Psychological Adjustment and Its Role in the Academic Success of University Students

التوافق النفسي ودوره في نجاح الطالب الجامعي

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Abdelnacer Salah Abdallah ALDEEB *1
Sabratha University (Libya)
Email : asa.aldeeb@univ-skikda.dz

Slimane BOUMEDIENE 2
University of 20 August 1955 in Skikda (Algeria)
Email : sl.boumediene@univ-skikda.dz

Tarek DJAMAI 3
University of 20 August 1955 in Skikda (Algeria)
Email : t.djamai@univ-skikda.dz

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Abstract *:*

The university stage marks a turning point in the educational journey, during which students face a range of psychological, social, and academic challenges that may affect their performance and academic success. The findings of the article indicate that psychological adjustment is a fundamental factor that directly influences academic performance. The more psychologically adjusted a student is, the better their ability to overcome academic challenges and achieve positive outcomes. Moreover, psychological adjustment is not merely a secondary factor, but a crucial element in the success of university students. It represents the cornerstone of achievement, as it helps students adapt to various challenges and maintain a balance between academic demands and personal life. Therefore, addressing the issue of psychological adjustment is of great importance, as it reflects the urgent need to provide an educational environment that supports mental health and enhances academic success. Educational institutions should prioritize students' psychological adjustment by offering psychological support and guidance and fostering a supportive learning environment.

Keywords: *The role, success, psychological adjustment, university student*

الملخـص:

مثل المرحلة الجامعية منعطفا حاسما في الرحلة التعليمية، حيث يواجه الطلاب مجموعة من التحديات النفسية والاجتماعية والأكاديمية التي قد تؤثر على أدائهم وتحقيقهم الأكاديمي. وتشير نتائج المقال إلى أن التكيف النفسي عامل أساسي يؤثر مباشرة على الأداء الأكاديمي؛ فكلما زاد تكيف الطالب نفسيا، تحسنت قدرته على تجاوز التحديات الأكاديمية وتحقيق نتائج إيجابية. علاوة على ذلك، لا يعد التكيف النفسي مجرد عامل ثانوي، بل هو عنصر حاسم في نجاح الطلاب الجامعيين، إذ يمثل حجر الأساس للإنجاز، حيث يساعدهم على التأقلم مع التحديات المتنوعة والحفاظ على التوازن بين متطلبات الدراسة والحياة الشخصية. وعليه فإن معالجة قضية التكيف النفسي تحظى بأهمية كبيرة، لأنها تعكس الحاجة الملحة لتوفير بيئة تعليمية تدعم الصحة النفسية وتعزز النجاح الأكاديمي. يجب على المؤسسات التعليمية أن تولي أولوية قصوى لضمان تكيف الطلاب نفسيا من خلال تقديم الدعم والإرشاد النفسي، وتعزيز بيئة تعليمية داعمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدور ، النجاح؛ ، التوافق النفسي؛ ، طالب جامعي

* Corresponding author:

Introducion:

The university stage is a turning point in the educational journey, where students face a rang of psychological, social, and academic challenges that may affect their performance and success in this stage, especially when they are unable to adjust to the demands of university life. Psychological adjustment helps students deal with academic pressures, find a balance between personal aspects and the academic environment, and build relationships with colleagues and professors to overcome difficulties and adapt to the changes around them. It also includes the ability to cope with daily pressures and challenges and is an important factor in determining the level of academic achievement of students. Several studies have emphasized that psychological adjustment plays a significant role in enhancing university students' academic performance, improving their academic achievement, and increasing their motivation to learn. For instance, Al-Qaisi (2020) found that psychological adjustment helps reduce stress and improve academic performance. Similarly, Al-Ali (2018) reported a positive correlation between psychological adjustment and academic achievement. In addition, Al-Shammari (2021) investigated the relationship between psychological adjustment and academic motivation among university students and concluded that psychological adjustment has a positive impact on students' motivation. These and other studies highlight the crucial importance of psychological adjustment in the academic lives of university students.

This article aims to shed light on the concept, characteristics, and various dimensions of psychological adjustment, as well as the related theories and the key factors that influence it. It further explores the relationship between psychological adjustment and academic success, and outlines practical strategies that students can adopt to enhance their psychological adjustment and improve their chances of success. By doing so, it contributes to strengthening their ability to cope with academic and social pressures, challenges, and obstacles that may hinder their path to success. The above highlights the growing need for such studies that examine the connection between psychological adjustment and academic achievement, leading to the central research question: What role does psychological adjustment play in the success of university students?

