Students' Socio-Economic Status and Academic Adjustment in University of Sargodha

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Abstract

The study was about the influence of socioeconomic status on academic adjustments of undergraduate students. The study was a cross-sectional survey. The population was all the undergraduates enrolled in the university of Sargodha. Using a multistage random sampling sample of 550 students was selected. A modified scale 'Socio-economic status surveys for students' from Student to College Questionnaire (SACQ), were used and on the bases of pilot testing showing reliability coefficient Cronbach Alpha values 0.90 and 0.71respectively. Data were analyzed by calculating frequencies, percentages and mean score, t-test and one-way ANOVA. The major findings were that the majority of students had moderate academic adjustment; no significant difference was found in academic adjustment with respect to their SES. It is recommended that students' may be provided with the opportunities of group projects and counseling and guidance to gain a high level of academic adjustment.

Key Words: University Students, Socio-Economic Status, Academic Adjustment

Introduction

Students getting enrolled in university are from the most diverse population in terms of their family background, ethnic composition, age, gender, native language socioeconomic status, and level of academic preparation. Usually, the concept of socio-economic status is taken as the category of individuals or groups of social standing. It is mostly measured as a combination of the indicators i.e. occupation, education and income (Ghaemi, & Yazdanpanah, 2014).

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University students belong to different areas and have different social status, background and culture even. They made a very different environment at university which is always dynamic but complex. In university students face novel situations, have different choices and bear different responsibilities, and challenges. They have to learn to deal with such environment, challenges, and responsibilities. They have to adjust to this new environment (Kerr, Johnson, Gans, & Krumrine, 2004). Adjustment means highlighting the efforts of a person to survive in a new social or physical environment (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007). Adjustment is a practice of escalating the tension, bearing the stress, dealing with conflicts and to meet up the individual's needs. There are two basic factors of the adjustment process i.e. that are the individual and the environment. So, in the process of adjustment, the person tries his best to make and sustain a good relationship with the environment. On joining the educational institution, students from different backgrounds have their own values and norms whereas they face different norms and values which are according to the vision and mission of that institution. Students have to mould themselves to get easy going with the institutional norms and values (Robinson, 2009).

Every student has a different level of adjustment on the basis of his developmental stage and previous experiences. This is similar to the thoughts of Dyson and Renk (2006) as they concluded in their study that most of the students while entering the university have to undergo the phase of adjustment but everyone has his own pace of development. Every student has to face the transition period of leaving college and entering into a new university environment full of challenges of different academic set up, different teaching styles, new friends, etc. According to Lapsley and Edgerton (2002) more or less every student has to struggle to manage new challenges in university and they become more prone to stress, depression, and anxiety. McDermott and Pettijohn (2011) described that throughout the world there is a very high rate of psychological problems during the early days of university students.

Crede and Niehorster (2012) conducted experimental research on the dimensions of adjustment i.e. personal-emotional adjustment, academic adjustment, social adjustment, and institutional commitment. Social adjustment is important for every person but it is necessary for undergraduate students because they face phenomena of individualization from home and family. Social adjustment of university students is directly linked with their overall adjustment (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007). To minimize the effects of loneliness, anxiety, and depression on undergraduate students, social support is the most significant factor (Dong, Hunsberger& Pancer, 2000). In this regard students' adjustment socially and academically, Dyson and Renk (2006) defined the social adjustment of students as students' participation in social activities and the extent to which students are satisfied with the university social environment.

New entry university students have to make adjustments in the university environment. Adjustment of academic habits and expectations are required from students when they enter university life after completing their college studies. They will need to work harder to improve their study habits as they may face many new academic challenges i.e. larger classes, different teaching techniques, and lengthier assignments (Round, 2005).

There are different results of the researches about the socio-economic status and academic adjustment. Zarina (2011) concluded that the higher the SES the better the academic adjustment. Income is an important factor of SES and it has an influence on student's adjustment to higher education (Mompremier, 2009; Backhaus, 2009; Joseph, 2016). But according to Kyalo, & Chumba (2011) SES has no significant effect on university students' academic adjustment. Similarly, Carvalho, & Novo, (2012) concluded that SES has a good relationship with school adaptation.

