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## **Examining the Social Support, Psychological Capital, and Academic Success in University Students: The moderating role of Academic Adjustment**

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### **Abstract**

The recent research was endeavored to evaluate the level of significance that academic adjustment plays in influencing the academic accomplishment of pupils. For the purpose of the study, 250 valid responses were collected from a variety of university departments through the use of convenience sampling. The process of analyzing the data was carried out via using SPSS. Based on the data collected from the participants of this study, it was revealed that the perception of social support and psychological capital have a substantial impact on the outcomes of academic adjustment and success. The interaction between social support and academic success ( $SE = 1.54$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicated a significant positive relationship. Similarly, the interaction between psychological capital and academic success showed ( $SE = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ) a significant positive association. Moreover, the moderation effect of academic achievement on the relationship between social support and academic success was found to be significant ( $SE = 0.31$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). Likewise, academic achievement was observed to moderate the relationship between psychological capital and academic success significantly ( $SE = 0.26$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). This underscores the necessity for institutions of higher education to place an emphasis on the formation of academic qualities that enhance success, as well as for policymakers to provide assistance to students in effectively adapting to new circumstances.

**Keywords:** academic adjustment, psychological capital, social support, students

## Introduction

Academic students go through a lot of changes that affect their capacity to thrive in the classroom and adapt to its demands. These modifications support their development on the personal, professional, emotional, and societal levels. Globally, adult learners are given a lot of attention when it comes to their academic achievements, level of personal satisfaction, behavioral and psychological aspects, and overall development. Their competitiveness, energy, inventiveness, and drive are the reasons behind this (Zhao et al., 2022). A person's time in college is very important since it shapes who they are and lays the groundwork for their future success. Here, the most important thing is to do well in school, which means earning a degree and becoming an expert in the field of one's choice in terms of both theoretical understanding and practical application (Khalid et al., 2023). Securing work and reaching professional achievement are directly related to your academic performance. Students in higher education vary greatly in terms of their motivation levels, backgrounds, experiences, and access to social and emotional support. This variability can range from pupils who are highly resilient and adaptive to others who go through a lot of stress and anxiety (Mushtaque, Waqas, et al., 2021).

The concept of academic adjustment is multifaceted and arises from the process of surmounting the obstacles and adversities that come with being a student. It is related to a number of different concepts, including academic performance, graduate qualities, motivation, and autonomy (Ahmed et al., 2023). Intellectual adjustment pertains to a comprehensive assessment of performance at the university level that considers four essential domains: intellectual, social, institutional, and emotional aspects of students' functioning. This evaluation goes beyond traditional metrics like grades (Hassan, Malik, et al., 2022). The results of this assessment are crucial in predicting academic success and lifelong adjustment. Students' ability to adapt academically is directly related to their future success, and research has shown that it is also related to psychological capital, positive emotional states, and general well-being (Fang & Mushtaque, 2024). These factors improve students' ability to bounce back from setbacks.

Academic success and psychological capital are closely related concepts. Psychological capital is a positive resource pool that helps people believe in their own talents and adjust their behavior. In addition to improving social happiness, subjective social support from other members of the university community can assist people in better managing their stress and anxiety. The complex interactions between psychological capital, social support, academic adaptability, and achievement outcomes highlight how these factors affect children's educational paths. The purpose of this study is to investigate how students' perceptions of social support, psychological capital, and academic adjustment are related to each other. By looking into these three areas, the study aims to fill in the gaps in the literature by offering insights into how they affect university students' final grades.

## Literature Review

### 1. Psychological Capital

One key indicator of people's positive psychological development is psychological capital, a concept studied in organizational behavior and positive psychology. The majority of research on its effects has focused on managerial contexts, particularly the effects it has on employees' contentment, productivity, and happiness within organizations (Hassan, Luo, et al., 2022). While studies have been done on the relationship between students' psychological capital, social support perceptions, and academic achievement, most of them have focused on business students, students in organizational sectors, or college students alone. By investigating how academic adjustment influences the relationships between students' perceptions of social support, their psychological capital, and their success outcomes, this study seeks to close theoretical and practical gaps in the literature (Hassan, Malik, et al., 2022).

