

Social Support, Academic Support and Adaptation to College: Exploring the Relationships between Indicators of College Students

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to explain the relation between social and academic support of students' adaptation to college. The results of this study show that there were a weak and a reverse correlation between the discharge support and personal adaptability and total adaptation. There was a direct correlation between emotional support and social adaptation and dependence adaptation, a direct correlation between socializing with social adaptation and total adaptation, a direct correlation between practical support with social and dependence adaptation and among a variety of kinds of academic support, the discharge support can predict students' adaptation to university, as well as among a variety of kinds of social support, socialization can predict students' adaptation to college.

Keywords: *social support, academic support, adaptation to college, student*

Introduction

Social support adds confidence and self-confidence to try new things and is effective in the satisfaction of people's lives (Asgari and Nakl Zadeh, 2011). The concept of perceived social support would acknowledge the matter that not all the relations between an individual and others are considered as social support. There is evidence that sometimes helping a person is inappropriate and ill-timed, even against the person's will. Therefore, the person's perception is more important

than the support. The Perceived Social Support scales are also concentrated on the cognitive assessment of the individual from their environment and the level of their confidence that there will be help and support if necessary (Michaeli, Mokhtarpourhabashy & Meisami, 2013).

According to Lee, Yae Chung, Boog Park, and Hong Chung (2004), perceived social support can prevent the occurrence of physiological undesirable effects of illness in the person, increase self-care and the person's confidence and have a positive impact on the physical, mental and social situation of the person and clearly enhance performance and improve the quality of the person's life. Jones (2008) showed how effective the relationship between students and their teachers is on their opinion and feeling and the educational place. Support outside of the classroom has various benefits for students, but most students communicate with their teachers in the classroom. Therefore, one of the outside of the classroom support limitations is not providing the formation possibility of a perfect relationship between the teacher and the student. The support outside of the classroom lacks the classroom interaction between these two parties. These class interactions are more common among those who do not have the required motivational force to communicate beyond the classroom. Class communication between students and teachers determines whether the person is willing to communicate with his teacher outside of class or not and if so, what is the nature of the relationship outside of the classroom. Thus, researchers have investigated other methods of communication that teachers apply to support their students (Bejrano, 2014). Ellis (2000) concluded that the teacher's appreciation has a great impact on students' cognitive and affective learning.

Thompson and Mazer (2009) in their research showed that academic support promotes the adaptive aspects in the following ways. First, by helping each other in class, preparing educational strategies and advice, students ease each other's academic adaptivity. Bejrano (2014) believes that motivated people like support groups because "these motivated people help to make a strong academic environment inside and outside the classroom".

Sherot, Turman and Soliz (2009) found the teacher's confirmation depends directly and indirectly on the student's opinion about the teacher's credit and their assessment of the teacher. The study results of Jones (2008) suggest that students are very enthusiastic and happy about learning from the teachers who support them outside of class, and this process can be reduced by the teachers who give limited support to the student and the teachers who do not give any support action. Jones concluded that the teachers who apply the outside of the classroom supporting technique could help their students to cope with academic life cycle

stresses. Jones also revealed that the support gives value and credit to students, encourages them not to give up, and through this, helps in their adaptation to the academic environment. Teachers are the most valuable resources that provide their students with required tips for dealing with difficult circumstances. Regarding social support and adaptation, other research was conducted that can refer to the studies by Saloviita, Italinna and Leinonen (2003), White and Hastings (2004) and Cecilia and Blgrave (2007).