On joining university students make new social relations and face new demands like academic adjustment (Monroe, 2009). Many students in past life were dependent on their parents are teachers and in university, they have doubts about their abilities to cope up with new experiences of course work (Robinson, 2009). It is agreed upon the matter that undergraduate students have to make adjustments in several activities (Clark, 2005). In this regard, socio-economic status of students may have effects on academic adjustment in university.

In the university of Sargodha every year, a large number of students gets enrolled in undergraduate programs of a different discipline. All these students have a different religious, cultural, social, ethnic, and academic background. They have experiences of a college environment that are surely different from the environment of the university in terms of mode of education i.e. academic activities, co-education, and social activities. The present study was aimed to explore the academic adjustment of undergraduate students of University of Sargodha with different socioeconomic statuses.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the association between socioeconomic status of undergraduate students and their academic adjustment.

Research methodology

This study was a descriptive and cross-sectional survey to explore the SES of undergraduate students and the influence of factors of SES i.e. psychological factors (self-efficacy, test anxiety, and self-esteem), socio-economic status demographic variables on academic adjustment of undergraduate students.

Population

University of Sargodha (UOS) is a public sector university in Punjab province of Pakistan. UOS Main campus was the source of data for this study because it enrolled a larger number of students and offer many programs for students to take admission. In this study, all the undergraduate students studying in different departments of the main campus of University of Sargodha were the population of the study.

Sampling and sample

UOS main campus has 9 faculties and 45 departments. Multistage random sampling technique was used to select the representative sample

1. Using simple random sampling eleven (11) departments were selected; one department forms the smaller faculties and two from the larger faculties. Students of the 2nd & 8th semesters of the selected departments were considered as the students of (first & final year of study) respectively. Because this study was conducted in March/April and University of Sargodha offers admission in students in the fall semester (in September) and at the time of data collection, students of 2nd semester were junior undergraduates and students of 8th semester were the senior undergraduates.
2. 50 students (25 students from 2nd & 25 students from 8th semester) from each selected department were included in the sample through a random selection of students, hence sample was 550.

Instruments of the study

To collect data about the two variables in the study i.e. the socioeconomic status of undergraduates' students and academic adjustment, two research instruments were used i.e. Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS) for measurement of academic adjustment of undergraduates and Socio-economic status (SES) survey for students' SES status.
Both the scales used in this study were adapted by the permission of the authors and made bilingual (in English and Urdu languages) to make it more understandable for the students. Academic adjustment scale was the subscale of the questionnaire 'Students Adaptation to College Questionnaire' (SACQ), which had copyrights and was purchased under license number wps-000599. It consisted of the factors i.e. motivation (6 items), application (4 items), performance (9 items) and academic environment (5 items). The response options for each item were as follows: Strongly disagree, disagree, Un-decided, agree and strongly agree. Students socio-economic survey consisted of the information about students' parents; education, profession and monthly family income etc.

For the validation of bilingual research instruments, the opinion of five experts was sought, who were Ph.D. Education and were expert in English and Urdu language with plenty of academic and research experience. They reviewed the translation, suitability of the items, etc. After improving according to the opinion of the experts, the instruments were administered to 100 students for pilot testing. These students were not included in the actual sample. The reliability coefficient Cronbach Alpha value for both the instruments SES & AAS was 0.90 and 0.7 respectively.

Data Analysis and Results

Data were collected through self-visits. For each student, an index score for SES was formulated by adding up scores of all items of SES scale. The minimum score in the index was '0', indicating the lowest SES, and 33 score was for the highest SES. The index mean was 14.55 and the standard deviation of 5.84. The index was categorized into three i.e. low SES (0-11), moderate SES (12-22), high SES (23-33) categories.

Table 1: Socio-economic Status Categories of Undergraduate Students

SES Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Low (0-11)	183	33.3%
Moderate (12-22)	321	58.4%
High (23-33)	46	8.4%
Total	550	100%

Table 1 shows that the majority of the undergraduate students (58.4%) were of moderate and low (33.3%) SES while only 8.4% of students were of high SES. The majority of the undergraduate program students had the low and moderate status of SES.

