



THE EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY ADJUSTMENT LEVELS OF LATE ADOLESCENTS IN TERMS OF SOME VARIABLE

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Abstract

This study determines whether adjustment to university among young adults varies depending on gender, location of residence, academic performance, socio-economic level and parent attitudes. The study group consisted of 1-4th year students studying at Kırıkkale University. The Adjustment to University Life Scale were used as research instrument. The data gathered were analyzed with t test and one way variance analysis (Anova) method. The Adjustment to University Life Scale's subscales were significantly different in terms of gender and academic success. Research findings from the literature were discussed with those of the previous research and recommendations are presented.

Keywords: university adjustment; late adolescent; gender; academic success; socio-economic level; parent attitude

Throughout their lives, living beings are in a constant effort to adapt to their environment. Adjustment is a dynamic process, and consists of the set of reactions an individual being develops towards its environment. Level of adjustment is primarily determined by two basic factors. One of these is the characteristics of the individual, while the other is the specific situations the individual encounters (Geçtan, 1995). Humans are different from other living

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beings in many respects, and evaluating their level of adjustment is consequently difficult. This is largely because success and failure in humans is not assessed solely based on the ability to sustain basic biological existence. Humans are also evaluated based on their distinct place in this world.

Adjustment is defined as the set of reactions individuals exhibit in response to the demands of other people and the physical, psychological and social requirements of their environment. The environment plays an important role in shaping adjustment. There is, however, no universally-accepted standard for assessing adjustment. Researchers generally use a diversity of standards that each reflect different theoretical orientations and values. When evaluating whether adaptive responses are appropriate or adequate, it is necessary to take into account not only the relevant social and cultural factors, but also the needs of the individual (Napoli, Kilbride, & Tebbs, 1985).

In their study on first- to fourth-year university students in Hong Kong; Yau, Sun, and Cheng (2012) determined that the students' social adjustment had a positive effect on their academic adjustment (and hence performance), while psychological adjustment similarly had a positive effect of academic adjustment, and that social adjustment had a positive effect of psychological adjustment. In another study on first-year university students in Hong Kong; Yau, Sun, and Cheng (2012) determined that the positive effect of social adjustment on the academic adjustment was stronger among female students compared to male students. The said study similarly observed that psychological adjustment had a greater effect on academic adjustment for female students compared to male students. On the other hand, the relationship between social and psychological adjustment was not found to be significant for both female and male students. In their study involving first- to fourth-year university students, 40 student peer counsellors, two teacher counsellor and a student dean; Kyalo and Chumba (2011) determined that interpersonal relationships, and attitudes towards the university environment and academic program were critical factors which influenced university undergraduate students' social and academic adjustment. The said study also determined that first-year university students exhibit greater academic adjustment than other students. In their study of first-year university students; Petersen, Louw, and Dumont (2009) observed that the psychosocial factors *help-seeking behavior, internal motivation, identity organization, self-respect, perceived stress,*

external organization, and *organized internalization* explained 59% of student adjustment.

In a study performed on first- to fourth-year Turkish university students, Ceyhan (2006) determined that personal, social and general adjustment levels have a significant relationship with perceived communication skills. Students with higher perceived communication skills exhibited higher levels of personal, social and general adjustment. A study performed by Kağnıcı (2012) on first year university students determined that demographic variables such as age, gender, time spent in Turkey, location of residence, and international social networks were significant predictors of adjustment to the university environment. The study also determined that social initiative, emotional integrity, open-mindedness and cultural empathy positively predicted adjustment to university. A study performed by Sürücü and Bacanlı (2010) on first- to fourth-year university students, it was determined that students with moderate levels of psychological endurance had higher general adjustment scores than students with low psychological endurance levels. It was also determined that students with moderate and high levels of psychological endurance had higher academic adjustment scores than students with low levels of psychological endurance. The adjustment of male students to the university environment was significantly higher than that of female students. In a longitudinal study involving first- to fourth-year undergraduate students; Aypay, Sever, and Demirhan (2012) determined that although social adjustment informally increased over time and students became more academically integrated to the university, the students sense of belonging to the institution tended to wane over the years.

