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ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: MEDIATING ROLE OF ACADEMIC STRESS

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Abstract

The current study aims to gauge the relationship between the academic support (supports from teachers & classmates) and academic achievement of university students; mediating role of academic stress. The total sample comprised of 180 university students whom were selected from two Government universities (IUB, & BZU) of Southern-Punjab, Pakistan by using convenient sampling. The sample for the study was justified by employing online A-priori statistics multiple regression analysis (Soper, 2018); where power and precision was 0.9% at the 95% confidence interval and the attrition rate was 20%. The present research was quantitative-cross-sectional in nature. There were two questionnaires utilized for data collection; Teacher and Classmate Support Scale by Torsheim, Wold, and Samdal (2000) and Academic Stress Questionnaire (Lakaev, 2009), whereas academic achievement was calculated through (CGPA) Cumulative Grade Point Average. To analyze collected data, SPSS (23.0) was used. The results of this research revealed positive correlation ($p < .01$) between academic support (support of teacher & classmate) and academic achievement of university students. Whereas, the outcomes of mediation analysis through Process by Hayes (2013) endorsed academic stress was significant mediator (partially) between academic support and academic achievement of graduate university students. As far as the gender differences are concerned, female students received greater level of academic support, academic stress and academic achievement. The limitations and future avenues have also been furnished. This study would be beneficial for academia of Pakistan.

Keywords

Appearance Schemas, Self-esteem and Academic Achievement.

1. Introduction

University life is full of such demanding tasks and roles which are necessary to be carry out by the student and on the chance of facing a failure the student become prone to the stress (Calaguas, 2011; Lessard, 1998). In Various studies by Wentzel (1999, 2005, 2009) it was depicted that, in order to maintain the constructive relations there should be positive relationship with the peers, which impact on the student's academic engagement in promising manner. The degree to which the students have the sense of acceptance from their peer groups and if these relationships are made on the basis of friendship and emotions, through this student will be become more

motivated even they can also get influenced by the idea of becoming active and much engaged in the activities which are related to their academics (Juvonen et al. 2012). The main goal of this research study is to measure the association between academic support (supports from teachers & classmates) and academic achievement of university students; mediating role of academic stress.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1986) Although the opinion from the ecological studies shows that the students have significant influence of their social environment and surroundings. So according to Dennis, Phinney and Chuateco (2005) it offers the

user with an idea of considering the relationship between the social support and the results of student's learning (2005). Here, in the university students, due to the social support there come the idea of safety and capability, in return of which it helps them to report the challenges in the intellectual stream more efficiently and effectively (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). As Brouwer, Jansen, Flache and Hofman (2016) stated that according to the theory of social capital, the possessions in the social network benefits allow the individuals in achieving of the different aims and goals.

The people who have the stronger level of social support are more surrounded in a helpful system and they are socially combined in the environment of their university academics thus they have the chance to recover their academics and achievements more properly (Rayle & Chung, 2007). Many researches have concluded that the students depict the high degree of perceived social support report the good appearance in their academics (Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, 1998) and the adjustment in the environment of university could become easier (Rueger, Malecki, & Demaray, 2008, 2010). Whereas a longitudinal study, proposed for one year has shown that the student's academic achievement is significantly predicted by the social support in the university (DeBerard, Spielmans, & Julka, 2004). In 2004, Robbins et al. inveterate the positive association between the social support and the Grade point average (GPA) students in the university. They Meta analyzed 109 studies, therefore it is suggested that the social support is positively related to the academic achievement of the students. On contrary to this, academic stress was negatively associated with the academic achievement.