A person's view of their own positive psychological traits, such as optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resilience, is known as perceived psychological capital. It displays their capacity to succeed in the face of adversity. It encourages an optimistic outlook and the will to adjust and make the required adjustments in order to fulfill personal objectives. Research on psychological capital's effects on college students' academic success and adjustment is lacking, despite the crucial role it plays in students' problem-solving skills (Malik et al., 2023). Pupils who feel that they are part of something bigger are more likely to be hopeful, resilient, optimistic, and confident in their talents, all of which may lead to better academic outcomes. Research has indicated that children's psychological capital, which in turn leads to improved academic engagement, adjustment, and performance, is strongly impacted by their emotional well-being.

### 2. Social Support

There is no agreed-upon definition of social support, despite its obvious importance in handling interpersonal relationships. More accurately, it refers to the various ways in which social networks provide both material and emotional support (Mushtaque et al., 2022). The social support networks that exist in kids' surroundings have a positive effect on their academic performance, developmental outcomes, and mental health. Rather than actual social support, perceived social support is the feeling that one is loved, cared for, and part of a supportive network. According to the research, students' mental health is more significantly impacted by perceived social support than by actual social support. Research has indicated that teenagers' mental health, academic achievement, and ability to control maladaptive behaviors are significantly impacted by their perception of social support. In addition to asking their loved ones for emotional support, students can lessen the challenges of acculturation by creating and maintaining social support networks. This is especially true in the context of higher education, where students can interact with new people and find it helps them adjust academically as well as reduce social anxiety (Raza, Khalid, et al., 2023a).

### 3. Academic Adjustment

Academic adjustment is the ability to perform academic work well enough to prepare people for the many and complex educational environments. In essence, it means that students and their educational setting ought to be in perfect harmony. A strong desire to study, specific goals for one's educational endeavors, active participation in one's own learning process, and contentment with the learning environment are the four main components of academic adaptation. Good adaptation is associated with steady academic progress and accomplishments throughout several semesters, and this adjustment process has a big impact on students' academic performance. The relationship between academic adjustment and other important factors like motivation, performance, and learning capacity has been the subject of extensive investigation in the literature. The results show a positive correlation between these variables and academic success every time(Raza, Khalid, et al., 2023b). Students' academic success is dependent on how motivated they are to learn and how hard they work to attain their academic goals. The importance of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy in predicting academic success trajectories has been highlighted in research on academic adjustment in higher education.

### Objectives of the Study

1. Investigate the role of relationships formed during university in facilitating academic adjustment and their subsequent impact on students' academic success, psychological capital, and perceived social support.
2. Assess the current state of research on academic achievement, psychological capital, and social support to identify gaps and areas requiring further investigation.

### Conceptual Framework

Perceived social support, psychological capital, academic adjustment, and academic achievement are all positively correlated, according to the presented research hypotheses, with academic adjustment acting as a significant moderator. Figure 1 illustrates the direct relationship between academic performance, psychological capital, and social support, with academic adjustment acting as a potential moderator.

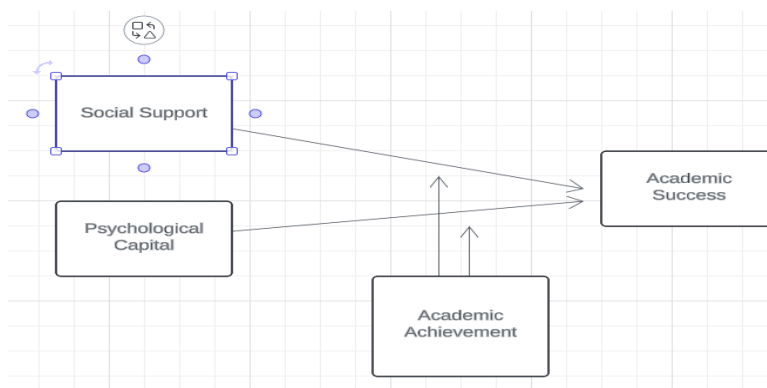


Figure 01 Conceptual Framework

## **Hypothesis of the Study**

H1: Social Support (SS) and Psychological Capital (PC) have the positive correlation with academic success among students.

H2: Academic achievement positively moderates the relationship between Social Support and Psychological capital.

## **Methodology**

The research strategy was developed to assess the hypotheses quantitatively. By applying academic adjustment, the model included variables to investigate the major impact that psychological capital and perceived social support had on students' academic success. By giving university students a survey form and collecting their self-reported responses, data was obtained from them. The surveys were requested to be completed by the respondents, and their involvement was entirely voluntary.

## **Study Population and Sample**

The researchers employed convenience sampling to enlist participants from two public universities in Punjab for this investigation. Researchers obtained data from a sample of 500 social science students, including undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels, with relative ease. A total of 250 questionnaires were returned from the respondents, representing a response rate of 86.8%.