The concept of adjustment is considered one of the key factors influencing individuals' lives and their interactions with the surrounding environment. It reflects a person's ability to adapt and respond positively to various life circumstances and demands. However, adjustment is not merely about adapting; it also encompasses an individual's ability to maintain harmony with others and to strike a balance between personal needs and societal expectations. In this context, exploring the concept of adjustment both linguistically and terminologically is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of how individuals can achieve psychological and social harmony and balance.

1. The concept of Adjustment:

Adjustment is recognized as one of the fundamental concepts in psychology and other social sciences, as it reflects an individual's ability to adapt to their surrounding environment—whether social, cultural, or psychological. It involves the capacity to respond positively to the challenges and pressures that individuals may encounter in their daily lives, as well as to

maintain harmony with others. Adjustment also enables the individual to strike a balance between personal needs and societal demands.

.1.1 The Linguistic Meaning of Adjustment (Tawafuq:(

According to Lisan Al-Arab, the word "tawafuq" (adjustment) is derived from "wafaqa al-shay'," meaning to support or be in agreement with something. It is stated, "He agreed with them – wafaqah – and was in harmony with them – tawafuq." (Al-Ansari, 1988, p. 68). In Al-Mu'jam Al-Waseet, adjustment in philosophy is described as an individual's tendency to behave in accordance with the group and to avoid behavioral deviation. (Mostafa, et al., 1973, p. 1047)

1.2. The Concept of Adjustment in Terminology:

Bakhit (1988) defined it as a positive relationship that the individual deliberately establishes to ensure harmony and coherence with their surrounding environment. This implies the individual's ability to perceive biological, social, and emotional needs.

2. Definition of Psychological Adjustment:

It is an ongoing process that involves modifying behavior and the environment to achieve balance between the individual and their surroundings. This balance includes fulfilling the individual's needs and meeting environmental demands (Zahran, 1997, p. 21). Lazarus defined it as “a set of psychological processes that help the individual cope with demands and psychological pressures” (Al-Khalidi, 2002, p. 42). It is also described as a state of harmony and consistency with the environment, reflecting the individual's ability to satisfy most of their needs and act appropriately in response to physical and social demands (Al-Deeb, 1988, p. 8). The aforementioned definitions provide various perspectives on psychological adjustment and how individuals cope with their environment and psychological challenges. While each definition emphasizes different aspects, they all agree on the importance of effective adjustment as a fundamental condition for mental health, social adaptation, and academic success. These concepts should be incorporated into support programs aimed at university students to strengthen their adaptive abilities and ensure success in both their academic and personal lives.

3. Terms Related to Psychological Adjustment:

There are some concepts that inherently include the meaning of psychological adjustment, including:

3.1. Adjustment and Mental Health:

The first sign of mental health is the individual’s ability to reconcile desires with reason and conscience. The second is the ability to face sudden crises. If internal conflicts are unresolved, external conflicts will be even harder to face. The third sign is the result of the first two—either positively or negatively. Inner integration helps resolve outer conflict, leading to self-confidence, self-satisfaction, and a sense of identity and positivity. (Awad & Abbas, 1996, p. 40)

3.2. Adjustment and Adaptation:

Many researchers have used "adaptation" interchangeably with "adjustment," despite a clear difference. Adaptation is broader, encompassing humans, animals, and plants in their interaction with the environment, while psychological adjustment specifically refers to human interaction with others. Moreover, adjustment reflects human will to improve reality, thus serving as the foundation of human progress and creativity. Psychological adjustment is the result of an individual's efforts, including past and present experiences, to move toward the future. It is also a relative matter, differing by individual abilities, culture, time, and place. (Al-Dahiri, 1999, pp. 15–16)

The above clarifies that mental health and psychological adjustment are interconnected and complementary. Together, they achieve internal integration, self-confidence, and satisfaction—key components of academic success. A university student with good mental health can reconcile internal drives with personal values and face academic and social challenges effectively. As for adaptation, it is more comprehensive and positive than adjustment. It is a dynamic and ongoing process that varies from student to student, depending on individual abilities and their social and academic environment.