With respect to some anticipation the academic stress which is related to the academic failure is the stress regarded as the mental stress is caused in case of failure in the academic (Gupta & Khan 1987). This includes several demands in which the list was the course requirement, (Misra, 2000) adjustment to the environment, time management and financial burden up, social activities and lack of support networks (Kariv & Heiman, 2005; Von Ah, Ebert, Ngamvitroj, Park, & Hang, 2004). There are four areas of academic stress, Academic pressure, academic conflict and academic anxiety (Bisht, 1987). There are a number of causes of stress in the academics especially to those who have just entered the university or are having the first year in their university life. Along with these changes of joining university, there semester

system is also one of the most complicated method. These semester credit system (SKS) provide the students with the opportunity to come again and represents with the talents, interests and the capabilities. So this system has the greatest demanding of the responsibilities in the students that they should determine that how you can get the credit. Besides with the results to demands of previous students, there is also another thing that students must obtain 2.0 GPA. In the first two semesters. If any students would obtain less than 2.0 they will be terminated. So this system has the most demanding of responsibilities but seriously you must take some schedule (Greenberg, 1981). Greenberg (1981) also explains about the stressors which exists in the students of 1st year explains that these stressors should be repeat off, then it will be easy to understand that all the lifestyles, values, problems in the academics. According to Dwyer and Cummings (2001), the students of first year do need the social support otherwise it cannot be possible for them to get succeeded Social support is special in the buffering of Individuals of performance, it is termed as the most important to think. (Parrack & Preyde, 2009).

Whereas, in the life of individuals, social support is regarded as very important and it also shows the significant impact on the achievement of student in the academics (Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2010). Even the perceived social support is influential moderator of the success. The social support which students received is a good for such students who have higher stress level (Lawson & Fuehrer, 2001). The social support in the students is gathered from the parents, classmates, teachers and friends as well (Bokhorst, Sumter, & Westenberg, 2009). In Asia, some researchers have depicted that the social support is the vital part for the management of many psychological problems. Due to such inadequacy of social support, it has been recognized as one of the factors that would lead towards the numerous psychological problems which the students have to face (Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2010).

Apart from the social support which the students receive either by the family or from the friends, they can subsidize in the good academic performance in the university. It is crucial to consider that the performance of students in the academic is not only recognized in the matters which are related to academic but also by the social support which they usually get from their society and the people who are in their surroundings (Yasin & Dzulkifli, 2011). The above cited literature provides sufficient avoidance for objectives and hypotheses of this research.

1.1 Objectives

- To measure the association between academic support and academic achievement of university students.
- To check the academic stress as a mediator between academic support and academic achievement.
- To investigate the gender differences in terms of academic support, academic achievement and academic stress.

1.2 Hypotheses

- Academic support would be a positive correlate with academic achievement of university students.
- Academic stress would be a negative mediator between academic support and academic achievement of university students.
- Female students have higher level of academic support, academic stress and academic achievement than male students.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Sample

The total sample comprised of 180 university students whom were selected from two government universities (IUB, & BZU) of Southern-Punjab, Pakistan. The sample for the study was justified by employing online A-priori statistics multiple regression analysis (Soper, 2018); where power and precision was 0.9% at the 95% confidence interval and the attrition rate was 20%.

2.2 Research Design

The proposed research was quantitative in nature and cross-sectional research study design was used.

2.3 Sampling Technique

The sample of this research was collected through convenient sampling technique. University students conveniently participated in this research.

2.4 Research Instruments

2.5 There are two questionnaire used in this research.

2.5.1 Teacher and Classmate Support Scale. Academic support measured using Teacher and Classmate Support Scale developed by Torsheim, Wold, and Samdal (2000). This scale is consist on 8 items (4 items for Teacher Support and 4 items for Classmate Support) having with 4-point Likert response, 0 for strongly disagree and 3 for strongly agree.

2.5.2 Lakaev Academic Stress Response Scale (LASRS). This scale developed by

Lakaev (2009). This scale is a reliable and valid measure for academic stress responses having with six self-report questionnaires with 5-point Likert scale with the anchors None of the Time (1), A Little of the Time (2), Some of the Time (3), Most of the Time (4), and All of the Time (5) that related to, acculturative stress, somatic stress symptoms, academic stress, stress responses, extraversion and general stress in order to determine convergent and divergent validity. The LASRS was shown to have sound psychometric properties and was suggested to be a sound way of measuring academic stress responses.

2.5.3 Academic achievement. Whereas, the academic achievement was calculated through Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Considering this research as a quantitative survey, the compulsory ethical considerations were addressed (e.g., informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity). Further, formal permission was taken from ethical review committee.