## **Instruments of Study**

1. The three components of perceived social support are closeness from intimate relationships, kinship from family, and companionship from friends. There are four components to each dimension. A scale from 1 to 5, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree," was used to rate the Likert scale items. "I am able to talk about my personal problems with my family" (family), "My friends really try to help me" (friends), and "I have a specific person who is a real source of comfort for me" (significant others) are a few examples of items that represent each dimension.
2. Hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy are examples of psychological capital. Each dimension has six components, for a total of 24 components that can be found in Liranand Miller's work. A five-point Likert scale was utilized to evaluate the psychological capital items, with a score of 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and a score of 5 denoting "strongly agree." "I am capable of handling academic challenges due to my previous experiences with difficulty," "There are multiple strategies available to overcome any obstacles encountered in my studies," "When faced with uncertainty as a student, I typically maintain a positive outlook" (optimism), and "I possess the necessary

skills to analyze and solve complex problems related to my studies" (self-efficacy) are some examples of items that represent each dimension.

3. Six items measuring academic adaptability were acquired. The questions were assessed using a Likert-type scale consisting of nine points, ranging from 1 to 9. A score of 1 means the item fits the wearer extremely well, and a score of 9 means the item does not fit the wearer at all. The scale includes items such as "I perceive academic studies as challenging."
4. We were able to assess the academic success of the students by averaging their final marks. Academic achievement was measured using previous semester's grade point averages. It was requested of each student to turn in their semester-final grades. A cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.5, on a scale of 1 to 4, is necessary to pass a Pakistani university.

### Procedure of Study

Surveys were used to collect data, and participants were given the assurance of confidentiality. It was made clear to participants in the evaluation statements that participation was entirely voluntary. The individuals gave individualized reports of their encounters. After that, the data was coded and arranged in order to get it ready for statistical analysis. Using descriptive and inferential statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, correlations, and moderation, the statistical program SPSS V.23 was used to assess the hypotheses.

### Results

**Table 1 Students demographic Information (N=250)**

Variables	F(%)	M(SD)
<b>Male</b>	111(44.4)	
<b>Female</b>	139 (55.6)	
<b>Age of Students</b>		23.65 (6.42)
<b>Education Level</b>		
Undergraduate	69 (15.7)	
Graduate	104 (25.3)	
Postgraduate	77 (31.6)	
<b>CGPA</b>		
2.50- 3.00	76 (24.6)	
3.01-4.00	174 (54.3)	

**Table 2 Correlation analysis**

Variables	1	2	3	4
<b>1. Social Support</b>	-	0.25*	0.65*	0.14**
<b>2. Psychological Support</b>		-	0.35**	0.16**
<b>3. Academic Success</b>			-	0.37*
<b>4. Academic Achievement</b>				-

Table 2 presents the correlation analysis between the variables. Social support exhibited a significant positive correlation with psychological support ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), academic success ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and academic achievement ( $r = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Psychological support also showed a significant positive correlation with academic success ( $r = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and academic achievement ( $r = 0.16$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, academic success displayed a significant positive correlation with academic achievement ( $r = 0.37$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3 Regression Analysis**

Interaction	$\beta$	SE	p
<b>Social Support</b> $\longrightarrow$ <b>Academic Success</b>	0.34	1.54	0.001
<b>Psychological Capital</b> $\longrightarrow$ <b>Academic Success</b>	0.43	0.43	0.036
<b>Academic Achievement moderates relationship social support and academic success</b>	0.51	0.31	0.013
<b>Academic Achievement moderates relationship psychological capital and academic success</b>	0.25	0.26	0.000

The results of the regression analysis, as depicted in Table 3, reveal significant interactions between the variables. The interaction between social support and academic success yielded a beta coefficient of 0.34 ( $SE = 1.54$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating a significant positive relationship. Similarly, the interaction between psychological capital and academic success showed a beta coefficient of 0.43 ( $SE = 0.43$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ), suggesting a significant positive association. Moreover, the moderation effect of academic achievement on the relationship between social support and academic success was found to be significant, with a beta coefficient of 0.51 ( $SE = 0.31$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). Likewise, academic achievement was observed to moderate the relationship between psychological capital and academic success significantly, with a beta coefficient of 0.25 ( $SE = 0.26$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