The above-mentioned research shows that the relation between social support and adaptation is significant. In addition, other research shows that social support has a positive effect on adaptation (Holland and Holahan, 2003, Brambli, Harry Davidson and Emerson, 2004). Tao, Dong, Pratt, Pancer and Hunsberger (2000) suggest that social support is closely related to social adaptation. Davidson et al. (2005) investigated the relation between the observed social support and adaptation behaviors of youth and concluded that the relation between social support and adaptive behaviors of students is significant (Khaksar Beldaji and Khodapanahi, 2006). Pelgarn et al. (2003) showed there is a significant difference between patient men and women in various aspects of social adaptation and psychological distress. In another study, Wallace (2001) found out that educational success was related to psychological adaptation and boys were in a better position than girls in terms of psychological adaptation. King (1999) also showed that boys were in a better position than girls in terms of a positive attitude to life, and a sense of happiness and satisfaction with life. Loieng (1997) proved that in the entire and social adaptation the difference between two considered samples gender was not significant. Ranchor, Bouma and Sandrmn (1996) found that social support was positively related to health and thus the person's ability to deal with anxiety, stress and concern increases. Researchers also agree that social support protects a person from stress and anxiety. Therefore, achieving a desired level of adaptation in different areas makes it possible to develop, meet needs and desires and realize an ideal (Brghandan, 2013).

Adopting appropriate exposure practices can lead to more adaptation in a person. Confronting refers to a series of cognitive and behavioral strategies applied by a person to manage their demands in stressful and difficult situations (Folkman and Moscovetiz, 2004). Moormi (2002) concluded that parenting styles of single-parent children had no direct correlation with those children's emotional and social adaptation, whereas factors such as other's social support and children's intelligence might play a role in offsetting the effects of the mother's absence of personal-social adaptation and their character. Soda in his background review is

seeking for the study, the environment and future. The student's social adaptation is also affected by academic and non-academic factors; studies have found that social acceptance by teachers and classmates leads to different compatible outcomes in this period (Mercer, 2008).

Any changes in human life, pleasant and unpleasant, require a kind of readjustment (Hosseinian et al., 2007). As noted, social and academic support of the student has a positive impact on their adaptation and success, and this plays a decisive role in the student's educational achievement and their socialization in many cases. Therefore, considering the importance of the student's social and academic support and its important role in their educational life, the present study is considered necessary in this area and it investigates the role of social support and academic support in students' adaptation to college. The purpose of the study was to explore the relationships between indicators of college students about social support, academic support and adaptation to college.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship between the academic support of students and their adaptation to college?
2. Is there a relationship between the social support of students and their adaptation to college?
3. Can a variety of academic support of students at university predict their adaptation to college?
4. Can a variety of social support of students at university predict their adaptation to college?

Research Methodology

The presented study used a descriptive methodology with a correlated approach. The target population includes all 8300 students of Azad University in Zahedan in the 2015–2016 academic year. To determine the sample size, the sampling table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used. In the study, based on the classification of the sampling method, the proportional size and simple random method were used. The demographic characteristics of the sample population are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample population (N= 368)

		F	%
Gender	Male	197	53.5
	Female	171	46.5
Age	<21	120	32.6
	21–24	112	30.4
	>24	136	37
Field of Study	Human Sciences	266	72.3
	Basic Sciences	39	10.6
	Technical and Engineering	63	17.1
Educational Level	Bachelor's Degree	232	63
	Master's Degree	136	37

To collect data, the following questionnaires are used:

The student academic support scale by Thompson and Mazer (2009) has 15 items in the form of four sub-components as follows: a) informational support: items 1 to 7, b) confident support: items 8 to 10, c) motivational support: items 11 to 13, and d) discharge support: items 14 and 15. Responding to the items of this questionnaire is set in a range of five options from *not at all* = 1 to *every day* = 5.

The social support behaviors scale by Vaux, Riede and Stewart (1987). The questionnaire has 35 items in the form of four sub-components as follows: a) emotional support: items 1 to 9, b) socialization : items 10 to 14, c) application assistants (practical): items 15 to 24, and d) advice and guidance: items 25 to 35. Responding to the items of this questionnaire is set in a range of five options from *do not let anyone* = 1 to *most of the family members do it* = 5.

The student adaptation to college questionnaire by Baker and Siryk (1989) has 21 items in the form of four sub-components as follows: a) scientific adaptation: items 1 to 5, b) social adaptation: items 6 to 11, c) personal and emotional adaptation: items 12 to 16, and d) affiliation: items 17 to 21. Responding to the items of this questionnaire is set in a range of five options from *completely false* = 1 to *quite right* = 5.