2.6 Analyses Plan

The collected data of present research were analyzed using SPSS (23.0). To check the relationship used bivariate correlation analysis, while in mediation, a process macro Hayes (2013) approach was utilized and to check the gender differences used independent sample t-Test for the hypotheses testing.

3. Results

The table 1 showed the frequency distribution of demographic variables. 90(50.0%) respondents of this research were participated from The Islamia University Bahawalpur and 90(50.0%) respondents of this research were participated from Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. Whereas, 90(50.0%) respondents of present research were male and 90(50.0%) respondents of present research were female university students. Furthermore, in education, 98(54.4%) respondents of present research were enrolled in BS program of education and 82(45.6%) respondents of present research were enrolled in master program of education. Finally, 101(56.1%) respondents of were nuclear family and 79(43.9%) respondents of were participated from joint family. Furthermore, the table 2 showed that academic support (support of teacher and classmate) was significantly

positively correlated with academic achievement of university students, while academic support (support of teacher and classmate) was significantly negatively associated with academic stress of university students. Additionally, academic stress was significantly negatively associated with the academic achievement of university students. Moreover, the results of table 3 showed that academic stress endured significant and partially mediator between academic support and academic achievement. While, academic support was also established to significant direct and indirect predictor in academic achievement. Finally, the table 4 showed that the significant and important gender differences in terms of academic support and academic achievement of university students. While, the mean of academic support, academic stress and academic achievement were higher among female students than male students.

4. Discussion

The progress in the satisfactory attitude of students towards their academics, especially in the learning is thought to be the thrust of the educational research all around the globe. Although studies (Shen, Washington, Bierlein Palmer & Xia, 2014) have investigated the role of socializing representatives for becoming the significant impact on the achievement (Danielsen, Wiium, Wilhelmsen & Wold, 2010; Wentzel, Battle, Russell & Looney, 2010). The finding of current study showed for H_1 that academic support (support of teacher and classmate) was significantly positively associated with academic achievement of university students. Interestingly, support from teacher was highly correlated with academic achievement than support from classmate. The results of present research are similar with past studies, some of the studies have examined the degree to which those three support networks concurrently impact upon the three components of the academic engagement along with its influence on the academic achievement in only one research. For instance, in 2010, Wentzel et al. primarily focused on the support of teacher in learning and the support of peers as well within the sample of adolescents population, whereas another study by Chen (2005) also conducted a research on the role of engagement as a complex aspect among the adolescent's sample. Furthermore many other studies also found positive correlation between support from teacher, peers and classmate and academic achievement (Kartal & Cetinkaya, 2009; Montenegro, 2007; Yildirim, 2006). The result of this research supported above cited literature, so H_1 of this research is accepted. Many studies during the past ten years have pursued to investigate the acuties

of stress among the graduate students (Nelson, Dell'Oliver, Koch, & Buckler, 2001; Soares, Prestridge, & Soares, 1992). These studies (Rocha-Singh, 1994) have showed the problems which are integral to the perceived stress in the unavailability of the appropriate social support among the graduate students who are from psychology and many other disciplines as well.

The results of this research showed for H_2 that academic stress endured significant and partially mediator between academic support and academic achievement. While, academic support was also confirmed as a significant direct and indirect predictor in academic achievement. This research also showed the similar results with the previous studies in which social support was thought to be the protective and safe resource which made the people capable to survive with the depression, distress or stress (Chou, 2000; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988). Individuals may encounter with more lethal distresses due to stress if adequate social support is missing or not provided properly (Rueger et al., 2016). Moreover, the social support also enables the individuals to develop contacts in social environments which are very positive, and they also contribute in reducing the burnout and maintaining the emotional balance (Boren, 2013). Hence the students who have the support are less prone to face the emotional exhaustion (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008) as compared to their equals who are lacking such possessions (Uchida & Yamasaki, 2008). Conclusively, the social supports oblige as an operative cure to enhance the stress level in the students, which might become helpful in competing with the emotional fatigue and exhaustion particularly (Jacobs & Dodd, 2003). Whereas, majority of past studies (Gillock & Reyes, 1999; Russell & Petrie, 1992) found that the stress is always negatively correlated with the academic achievement of undergraduates students (Buddington, 2002; Felsten & Wilcox, 1992; Pritchard & Wilson, 2003; Struthers, Perry & Menec, 2000), in other study, Ghaith (2002) quantified support (from teacher and classmate) is regarded as one of the most vital aspect of classroom environment which may impact upon the academic achievement, both psychological and physical health and the productive stress management. The results of this research are supported through above cited literature, so H_2 of this research is accepted.