Table 2. Undergraduate students' Academic adjustment level

Level (w.r.t Mean Value)	Male		Female		Total	
	f	Percentage	f	Percentage	f	Percentage
Low (≤70)	33	18.2%	62	16.8%	95	17.27%
Moderate (70-88)	122	67.4%	248	67.2%	370	67.27%
High (> 88)	26	14.4%	59	16.0%	85	15.45%
Total	181		369		550	

In table 2 academic adjustment score index, for each undergraduate student, was calculated by adding up all the scores. This index was categorized into three i.e. low level, moderate level and high level categories according to the steps recommended by Cohen and Lea (2004) i.e. standard deviation was subtracted from the mean index score (79.04) to form first (low) category which was ≤70, for 2nd category (medium) standard deviation was added up into the mean index score which was 71-88 and score greater than mean index score (>88) were considered the high-level academic adjustment.

Majority of the undergraduate students 67.27% (including 67.4% male and 67.2% female) had moderate level academic adjustment whereas 17.27% undergraduate students (including 18.2% male students and 16.2% female students) had low-level academic adjustment while 15.45% undergraduate students (including 14.4% male and 16% female) had high level of academic adjustment. The majority of undergraduate students had moderate and low (67.27% & 17.27% respectively) of academic adjustment.

Table 3. Undergraduate students' academic adjustment level on Residence basis i.e Day-scholars or Boarders

Level (w.r.t mean value)	Boarders	%age	Day-scholars	%age	Total	%age
Low (≤70)	41	17.4%	54	17.2%	95	17.27%
Moderate (70-88)	174	73.7%	196	62.4%	370	67.27%
High (> 88)	21	9%	64	20%	85	15.45%
Total	236		314		550	

Table 3 shows that the majority (67.27%) of the undergraduate students (including 73.7% boarders and 17.2% day-scholars) had a moderate level of academic adjustment, whereas 17.27% undergraduate students (including 17.4% boarders & 17.2% day-scholars) had a low level of academic adjustment. While only 15.45% of undergraduate students (including 9% boarders & 20% day-scholars) had a high level of academic adjustment.
Majority of boarders and day-scholars undergraduate students had moderate and low (67.27% and 17.27% respectively) level of academic adjustment.

Table 4. Undergraduate students' academic adjustment level on the basis of Locality (Rural & Urban)

Level (w.r.t mean value)	Rural	%age	Urban	%age	Total	%age
Low (≤70)	44	16.9%	51	17.6%	95	17.27%
Moderate (71-88)	174	66.7%	196	67.8%	370	67.27%
High (> 88)	43	16.5%	42	14.5%	85	15.45%
Total	261		289		550	

Table 4 shows that there were 67.27% of undergraduate students (including 66.7% rural and 67.8% urban) had moderate level academic adjustment whereas 17.27% of undergraduate students (including 16.9% rural and 17.6% urban) had the low-level academic adjustment. While only 15.45% undergraduate students (including 16.5% rural & 14.5% urban) had high level academic adjustment.

The majority of rural and urban undergraduate students had moderate and low (67.27% and 17.27% respectively) level of academic adjustment.

Table 5. Undergraduate students' academic adjustment level on the basis of admission Status (Regular & Self-support)

Level (w.r.t mean Value)	Regular	%age	Self-Support	%age	Total	%age
Low (≤70)	55	16.3%	40	18.9%	95	17.27%
Moderate (71-88)	233	68.9%	137	64.6%	370	67.27%
High (> 88)	50	14.8%	35	16.5%	85	15.45%
Total	338	100%	212	100%	550	100%

Table 5 shows that the majority (67.27%) of the undergraduate students (including 68.9% regular & 64.6% self-support) had a moderate level of academic adjustment whereas 17.27% of undergraduate students (including 16.3% regular & 18.9% self-support) had a low level of academic adjustment. While only 15.45% undergraduate students (including 14.8% regular & 16.5% self-support) had high level of academic adjustment.

The majority of regular and self-support undergraduate students had a moderate and low levels (67.27% & 17.27% respectively) of academic adjustment.

Table 6. Undergraduate students level of academic adjustment with respect to semester

Level (w.r.t mean Value)	2nd Semester	%age	8th Semester	%age	Total	%age
Low (≤ 70)	55	20%	40	14.5%	95	17.27%
Moderate (70-88)	174	63.3%	196	71.3%	370	67.27%
High (> 88)	46	16.7%	39	14.2%	85	15.45%
Total	275	100%	275	100%	500	100%

Table 6 shows that there were 67.27% of undergraduate students (including 63.3% of 2nd semester and 71.3% of 8th semester) had moderate level academic adjustment

whereas 17.27% undergraduate students (including 20% of 2nd semester and 14.5% of 8th semester) had the low-level academic adjustment. While only 15.45% of undergraduate students (including 16.7% of 2nd semester & 14.2% of 8th semester) had a high level of academic adjustment.