To compute reliability, the Cronbach alpha test was used and the calculated values are presented in Table 2.

In the study, to analyze the research data, the inferential statistics such as Pearson's correlation test, analysis of variance and stepwise regression were used. It should be noted that all the statistical calculations were conducted with SPSS, version 19, software.

Table 2. The main questionnaire components and their reliability coefficient

Questionnaires	Number of items	α
Academic Support	15	0.89
Social Support	35	0.94
Adaptation to college	21	0.78

Research Results

- Is there a relationship between the academic support of students and their adaptation to college?

Table 3. The correlation test in connection with the academic support of students and adaptation (N= 380)

		Scientific A.	Social A.	Personal A.	Dependence A.	Adaptation (Total)
Informational S.	r	-.084	-.012	.017	-.059	-.044
	Sig	.107	.821	.739	.259	.402
Confidence S.	r	-.056	.035	-.025	.021	-.008
	Sig	.282	.509	.636	.684	.871
Motivational S.	r	-.053	-.012	-.084	-.014	-.065
	Sig	.315	.823	.109	.792	.215
Discharge S.	r	-.108*	.038	-.123*	-.102*	-.120*
	Sig	.039	.465	.018	.051	.021
Academic S. (Total)	r	-.092	.008	-.043	-.047	-.064
	Sig	.079	.885	.415	.367	.221

*P>.05

As shown in Table 3, among the different kinds of academic support, there is a significant and inverse – although insignificant – relationship between discharge support and scientific, personal adaptation and the student's dependency on the university and the same adaptation ($p < .05$). There was no statistically significant difference among other items.

- Is there a relationship between the social support of students and their adaptation to college?

Table 4. The correlation test in connection with the social support of students' adaptation (N= 380)

		Scientific adaptation	Social adaptation	Personal adaptation	Dependence adaptation	Adaptation (Total)
Emotional Support	r	-.085	.191**	-.013	.133*	.084
	Sig	.102	.000	.803	.011	.106
Socialization	r	-.067	.269**	.024	.093	.116*
	Sig	.202	.000	.641	.076	.026
Practical Support	r	-.052	.168**	.027	.120*	.100
	Sig	.324	.001	.609	.022	.055
Consultation and guidance	r	-.158**	.168**	.010	.032	.026
	Sig	.002	.001	.842	.542	.618
Social Support (Total)	r	-.115*	.224**	.013	.105*	.088
	Sig	.028	.000	.797	.043	.093

*P>.05 **P>.01

As can be seen in Table 4, except for a significant correlation between emotional support and social adaptation ($r = .191$) and dependency ($r = .133$) and socialization with social adaptation ($r = .269$) and total adaptation ($r = .116$), consulting and guidance with scientific adaptation ($r = -.158$) and social adaptation ($r = .168$), and total social support with scientific adaptation ($r = .115$) and social adaptation ($r = .244$), there was no statistically significant correlation between the other components.

- Can a variety of academic support of students at university predict their adaptation to college?

Table 5. Prediction Regression of Students' adaptation by a variety of academic supports (N= 380)

Step	Independent variable	R	R2	Adj.R2	R2 Change	B	t	Sig.
1	Discharge Support	.120	.014	.012	.014		53.862	.000
						-.120	-2.311	.021

To predict students' adaptation to university by a variety of academic support, the stepwise regression was used. At this stage, discharge was the most anticipated of students' adaptation to university, as shown in the table above. As the results

show, the discharge support could predict 12 % of the student's adaptation to university. In addition, according to the obtained $t = 2.31$ and the significant degree of 0.05, it confirms the success of this model at the level of 0.95. In other words, one can say with 95% of confidence that the effect coefficient is the discharge support variable in the significant model.

- Can a variety of social support of students at university predict their adaptation to college?