The results of this research for H_3 found that the gender played a significant role of difference in term of academic support and academic achievement of students in the university. While, the mean of academic support, academic stress and

academic achievement were at high level in female students as in comparison to the male students. The results of this research supported through previous researches, Tayfur and Ulupinar (2016) found female students perceived more support than male students. This clearly proposes that female students give more priority to academic achievement. Past researchers have found that the rate of success in entrance exams for university is greater in females than that of males (Kızıldağ & Yıldırım, 2009). It clearly depicts that female students are achieving more, and they are very successful in the university education level. Findings of similar researches (Mustafa, Avşaroğlu & Sezer, 2004; Rospenda, Halpert, & Richman, 1994; Şeker, Çınar & Özkaya, 2004)

strongly support these conclusions. Moreover, academic support also gives benefits to students for the solutions of their complex problems in time of difficulty. In fact, the scores on perception of academic support of the female students were high than the male students, so it proposes that the females are more open in sharing their issues with their teachers, facilitator and friends. Moreover, they also receive more assistance than the males. Many studies have specified that female students perceive more support from their friends (Chechen, 2008; Gökler, 2007; Kartal & Cetinkaya, 2009; Kozaklı, 2006; Rospenda, Halpert, & Richman, 1994) than males. The results of this research supported through above cited literature, so H₃ of this research is accepted.

Table 1 : *Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables (N=180)*

Respondent's Characteristics		f (%)
University	The Islamia University Bahawalpur	90 (90.0)
	Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan	90 (90.0)
Gender	Male	90 (90.0)
	Female	90 (90.0)
Education	B.S	98 (54.4)
	M.SC/M.A	82 (45.6)
Family Type	Nuclear	101 (56.1)
	Joint	79 (43.9)

Table 2: *Bivariate Correlation among Teacher and Classmate Support, Academic Stress and Academic Achievement of University Students (N=180)*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Academic Support	-	.66**	.65**	-.42**	.31**
2. Teacher Support		-	.73**	-.39**	.33**
3. Classmate Support			-	-.43**	.27**
4. Academic Stress				-	-.41**
5. Academic Achievement					-
Mean	14.11	6.81	7.30	17.16	3.13
Std. Deviation	7.47	4.11	3.69	4.98	.61
α	.86	.70	.77	.82	-

**p < .01

Table 3: *For the effect of Academic Support and Academic Stress on Academic Achievement (N=180)*

Predictors	Academic Achievement		
	Model 2		
	Model 1 B	B	95% CI

Constant	2.83**	3.55**	[3.20, 3.90]
Academic Support	.02**	-.01**	[.00, .02]
Academic Stress		-.03	[-.05, -.02]
R ²	.10	.19	
F	18.94**	20.67**	
ΔR ²		.18	
ΔF		37.93**	

** $p < .01$; B for Unstandardized regression coefficient; CI for Confidence interval

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test Used for Comparison between Male and Female Students for Academic Support, Academic Stress and Academic Achievement (N = 180)

Variable	Male (n = 90)		Female (n = 90)		t	p	95%CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Academic Support	12.69	7.858	15.53	6.809	-2.60	.01	-5.01	-.68
Teacher Support	6.00	4.083	7.62	4.004	-2.69	.01	-2.81	-.43
Classmate Support	6.69	4.080	7.91	3.150	-2.25	.03	-2.29	-.15
Academic Stress	17.07	4.901	17.24	5.086	-.24	.81	-1.65	1.29
Academic Achievement	2.99	.514	3.26	.470	-3.62	.00	-.41	-.12

4.1 Conclusion

Conclusively, academic support from teacher and classmate increase the academic achievement of university students and inversely linked with academic related stress. Whereas, academic plays an important role of mediation between academic support and academic achievement. In gender differences, female university students more prone toward academic support, academic stress and academic achievement than male university students.

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