Majority of 2nd semester and 8th-semester undergraduate students had moderate and low (67.27% and 17.27% respectively) level of academic adjustment.

Table 7. Gender based Comparison of Undergraduate Students' Academic Adjustment

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	*p*-value
Male	181	78.44	9.08	-1.059	548	.290
Female	369	79.33	9.35			

Table 7 indicates that there exists no significant difference in academic adjustment of male (M=78.44, SD=9.08) and female undergraduate students (M=79.33, SD=9.35) as indicated by t=-1.059, df = 548 and p=.290 > α=.05.

Table 8. Comparison of Academic Adjustment on the basis of Study Duration

Duration of study	N	Mean	SD	t	df	*p*-value
2nd	275	78.96	9.84	-.198	548	.843
8th	275	79.12	8.67			

Table 8 indicates that there exist no significant difference in academic adjustment of 2nd semesters' students (M=78.96, SD=9.84) and 8th semester's undergraduate students (M=79.12, SD=8.67) as shown by t-value= (-.198), df = 548 and p=.843 > α=.05.

Table 9. Undergraduate Students' Academic Adjustment on the Basis of SES

Students' SES Level	*f* (%)	Mean Academic adjustment	SD
Low (≤11)	183 (33.27%)	80.27	8.78
Moderate (12-22)	321 (58.36%)	78.52	9.11
High (23-33)	46 (8.36%)	77.76	11.64

Table 9 shows that majority of the undergraduate students (58.36%) with mean academic adjustment 78.52 and SD= 9.11, belongs to moderate SES whereas many undergraduate students (33.27%) with mean academic adjustment 80.27 and SD=8.78 belongs to low SES while only 8.36% undergraduate students mean academic adjustment 77.76 and SD=11.64 were in the category of High SES. The

analysis shows that students of low SES status had higher mean academic adjustment scores and vice versa.

Table 10. Undergraduate students' Academic Adjustment with respect to SES

	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	df	*P*
Between Groups	437.18	218.59	2.558	2	.078
Within Groups	46750.67	85.46		547	
Total	47187.86			549	

In table 10 one way ANOVA revealed no significant difference in the mean academic adjustment of undergraduate students belonging to a different levels of SES i.e. Low, Moderate and High as shown by F (2,547) = 2.558, p=0.078 > α =0.05. It represses that undergraduate students having different socio-economic status have equivalent academic adjustment.

Conclusions and Discussions

i. The majority of the undergraduate students were of moderate or low SES status.

ii. The majority of undergraduate students had a moderate and low levels of academic adjustment; a similar trend was reported in females and males separately and female and male undergraduate students had an equivalent level of academic adjustment.

iii. The majority of both boarders and day-scholars undergraduate students had an equivalent (moderate and low) level of academic adjustment. Similarly, the majority of rural and urban undergraduate students had a moderate and low levels of academic adjustment. Moreover, the majority of regular and self-support undergraduate students also had a moderate and low levels of academic adjustment. The result of the study verified the findings of Ogini and Ofodile (2014) who found that there was no significant difference in academic adjustment of boarders and day-scholar students.

iv. Majority of 2nd semester and 8th-semester undergraduate students had an equivalent moderate and low levels of academic adjustment. This result is not in line with the findings of Carvalho and Novo (2012); they found that Higher SES college students had more adaptation/ adjustment. A possible reason for this may be that in Sargodha University most of the students are from rural areas and have low or moderate SES status. Moreover, they have the same cultural background, so SES has the least affect.

v. Low SES status had a bit higher mean academic adjustment score and vice versa but this difference is not statistically significant. It means undergraduate students having different socio-economic status have

equivalent academic adjustment. This result is in line with the findings of Kyalo and Chumba (2011); they also found that socioeconomic factors had no significant influence on the level of students' academic adjustment in the university.

Recommendations

University students may be provided with guidance and counseling facilities to motivate them in using study time efficiently and adjust themselves for better academics.

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