Table 6. Prediction Regression of Students' adaptation by a variety of social support (N= 380)

Step	Independent variable	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	R ² Change	B	t	Sig.
1	Socialization	.116 ^a	.013	.011	.013		26.728	.000
						.116	2.235	.026

To predict students' adaptation to university by a variety of social support, the stepwise regression was used. At this stage, socialization was the most anticipated of students' adaptation to university, as shown in the table above. As the results show, the socialization support could predict 11% of the student's adaptation to university. In addition, according to the obtained $t = 2.24$ and the significant degree of 0.05, it confirms the success of this model at the level of 0.95. In other words, one can say with 95% of confidence that the effect coefficient is the socialization support variable in the significant model.

Discussion and conclusion

The results show an inverse and weak relationship between the discharge support and personal adaptation and consistency. Comparison of the results of this study with the research results of Rahimi Nejad et al. (2014), entitled the correlation between Shahed students' perception of the educational atmosphere, their personal and family characteristics and social adaptation, showed that the students' satisfaction of Shahed share, other students' positive opinion to Shahed students, the teachers' dealing and Shahed students marriage that are predictors of Shahed students' social adaptation, is aligned. The results of Thomson et al. (2009) and Wallace's research (2001) indicate the relation between academic achievement and psychological adaptation as well as the research results of Gharagozlou, Rahiminezhad and Reza Zadeh (2009) show that there is a direct and significant

positive relationship between adaptation and social support, which is compatible with the current research.

The results also showed a direct correlation between emotional support and social and dependent adaptation, a direct correlation between socialization and social and total adaptation, a direct correlation between practical support and social and dependent adaptation and a direct correlation between consultation and guidance and social adaptation as well as a direct correlation between the total support and social adaptation. On the other hand, there is an inverse relation between consultation and guidance and scientific adaptation and total support with the scientific adaptation. Comparison of the results of the present study with the research results of Khoshkonesh et al. (2011), entitled the role of fundamental needs and social support in high school students' social adaptation, showed that there is a direct correlation between social support and social adaptation, has conformity. Regarding social support and adaptation, other studies have been done, e.g., Saloviita, Italianna and Leinonen (2003), White and Hastings (2004) and Sisilia and Bulgery (2007). The mentioned studies have shown that there is a significant correlation between social support and adaptation. Other research has also shown that social support has a positive effect on adaptation (Holland and Holahan, 2003, Brambli, Harry Davidson and Emerson, 2004). Tao, Dong, Pratt, Pansr and Hansbergur (2000) also suggest that social support correlates with social adaptation. Davidson et al. (2005) studied the relation between observed social support and the adaptation behaviors of young people and concluded that the relation between social support and students' compatible behaviors is significant. The results of the mentioned research are compatible with this research.

In relation to the third research question, the results showed that among the components of academic support, discharge support can predict students' adaptation to university. Comparison of the results of this study with the research results of Wright (2012) showed that students could help each other with emotional support, easy job support and academic support in adaptation to university and these forms of support confront with the stress of university. In relation to the fourth research question, the results showed that only socialization can predict students' adaptation to university.

In summary, there are a weak and an inverse correlation between discharge support and personal adaptation and total adaptation. There is a direct correlation between emotional support and social and dependent adaptation, a direct correlation between socialization and social and total adaptation, a direct correlation between practical support and social and dependent adaptation and a direct

correlation between consultation and guidance and social adaptation as well as a direct correlation between total support and social adaptation. There is also an inverse correlation between coping strategies and scientific adaptation. Among the components of academic support, discharge support can predict students' adaptation to university. None of the components of social support can predict students' adaptation to university.

According to the obtained results, what is recommended is:

1. Sponsorship of elite and low-income students by university
2. Granting interest-free loans for the education of students in higher education
3. Running social and religious counseling sessions for students in order to raise students' awareness and decision-making abilities in society
4. Creating an intimate atmosphere between students and officials in order to solve students' issues more easily
5. Giving special academic support to students.
6. Giving more importance to consultations with students.
7. Paying more attention to students' needs.
8. Planning students' future.

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