

## Social Achievement goals and Academic Adjustment among College Students: Data from Pakistan

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### Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the social achievement goals and academic adjustment among college students in Pakistan. These variables were studied with gender and family system. The sample was consisting of 750 students from which 429 were boys and 321 were girls, age range was 15-20 years. Students from joint family system were 585 and 165 students were from nuclear family system. Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk (1984) and Social Achievement Goals Questionnaire (SAGQ) developed by Ryan and Shim (2006) were used to collect the data after analyzing the questionnaire responses of the students. This research highlighted the problems that the students may face while living in a joint family system. Results indicated that boys have more adaptation to college environment and have more social achievement goals as compared to girls. This research was also helping in knowing that the students from nuclear family system have more social achievement and adjustment to college environment as compared to students from joint family system.

**Keywords:** Social achievement goals, adjustment to college environment, college students.

### Introduction

“Adjustment is the psychological process of adapting to, coping with, and managing the problems, challenges, and demands of everyday life”. Adjustment to educational environment is a major element to predict educational achievements. Many researchers such as Abdullah, et.al, 2009; Bryant, 2000; Enochs, 2006; Wintre, 2000 proved that problems of adjustment initiate most common during first academic year of students. The adjustment is a difficult and multidimensional process which requires many competencies to properly integrate with the environment such as quality and quantity of studies, accommodation with new teachers and classmates, which may cause psychological, social and academic difficulties and problems.

Researchers tried to name and quantify specific social goals through surveying students about specific social behaviors (Wentzel, 2000,). Family has a significant role in child's adjustment, in conformity to the values of family, in different fields. A family is a system which binds its members with sincere attitudes, values, attachment and well-being and also in adjustment and achievements of its members (Tomar, 2014).

Students in educational institutes come from different cultural or family norms and values and the educational institutes also have their own norms and ethics according to their own mission and vision. So students have to fit or adjust themselves according to the institutional norms and ethics. The adjustment according to the institutional norms and ethics differ from students to

student due to their own family or cultural norms and ethics and also their developmental stage. All the students live through an adjustment stage in the beginning of educational year and each student vary in his adjustment phase according to his or her own developmental stage (Dyson, & Renk, 2006).

Mode of education could be confusing for new students and this confusion become greater when students come from different language and cultural backgrounds (Cooper, 2009). As the students join higher level institutions, academic demands increase and students have to develop new social relations (Makara, 2015). Students who completely rely on their teacher, independent thinking might be a new experience for them and such students become uncertain about their abilities (Smith, & Robinson, 1996).

Adjustment is an incessant process which leads to make changes according to the environment and needs of the self. To make balance between one's own needs or desires and the expectations of the surrounding and to get favor or reinforcement is the main objective of adjustment (Samson, 2016). Adjustment is necessary for academic achievements and success and poor adjustment results in poor academic achievement and performance (Yamamoto, 2010). Therefore students difficulties in adjustment to their academic environment should be taken seriously because it effects students' academic performance and achievement (Abdullah et al. 2009).

A study in South African students found adjustment insignificant with academic performance as compared to the other psychological variables (Bodovski, 2010). A study conducted in Jammu Kashmir region found average health and social adjustment among girls and low adjustment in emotional area whereas boys found to average in social adjustment and low in health and emotional adjustment. Overall there was no significant difference between the boys and girls. Significant difference found among urban and rural areas students (Bhat, 2014).

Social achievement goals are defined as emphasize on social competence (Ryan & Shim, 2008), but social goals have not been studied extensively. Some scholar such as Dowson and McNemey (2001) argue that social orientations are not peripheral to academic performance and achievement, whereas they are directly proportional to psychological factors which motivate towards the academic achievement.

There is little research about the correlation between social achievement goals and their effective outcome. Some research studies found social achievement goals correlated to stress, loneliness and depression (Kuroda & Sakurai, 2011). Ryan and colleagues described three types of social achievement goals which leads to social competence these types are social development goals (which are related to mastery approach in academic goals), social demonstration approach goals ( these are related to performance approach goals), and social demonstration avoid goals ( these are related to the avoidance of incompetence in academic areas) and these goals leads to the social development and self growth of individuals (Ryan & Shim, 2008). Social development goals found to be negatively correlated with loneliness and positively correlated to positive emotions (Shim, Wang, & Cassady, 2013), prosocial behavior (Rudolph, et.al, 2011), self-acceptance (Ryan & Shim, 2008), peer relationships satisfaction and grades ( Makara&Madjar, 2015).

But Social demonstration goal approach found to be negatively correlated with personal growth and prosocial behavior (Rodkin, et.al, 2013) and found positively associated with aggression, disruptive behavior, and inappropriate coping skills (Ryan ,& Shim, 2012; Shim, Cho, et al., 2013). Joy is found positively correlated with social demonstration approach goals and expected popularity (Shim, Wang, et al., 2013; Ryan & Shim, 2008).