In their qualitative study performed on Malaysian undergraduate students in the United Kingdom by using the semi-structured interview technique, Coles and Swami (2012) described that the structure of university, the places where the students reside temporarily, class conditions, and student's association, clubs and communities serve as important means/opportunities for providing integration and adjustment support during the students' initial times at a university. A study performed by Swanson, Broadbridge, and Karatzias (2006) on first- to fourth-year students attending a Scottish University determined no significant difference in adjustment levels depending on whether the students were employed or worked part-time. The study also determined that the psychological factors of stress and positive affection had a mediating

effect on the relationship between role similarity and adjustment. Another finding of this study was that, due to its similarity to an academic program, part-time work actually served as a predictor for individual adjustment to the university. A study performed by Smith, Olson, Agronick, and Tyler (2009) on first-year students found that the students self-identification with university had a mediating effect on the relation between the behavior of the authority and student adjustment by the end of the semester. In his study on first- to fourth-year university students in Canada, Grayson (2003) determined that being a first-year student did not represent a disadvantage for student adjustment. On the other hand, Tieu et al. (2010) determined in a study on first-year university students that amount of extracurricular activities was positively related with adjustment to university. The said study also observed that the features of the extracurricular activities had a mediating effect on the relation between the structure of the activities and student adjustment to the university. In a previous study on first-year students that also included the dean, program administrators and support personnel, it was found that knowledge of English, civil status and country of origin were sources of adjustment problems among international students. Jdaitawi, Noor-Azniza, and Farid (2011) conducted a study where they formed study and control groups from randomly selected first-year university students in Jordan. and identified no significant differences between the groups' social and academic adjustment parameters. In study performed on first- to fourth-year students, Hibbard and Davies (2011) determined based on the relationship between perfectionism and psychological adjustment (self-respect, depression, isolation and eating disorders) that the two concepts are actually similar in various respects. In his study on postgraduate students, Wang (2000) determined that resistance characteristics (positive world view, positive self-image, focus, flexible thinking, social flexibility, being organized, proactive) have a highly negative correlation with adjustment problems (i.e. problems regarding university entrance and major selection, academic registration, socio-personal life, eating, health services, religious services, English language, student activity, financial aid, placement services). The study demonstrated that resistance positively affects adjustment. In their longitudinal study performed on eight postgraduate students using the interview technique, Wu and Hammond (2011) found that adequate preparation, suitable academic background, participation to social activities with other international students, and satisfaction facilitated adjustment to the university environment. As

suggested by the abovementioned studies, the concept of adjustment has an effect on individuals' interactions with their environment, their university life, their academic career, and even their life satisfaction.

Objective

In conclusion, the concept of adjustment has an effect on individuals' interactions with their environment, their university life, their academic career, and even their life satisfaction. In this respect, the concept of adjustment becomes even more important on the life, and especially the university life of students. In this context, the current study investigates whether adjustment to university among young adults varies depending on gender, academic performance, socio-economic level and parent attitudes.

Method

In this study, a convenience sampling method (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007) was used by the researcher, who involved the participants who were available during the course of the study. This study was designed as a cross-sectional study.

Participants

The sampling group consisted of 381 1st -4th year students studying at Kırıkkale University Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Faculty of Economics & Administrative Sciences, and Faculty of Education. However, the data gathered from 15 respondents was excluded from the analysis due to incorrect or missing marking, therefore the analysis was conducted using a 366-person data set. The number of female students participating in the study was 244 (66.67%) and the number of male students participating in the study was 122 (33.33%).

Instruments

The Adjustment to University Life Scale and Personal Information Form prepared for this study were used as data collection tools in this study.

The Adjustment to University Life Scale was developed by Aslan (2015), the Adjustment to University Life Scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale comprising of 3 subscales and 60 items. The result of the factor analyses

applied in the structure validity study, the rate of variance was found to be 78.16 %. Test-retest reliability coefficient of the Adjustment to University Life Scale was found 0.82 for personal adjustment, 0.61 for social adjustment and 0.84 for academic adjustment. Meanwhile, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found 0.92 for personal adjustment, 0.89 for social adjustment and 0.93 for academic adjustment.

Data Analysis

T test and one way variance analysis (Anova) techniques were employed in the analysis of the data (Büyüköztürk, 2006).