## Discussion

A favorable and statistically significant impact on how well children transition to school is found to be associated with the children's perceptions of the social support they receive, as indicated by the regression analysis. Students can rely on organizations and social networks to assist them in adjusting to college life, as demonstrated by this study, which adds additional evidence along

those lines(Raza, Khalique, et al., 2023). The findings of this study provide credence to the findings of past studies that discovered social support to be an essential component in determining the academic success and overall well-being of college students(Shehata et al., 2023). A similar correlation was found between the students' self-reported levels of social support and their actual levels of success. This correlation was found to be positive. This highlights the significance of social support even further in terms of its role in enhancing the academic performance of children and boosting their sense of self-worth. Psychological capital can be beneficial, but it may not be sufficient on its own in terms of academic achievement without additional factors. Based on these findings, it appears that psychological capital has a marginally significant residual effect. Other researches have shown that psychological capital has an impact on students' ability to manage academic problems and nurture a growth mindset in the pursuit of their goals. This finding is consistent with the findings of the previous study, which demonstrated that psychological capital is a strong predictor of academic adjustment(Mushtaque, Rizwan, et al., 2021). There was a discernible decrease in the connections between psychological capital, perceived social support, and academic achievement during the period of academic adjustment. The relevance of academic adjustment as the foundation of academic achievement is brought to light by the researches that have been conducted(Zhao et al., 2022). A higher level of psychological capital is associated with students who have a greater perception of social support, which in turn boosts their motivation and resilience to achieve academic success. When parents and schools collaborate, they have the ability to assist kids in the development of positive psychological characteristics, as well as in recognizing and making use of their social support networks, which is critically important for the students' overall development. According to the findings, there is a connection between success outcomes in a university setting, psychological capital, academic adjustment, and social support. This connection highlights the necessity of comprehensive support networks for the development of students on both the academic and personal fronts.

In many different ways, this piece of work makes a major contribution to the existing body of academic literature. It begins by highlighting the significant role that academic adjustment plays as a mediator in the formation of the links between perceived social support, psychological capital, and academic achievement in the setting of higher education(Mushtaque, Waqas, et al., 2021). Not only does it shed light on the significant impact that psychological capital has on academic adaptability, but it also demonstrates the significant role that psychological capital plays in addressing challenges that students are experiencing and in fostering academic performance. These findings shed light on the influences that psychological capital and perceived social support have, both directly and indirectly, on the outcomes of success pursuits.

Additionally, the study provides helpful implications that might assist academic departments, parents, and teachers in increasing student engagement and promoting regular study habits. Students who are better equipped psychologically to deal with academic challenges and who have a strong sense of social support are more adaptive during their time spent in higher education. Therefore, it is recommended that legislators make use of the tools at their disposal to aid students in making a smooth transition, and that universities lay a significant emphasis on the development of academic abilities that make it possible for students to achieve success.

The research, on the other hand, contains a number of shortcomings and offers opportunities for



further investigation. The fact that the research only dealt with academic adjustment as the moderator is a significant restriction that should be taken into consideration. In light of this, it is clear that future research must take into account institutional factors in addition to the emotional and social aspects of adjustment. Additionally, the partial moderation that exists between the constructs is investigated in this study. Nevertheless, it is possible that future research will focus on doing multi-moderation studies that make use of a wide variety of parameters. Furthermore, the sample size of the study was limited to a few colleges in the province of Punjab in Pakistan. This raises the possibility that the findings might be replicated in a wider variety of countries, regions, and academic fields. The study was conducted using a cross-sectional methodology, which makes it difficult to determine causal linkages. This highlights the importance of conducting longitudinal research in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of causal dynamics.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which psychological capital and perceived social support influence the academic adjustment and achievement of children, as well as the ways in which adjustment influences and influences success. Adaptation was shown to be significantly improved among students who received social aid in addition to their academic courses, as indicated by the study. This indicates that these students were better prepared for the rigorous environment that they were exposed to in the classroom. Students are more likely to employ psychological capital as a means of supporting academic transformation when they are confronted with academic challenges. The ideas of social capital and the conservation of resources were utilized in this research project to demonstrate that academic engagement and involvement are directly related to academic adjustment and achieved academic goals. This study provides evidence that lends credence to and validates these beliefs. University students who have successfully made adaptations to their academic schedules are more likely to have excellent cumulative grade point averages and demonstrate a desire to graduate from their respective institutions. The ability to successfully transition to the lifestyle of a university student is a major predictor of the positive association that exists between psychological capital and perceived social support.

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