	0.764	4	0.765	4
5	0.765	5	0.765	5
6	0.760	6	0.766	6
7	0.766	7	0.764	7
8	0.763	8	0.760	8
9	0.761	9	0.766	9
10	0.760			10
11	0.769			11
12	0.768			12
Alpha for Entire Dimension	0.769	Alpha for Entire Dimension	0.768	Alpha for Entire Dimension

Cronbach's Alpha for the Overall Scale = 0.782

The values in **Table (5)** indicate that removing any item reduces the reliability of each dimension. This confirms the reliability of the scale's sub-dimensions and demonstrates that removing any item negatively impacts the overall reliability. The results show that the scale has a high degree of reliability.

It is evident from Table (5) that all values indicate that the reliability of each dimension decreases when an item is removed. This demonstrates the reliability of the sub-dimensions of the scale, confirming that the removal of any item negatively affects the overall reliability of the scale. The table also shows that the scale possesses a high degree of reliability.

C. Split-Half Reliability:

The scale was applied to the pilot sample and divided into two halves (odd-ranked and even-ranked items). Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the two halves, and the reliability coefficient was computed using the Spearman-Brown and Guttman split-half methods. The results are shown in **Table (6)**:

Table (6): Split-Half Reliability Coefficients for the School Adjustment Scale

Correction Method	Spearman-Brown	Guttman
Reliability Coefficient	0.874	0.871

These values are statistically significant and high, indicating the scale's reliability and suitability for application.

8 . Results of Testing the Hypotheses for Academic Achievement and School Adjustment

Testing the First Hypothesis:

The hypothesis states:

"There is a statistically significant correlation between students' scores on the School Adjustment Scale and their academic achievement scores among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools."

To verify this hypothesis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the two variables. The results are shown in **Table (7)**:

Table (7): Pearson Correlation Matrix Between Academic Achievement and School Adjustment (N = 70)

Variable	General Behavior in School	Classroom Behavior	Student Adjustment with Teachers	Student Adjustment with Peers	Overall School Adjustment
Academic Achievement (r)	0.457**	0.462**	0.412**	0.443**	0.460**
Coefficient of Determination (r²)	0.20	0.21	0.17	0.19	0.21

Statistically significant at 0.01 () and 0.05 (*).**

Findings from Table (7):

The results indicate a statistically significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level between academic achievement and school adjustment (both dimensions and total score). All correlation coefficients between the two variables are positive and statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of school adjustment are associated with higher academic achievement, and vice versa.

- Pearson's correlation coefficient for the overall relationship is **0.460**, a statistically significant positive value at the 0.01 level.
- The coefficient of determination (r²) is **0.21**, meaning that **21% of the variation in school adjustment levels** among the sample can be attributed to proportional changes in their academic achievement levels.

Conclusion:

The first hypothesis is accepted:

"There is a statistically significant correlation at the 0.01 level between scores on the School Adjustment Scale and academic achievement among high school students in Ramallah and Al-Bireh schools."

This finding aligns with previous studies, including:

- Zainab Abdul Rahman (2023)
- Amina Ziada (2022)
- Ahmed Mohamed Musa Muhassna (2022)
- Qinglin Wan (2023)
- Kiokwamai (2023)
- Kayahan Cokuk (2020)

These studies confirm that academic achievement positively correlates with school adjustment. Higher levels of school adjustment contribute to improved academic performance because school adjustment is closely linked to factors affecting individuals' lives, particularly mental health and school success.

School adjustment enhances academic performance, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Key indicators of school adjustment include:

- Positive attitudes toward school
- Relationships with teachers and peers
- Time management and study methods
- Academic excellence

School adjustment reflects a constructive dynamic relationship between the student and their school environment. Positive indicators of this relationship include academic diligence, acceptance of school standards, and engagement in organized and coordinated activities.

Specific manifestations of school adjustment that enhance academic performance include:

- Psychological comfort
- Work efficiency
- Lesson follow-up
- Relationship-building
- Participation in activities

All these factors contribute to higher academic achievement, validating and supporting the first hypothesis.

Test of the Second Hypothesis: The hypothesis states:

"There are statistically significant differences attributed to the gender variable (Male/Female) in the level of school adaptation, favoring females among secondary school students in the schools of Ramallah and Al-Bireh."

To test the validity of this hypothesis, the research data were described and summarized by calculating the (mean, standard deviation) of the scores for both male and female research groups using the school adaptation scale. To verify the statistical significance of the difference between the means, a t-test was used for the two independent groups with equal numbers of participants. The results of applying the t-test to the mean difference to measure the significance of the difference between the mean scores of the research groups are as follows:

Table (8) Results of the t-test for the significance of the difference between the scores of the male and female research groups in the school adaptation scale.

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	df	Significance Level	Eta Squared	Effect Size
General Behavior in School	Males	42	32.12	7.29	2.802	68	Significant at 0.01	0.10	Medium
	Females	28	37.36	8.20					
Behavior Inside the Classroom	Males	42	24.12	5.70	2.663	68	Significant at 0.01	0.09	Medium
	Females	28	28.04	6.50					
Student Adaptation with Teachers	Males	42	24.40	6.07	2.029	68	Significant at 0.05	0.06	Medium
	Females	28	27.54	6.69					
Student Adaptation with Peers	Males	42	32.60	7.07	2.842	68	Significant at 0.01	0.11	Medium
	Females	28	37.82	8.20					
Overall School Adaptation	Males	42	113.24	25.06	2.822	68	Significant at 0.01	0.10	Medium
	Females	28	134.32	37.52					

From the table above, it is clear that the mean score for females on the overall school adaptation scale was 134.32, which is higher than the mean score for males, which was 113.24, indicating a difference between the mean scores of the two research groups on the school adaptation scale. Additionally, as shown in the table, the calculated "t" value for the overall school adaptation scale was 2.822, which exceeds the critical "t" value at 68 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.01, indicating a significant difference between the two groups' mean scores in favor of females. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted: "There are statistically significant differences attributed to the gender variable (Male/Female) in the level of school adaptation, favoring females among secondary school students in the schools of Ramallah and Al-Bireh," both for the overall scale and the sub-dimensions.

To study the effectiveness and educational significance, the following analysis methods were used, which are suitable for the current research, including the Eta-squared test. As shown in Table (2), the Eta-squared test value (η^2) = 0.10, meaning that 10% of the variance is attributed to gender differences. This indicates a moderate effect size for the difference between males and females in school adaptation, favoring females.

This finding is consistent with what was concluded in the study by Abdul Latif Moheni (2011), Ashraf Al-Lafi Mohammed Ziada (2019), Safia Muqaddim (2023), Tim et al. (2021), and Nuzhat Ahmad (2021), where the difference between males and females in school adaptation is attributed to the fact that school adaptation is a positive social relationship between the student and their peers and teachers, based on mutual respect,

acceptance of the school rules, and active participation in class and school activities such as festivals and sports. Females show more interest in these activities than males. School adaptation is the result of a positive interaction between the student's attitudes and positive inclinations. It is not limited to the interaction, harmony, and adjustment between the student and what the school offers, but it also reflects the student's ability to overcome obstacles, especially those related to academic achievement or success.

9. Statistical Methods Used:

To calculate the validity and reliability of the research scale and test the hypotheses, the following statistical methods were used:

Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, t-test, Cronbach's Alpha Reliability, Spearman, Guttman, Wilcoxon's Equation, using the SPSS statistical software for social sciences.

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