4. Characteristics of Adjustment:

Researchers have identified several shared characteristics of adjustment, particularly psychological adjustment:

4.1. Adjustment is Both Inherited and Acquired:

Through socialization, individuals learn how to interact socially and handle stress, achieving harmony between environmental elements and their internal needs. Genetic factors may also affect adjustment, such as inherited mental deficiencies or emotional sensitivities, which can hinder one's ability to adapt and interact socially. (Fawzi, 2000, p. 78)

4.2. Adjustment is an Individual Process:

This is represented in the individual differences between people, due to the differences in nervous systems and the different levels of social growth and levels of mental perception of the stimuli that individuals are exposed to, and this occurs through their responses. (Dubais, 2012, p. 29)

4.3. Adjustment is a Holistic Process:

It involves the individual's overall behavior, not just outward actions. It includes inner experiences and the individual's sense of satisfaction with themselves and their actions.

4.4. Adjustment Reflects Mental Health:

The degree of psychological well-being is shown by how well a person adjusts across different life domains. (Fawzi, 2000, p. 79)

From these characteristics, we conclude that adjustment is both genetic and learned. This highlights the importance of environmental support in enhancing coping skills. While genetic factors may hinder some students' integration, adjustment as an individual process reflects their personal responses shaped by their background and experiences. Individual differences in neurological abilities and levels of perception play a significant role in how each student deals with pressures and challenges. Hence, psychological support strategies must be tailored to each student's needs. Adjustment as a holistic process includes emotional experiences and self-satisfaction; students who feel content with themselves tend to achieve better academically. This illustrates the importance of fostering a positive educational environment. Promoting adjustment skills is therefore an investment in students' academic and future professional success.

5. Dimensions of Adjustment:

5.1. Personal Adjustment:

This refers to internal harmony, involving satisfaction of primary and secondary needs, resulting in happiness with oneself. It reflects "inner peace," reduces internal conflict, and meets developmental demands across different life stages. (Fahmi, 1979, p. 23)

Personal adjustment has dimensions that include physical adjustment, which expresses the individual's health and absence of diseases or physical defects, and is therefore a fundamental source of mental health (Awad, 1996, p. 46), as well as Self-Adjustment, which expresses that the individual adjusted to themselves does not conflict with reality and can succeed in satisfying their needs and achieving their desires, unlike the individual not adjusted to themselves, who conflicts with reality and therefore cannot achieve their desires and fails to form social relationships (Al-Tayeb, 1994, p. 33). Among its most important dimensions is also emotional adjustment, which is considered one of the most important personality traits; where trivial events do not provoke them, and they are characterized by calmness, mental sobriety, and facing matters with emotional balance and self-control (Desouky, 1996, p. 20)

5.2. Health Adjustment (Physical):

This includes enjoying good physical, mental, and emotional health, being free from organic and psychological problems, feeling satisfied with one’s capabilities, having intact senses, and maintaining energy, activity, focus, and motivation for continuous work without fatigue. (Awad & Abbas, 1996, p. 46)

5.3. Social Adjustment:

This involves being happy with others, adhering to societal ethics and norms, complying with social controls, engaging in positive interactions, and contributing to collective well-being and marital harmony, which all foster social health (Zahran, 2005, p. 28). This includes family Adjustment, which refers to the quality of the individual's relationships within their family and the

family's ability to provide necessary resources (Shaqeer, 2002, p. 5), as well as school Adjustment, where the school is the second most important institution after the family in shaping personality and influencing behavior. The mutual relationship between the individual and the school must be a positive and harmonious one. A student is considered adjusted in school when satisfied with their academic achievements and when the school is satisfied with their performance and relationships with teachers, peers, and staff. Healthy school adjustment has positive effects, including happiness, acquisition of socially acceptable behavior, and skills that enable successful social relationships. Indicators of good school adjustment include forming close friendships, feeling respected, developing self-confidence, and participating in school activities. On the other hand, poor school adjustment can negatively impact the student's psychological state, school life, and social relations, potentially leading to social rejection and poor academic outcomes. (Damanhouri, 1986, p. 186)

It is evident from these dimensions that psychological adjustment represents the cornerstone of university student success, as it directly contributes to shaping their personality and social interactions. Personal (emotional) adjustment encompasses various aspects, such as physical adjustment, which ensures individual health and supports psychological well-being, and self-adjustment, which reflects the harmony between an individual and themselves as well as the norms of society. Emotional adjustment, in particular, plays a central role in a student's ability to cope with academic stress and challenges.