Whereas social demonstration avoid goals found to be negatively associated with low acceptance, anxiety, internalizing behavior, avoidance coping strategy and positively associated with

low aggression, (Ryan & Shim, 2008) improved educational performance and more collective efficacy (Makara&Madjar, 2015).

In a study conducted by Suleman et al. (2012) small family size found to be enhanced student's performance. Akhlaq et al. (2013) investigated the impact of family dynamics on academic achievement and they found that family satisfaction increases the chances of academic achievements. Family environment and adjustment has significant role in academic achievement and students from nuclear family system found to have better adjustment as compare to students from joint family system at secondary level (Hussain et al., 2008). Similarly students from nuclear family system found to have better mental health as compared to the students from joint family system (Yadav, & Singh, 2004).

### Methodology

Correlational research design was used in this study. The sample was consists of 750 Pakistani college students. Random and convenient sampling strategies were used to select the sample. The age range was 15-20 years.

#### *Instruments/Assessment Measure*

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) developed by Baker and Siryk (1984) and Social Achievement Goals Questionnaire (SAGQ) developed by Ryan and Shim (2006) were used to collect the data.

### Results

**Table 1. Results on the score of Social Achievement Goal among College Students**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T	p
Male	429	36.744	6.578	2.402	.000
Female	321	35.629	5.874		

Note. N=750.*df* =74, *p*<0.05

Table 1, shows Means, Standard Deviations and t-value for the Scores of Social Achievement Goals (*t*=2.402,*df*= 74, *p* <0.05). There is significant difference between social achievement goals of male and female college students. Male have higher social achievement goals as compared to female college students.

**Table 2. Summary of results on the score of Student Adaption to College among College Students**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T	p
Male	429	341.475	50.730	3.127	.000
Female	321	330.199	46.266		

Note. N=750.*df* =74, *p*<0.05

Table 2, shows Means, Standard Deviations and t-value for the Scores of student adaption to college (*t*=2.402, *df*= 74, *p* <0.05). There is significant difference between social achievement goals of male and female college students. Male have higher adaption to college environment as compared to female college students.

**Table 3. Correlation Coefficient Matrix of Achievement Goals, Social Achievement Goals and Student Adaption to College Environment.**

Variable	SAGS	SACQ
SAGS	1	0.711**
SACQ	0.711**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, \*\* $p < 0.01$ , Note. N = 750

Achievement Goals, Social Achievement Goals and Student and Student Adaption to College are positively correlated to each other.

**Table 4. Mean, Standard deviation, t-test and p-value on the score of Social Achievement Goal with family type among College Students**

Family	N	Mean	S.D	T	p
Joint	585	35.904	6.488	-2.978	.000
Nuclear	165	37.551	5.441		

Note. N=750. $df = 74$ ,  $p < 0.05$

Table 4, shows Means, Standard Deviations and t-value for the Scores of Social Achievement Goals ( $t = -2.978, df = 74$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). There is significant difference between social achievement goals of student with regard to family type among college students. Students from nuclear family system have more social achievement goals as compared to joint family system.

**Table 5. Mean, Standard deviation, t and p-value on the score of Student Adaptation to College Environment with family type among College Students**

Family	N	Mean	S.D	T	p
Joint	585	333.353	50.757	-3.483	.000
Nuclear	165	348.333	41.049		

Note. N=750. $df = 74$ ,  $p < 0.05$

Table 5, shows Means, Standard Deviations and t-value for the Scores of Student Adaption to College Environment ( $t = -2.978$ ,  $df = 74$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). There is significant difference between Adaption to college environment of student with regard to family type among college students. Students from nuclear family system have more adaptive skills in college as compared to joint family system.

### Discussion

The results of the research were fascinating because it was against some of the traditional views. Normally it is considered that the children from joint family system have better adjustment whereas the results found contrary results because children from joint family system has many supports and aids which leads them to have low adjustment capacity on the contrary children from nuclear family system have to do many things own their own therefore they have good adjustment capacity. Importance of the role of family in students adjustment is identified by Tomar (2014) but he did not focus on the family type in this perspective. There is little research about the social achievement goals (Kuroda & Sakurai, 2011), our results showed that boys have more social achievement goals as compared to girls. In our view that this is due to the cultural values and

differences regarding gender because in Pakistani culture girls are tempered and cared more and their social value is usually considered with their marital status as compared to occupational status, therefore girls have less social achievement goals. Similarly when we talk about the adjustment to college environment same condition is here which is in the matter of social achievement, girls are cared and tempered more and they also have less social exposure so they have less ability to adjust in social situations outside home including college.

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