Procedure

The question forms were implemented by the researchers during the lectures of the participants. The participants were informed that they could reach the results if they wanted.

Results

T-test and one way variance analysis (Anova) result in regard to Adjustment to University Life Scale

Table 1. The Adjustment to University Life Scale Subscale's Means, Standard Deviations and t Values of Students according to Their Gender

	Females n=244		Males n=122		t	p
	X	S	X	S		
Personal adjustment	70.18	13.71	69.67	15.29	.31	.75
Social adjustment	82.98	12.12	81.05	9.68	1.51	.131
Academic adjustment	73.79	14.26	8.26	17.67	3.06	.002

It was observed that, The Adjustment to University Life Scale's subscales of academic adjustment subscale score was significantly different in terms of gender (*see* Table 1) while personal adjustment and social adjustment subscales scores were not.

Table 2. The Adjustment to University Life Scale Subscale's Means, Standard Deviations and Values of Students according to Academic Success

	Very good n=31		Good n=188		Gamma n=121		Poor n=26		F	p
	X	S	X	S	X	S	X	S		
Personal adjustment	75.57	9.27	70.62	14.64	69.54	13.15	61.36	17.19	4.80	.003
Social adjustment	83.50	14.05	83.48	10.73	81.23	10.08	76.65	13.99	3.45	.017
Academic adjustment	80.93	11.92	74.84	13.32	68.57	14.48	55.92	23.41	8.29	.000

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.000

It was observed that The Adjustment to University Life Scale's personal adjustment, social adjustment, and academic adjustment subscales were significantly different in terms of academic success (*see* Table 2).

Table 3. The Adjustment to University Life Scale Subscale's Means, Standard Deviations and f Values of Students according to socio-economic Level and Parent Attitude

	Personal Adjustment				Social Adjustment				Academic Adjustment		F	p
	X	S	F	p	X	S	F	p	X	S		
Lower	21	67.80	14.93		84.57	13.10			72.75	17.00		
Middle	319	69.98	14.11		82.05	10.73			71.61	15.48		
Upper	26	72.20	15.79		84.34	17.34			76.76	15.61		
				.543 .581				.890 .411			1.279	.280
Democratic	321	70.33	13.49		82.30	11.38			73.00	14.73		
Authoritarian	25	70.91	14.39		84.44	11.78			70.87	17.97		
Irrelevant	20	65.93	20.20		81.10	11.33			66.31	17.76		
				.808 .447				.705 .495			1.891	.153

Note: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.000

It was observed that The Adjustment to University Life Scale's personal adjustment, social adjustment, and academic adjustment subscales were not significantly different in terms of socioeconomic level and parent attitude (*see* Table 3).

Conclusions

The academic subscale of the Adjustment to University Life Scale was found to differ according to gender. It is possible to state that the findings of the current study on academic adjustment are in agreement with Yau, Sun, and Cheng's (2012) findings. The current study results were also in agreement with

the finding of Rathus and Nevid's (1989) study, which focused on the effect of healthy personality approaches on psychological adjustment, and on personal development within the frame of different professional pursuits/goals. However, the present study revealed no differences in the personal adjustment and social adjustment sub-scales with respect to gender. As such our study findings were not in agreement with Frydenberg's (1997) findings (which described that individuals with healthy adjustment tend to seek assistance in social circles or in social support networks), or with Rathus and Nevid's (1989) findings (which described psychological adjustment in individuals with healthy personalities as the effective personal, social and physical approaches used for promoting personal development).

The personal adjustment, social adjustment and academic adjustment sub-scale scores of the Adjustment to University Life Scale differed significantly depending on academic success. The results of the present study appear to support the findings of Aypay, Sever, and Demirhan (2012). Furthermore, since young adults lead a predominantly academic life in universities, their personal adjustment, social adjustment and academic adjustment appeared to differ significantly according to academic performance. On the other hand, the personal adjustment, social adjustment and academic adjustment sub-scale scores of the Adjustment to University Life Scale did not differ significantly according to socioeconomic level and parent attitudes. These findings might be tested by repeating this study longitudinally and focusing on Turkey culture.

Similar studies could also be conducted on different cultures to assess the effect of cultural factor on adjustment to university. Such studies on university adjustment could be conducted with young adults studying in different regions.

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