As for physical (health) adjustment, it is essential for maintaining a high level of academic performance, as it is closely linked to one's ability to concentrate and remain active. Additionally, social adjustment is considered a key factor in fostering positive relationships among students, their families, and educational institutions, thereby creating a supportive learning environment.

These dimensions are therefore crucial for achieving both academic and social success. Family and school adjustment enhance students' sense of stability and confidence, which in turn improves their academic performance and social interactions. Understanding and promoting these aspects is thus vital for ensuring students' success throughout their university journey.

6. Theories Explaining Psychological Adjustment:

Many scholars have developed theories that offer interpretations and insights into the individual's personality, the integration of its various dimensions, and the interaction between personality traits and the factors affecting psychological adjustment. The following is a brief overview of some of these theories:

6.1. Psychoanalytic Theory:

This theory focuses on the existence of an unconscious psychological life. According to Freud, human beings are born with specific instincts and drives, and psychological adjustment is largely unconscious. That is, individuals may not be fully aware of the true reasons behind much of their behavior. A well-adjusted person, from this perspective, is one who satisfies their personal needs in socially acceptable ways. Psychological disorders such as neurosis and psychosis, according to Freud, are forms of maladjustment. Adler, on the other hand, believed that human nature is inherently self-centered. Through upbringing and socialization, some individuals develop social interest, which enables them to understand and respond to others' needs. However, others may develop psychological issues due to their excessive competitiveness and desire for control or power over others (Al-Jubaili, 1997, p. 95). From this theoretical lens, psychological adjustment plays a vital role in university student success. It suggests that adjustment is linked to an individual's ability to fulfill personal needs in ways that align with social norms. Students with strong self-awareness are often better equipped to manage academic stress and build meaningful relationships. Adler's emphasis on social interest highlights the importance of cultivating cooperation and positive interactions among students, which contributes to greater academic achievement. Hence, enhancing self-awareness and social interest can profoundly impact students' university experiences.

6.2. Behavioral Theory:

Among the most prominent founders of this theory are Skinner and Watson, who view patterns of adjustment and maladjustment as learned behaviors shaped through life experiences. They argue that adjustment consists of a set of habits acquired in the past, which help reduce tension and prove effective in dealing with others. According to Skinner and Watson, psychological adjustment does not develop through conscious effort but rather through automatic processes involving repetition, environmental cues, and reinforcement. Kraner and Walman added that individuals who are not rewarded for their social interactions may begin to avoid such interactions, which could lead to the development of abnormal behaviors. (Ben Setti, 2013, p. 16) This theory suggests that psychological adjustment is learned through repeated behavior and environmental reinforcement. Positive behavioral habits can therefore play a significant role in academic success. Encouraging such habits among students can enhance their ability to adapt to the university environment. Positive social interaction, in particular, boosts students' capacity to engage, cope, and thrive in their academic lives.

6.3. Self-Theory:

Rogers believes that adjustment depends on how the individual perceives themselves, external events, and stimuli. He views adjustment as the ability of a person to accept what they perceive and to accept themselves. The individual, according to Rogers, possesses the capacity to lead and control themselves, and their behavior is driven by the motive of self-actualization. Personality is simply the result of the continuous interaction between the individual's self and the social and physical environment. If the actual self-aligns with the social and ideal selves, the individual experiences internal harmony and external adjustment with those around them. In contrast, an individual suffering from poor adjustment expresses their concerns through behaviors that are inconsistent with their self-concept. This maladjustment may persist if the person attempts to keep certain emotional experiences away from their field of awareness or perception. Rogers also asserts that a human being is not a passive entity who merely adapts to environmental changes but should play an active role in controlling their surroundings and expressing their abilities to the highest

degree. Rogers proposed three criteria for adjustment: (1) a sense of freedom, (2) openness to experience, and (3) trust in one's own feelings (Al-Qutayti & Al-Fawaeir, 2021, pp. 253–254).

In summary, Rogers' self-theory highlights the significance of an individual's self-awareness and its impact on psychological adjustment. According to this theory, adjustment is reflected in a person's ability to accept themselves and their environment, which promotes a sense of internal and external harmony. When the actual self-aligns with the ideal and social selves, the person experiences a state of adjustment and gains greater control over their life. In the context of university student success, enhancing self-awareness and openness to experience can contribute significantly to improved adaptation to academic and social challenges, thereby increasing the chances of success and excellence.

6.4. Cognitive Theory:

Cognitive theorists believe that adjustment is achieved through an individual's knowledge of themselves and their capabilities, and aligning with them according to their available potential. Every person, according to this theory, possesses the ability for self-adjustment. Based on this, Albert Ellis emphasized the importance of teaching psychiatric patients how to express their thoughts in problem-solving, and to make individuals aware that their self-talk is a source of emotional disturbance. Helping individuals to correct their thinking enables their inner dialogue to become more rational and effective (Samara & Nimer 1991, p. 61). Thus, it can be said that psychological adjustment, which develops through past growth experiences, plays a critical role in university student success. The more capable a student is in facing crises in a healthy manner and developing adaptive skills, the higher their chances of achieving academic and social goals.

These theories highlight the importance of psychological adjustment as a key factor in university student success. They demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of personality dimensions and environmental interaction, and how psychological adjustment contributes to enhanced academic performance and the achievement of personal goals.

The Role of Psychological Adjustment in University Student Success

From the aforementioned discussions about the concept of psychological adjustment and its importance in a university student's journey, the significance of psychological adjustment in a university student's life becomes evident. It stands out as a fundamental component that directly affects academic success. Many recent studies have demonstrated a close and direct relationship between psychological and academic adjustment. For instance, the study by Marih and Al-Ali (2023) indicated a correlation between academic adjustment and academic performance. This shows that academic adjustment can positively impact academic achievement. Students who feel adjusted in their academic environment are more likely to attain better academic outcomes, making psychological adjustment a significant factor in enhancing academic performance.

Moreover, psychological adjustment in all its dimensions plays a pivotal role in stimulating university students' motivation toward learning and academic success. When students feel comfortable and psychologically adapted, they are more likely to experience positive academic adjustment. This aligns with the findings of the study by Mnighid and Qoutas (2022). Although this study was conducted on secondary school students, the importance of the relationship between academic adjustment and motivation becomes even more significant at the university level. The university environment is often more complex and competitive, requiring greater independence and responsibility. A university student with good psychological adjustment is better able to adapt to such challenges and maintain motivation to achieve their academic goals.

Further emphasizing the essential role of psychological adjustment, the study by Ait Qassi et al. (2019) found a correlative relationship between psychological and academic adjustment. This highlights the importance of students' mental health in achieving good academic performance. Sound psychological adjustment helps students cope with academic pressures, enhances their motivation to learn, and improves their social skills.

Since psychological adjustment is not merely a result of academic talent, but rather requires integrated psychological and social support, the study by Al-

Zahrani (2019) provided added value to the understanding of academic adjustment among gifted students. The study found that gifted students may face additional pressures related to performance expectations, which can affect their mental health and psychological adjustment despite their high abilities. Here, the importance of providing appropriate psychological support for these students becomes evident, as sound psychological adjustment could be crucial in effectively utilizing their talents.

Conclusion:

The findings from these studies suggest that psychological adjustment is a fundamental factor that directly affects academic performance. The more psychologically adjusted a student is, the better equipped they are to face academic challenges and achieve positive outcomes. These findings confirm that psychological adjustment is not a secondary factor but a critical component in the success of university students. It is clear that psychological adjustment and academic performance form an integrated system that cannot be separated. Enhancing psychological adjustment plays a major role in enabling students to achieve academic excellence and fulfill their educational and professional aspirations.

Therefore, addressing the topic of psychological adjustment in this article is of utmost importance, as it reflects the urgent need to provide a learning environment that supports mental health and enhances students' chances of academic success. Psychological adjustment represents the cornerstone of academic achievement. It is an inseparable part of the educational process, helping students adapt to various challenges they face, granting them the ability to balance the demands of study and personal life. Hence, society and educational institutions must focus on fostering psychological adjustment among students through psychological support, guidance, skill development, and the creation of a supportive educational environment. Furthermore, research and studies should be conducted to identify the factors influencing psychological adjustment and academic success.

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