

Predicting Academic Adjustment of Students Based on Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, and Social Support

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted with the aim of examining the role of emotional intelligence, resilience, and perceived social support in predicting academic adjustment of students. The research method was descriptive-correlational. The statistical population included 555 students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology at Birjand University in the academic year 2022-2023, of which 237 were selected using stratified random sampling method. The research instruments included the Academic Adjustment Questionnaire by Baker and Siryk (1984), Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire by Schutte (1995), Resilience Questionnaire by Connor and Davidson (2003), and Perceived Social Support Questionnaire by Zimet et al. (1988). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise multiple regression. Pearson correlation results showed that the strongest relationship existed between resilience and academic adjustment ($r=0.63$). Additionally, significant relationships were found between emotional intelligence ($r=0.49$) and social support ($r=0.31$) with academic adjustment. Regression analysis showed that the three variables together explained 75% of the variance in academic adjustment. Resilience alone predicted 39%, together with emotional intelligence 62%, and with the addition of social support 75% of the changes in academic adjustment. The findings highlight the importance of developing these skills in improving students' academic adjustment.

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Introduction

Higher education is considered one of the most fundamental pillars of societal development, and students' success at this stage affects not only their individual future but also the overall progress of society. The transition from high school to university is regarded as one of the most sensitive and challenging periods of academic life, confronting students with extensive changes in various dimensions of life. At this stage, in addition to facing a new educational environment, students encounter challenges such as emotional independence from family, establishing new social relationships, setting academic and professional goals, and managing new responsibilities, all of which require effective adjustment to new conditions ([Baker & Siryk, 1999](#)).

Academic adjustment, as one of the most crucial factors for success during university years, is a complex process in which students strive to adapt to internal pressures and external requirements of the university environment ([Baker & Siryk, 1984](#)). This concept goes beyond simple academic performance and encompasses broad dimensions of learning motivation, ability to plan for academic activities, sense of commitment, persistence in educational matters, and satisfaction with the educational space and environment ([Hazard & Carter, 2018](#)). The importance of academic adjustment becomes more evident when we look at student dropout statistics. Research shows that students who are unsuccessful in adapting to the university environment have a higher probability of dropping out, decreased academic performance, and experiencing psychological problems. On the other hand, students with optimal academic adjustment not only achieve greater academic success but also enjoy higher psychological well-being ([Ahmad & Rana, 2023](#)). Studies indicate that students who possess good academic adjustment have better performance in courses, higher levels of academic satisfaction, and lower probability of dropping out ([Tinajero et al., 2020](#)).

One of the key variables that has attracted increasing attention in the field of educational sciences and psychology in recent years is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, first introduced by [Mayer and Salovey \(1990\)](#), refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, use, and manage emotions in themselves and others. This concept includes five main components: emotional self-awareness (ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions), emotional self-regulation (managing and controlling emotions), motivation (using emotions to achieve goals), empathy (understanding others' emotions), and social skills (managing interpersonal relationships). Emotional intelligence plays a fundamental role in individuals' adaptation to their surrounding environment and is considered an essential element for success in life and adaptation to various challenges. Students with high emotional intelligence are able to better manage negative emotions arising from academic stress, establish more effective social relationships, and have higher motivation for learning. These abilities directly affect students' academic adjustment and empower them in facing academic challenges ([Goleman, 1998](#)). Research shows that students with higher emotional intelligence have better ability to cope with academic pressures, manage stress, establish positive relationships with classmates and professors, and adapt to environmental changes ([Mousavi et al., 2012](#)). [Mousavi et al. \(2012\)](#) in a study on 300 female pre-university students in Tehran reported a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and educational adjustment ($p < 0.001$). The results of this study showed that students who had higher emotional intelligence had greater adaptation to their academic field. [Okhovat et al. \(2023\)](#) in research on 200 midwifery students confirmed a direct and significant relationship between the total score of emotional intelligence and all its dimensions with the total score of academic adjustment. This study also showed that training emotional intelligence components can act as a positive stimulating factor in students' academic performance.

Another important variable that plays a vital role in academic adjustment is resilience. Resilience, as one of the positive psychology constructs, plays an important role in individuals' mental health. Resilience is a phenomenon in which an individual maintains their mental health despite the presence of short-term (acute) or long-term (chronic) psychological or physical stressors ([Kalisch, Müller & Tüscher, 2015](#)). According to [Masten's \(2014\)](#) definition, resilience represents the capacity of a dynamic system for successful adaptation to disturbances that threaten the function, viability, or development of that system. Based on this, individuals

are considered resilient who, despite their adaptation being threatened by known threats, achieve positive developmental outcomes (Cicchetti, 2010). Resilience at the basic level is defined as the ability to respond to stressful or traumatic situations in healthy or positive ways. In educational environments, resilience can enhance the development of social, academic, and personal skills and help students overcome problems (Aloka, 2023). Research shows that higher emotional intelligence is associated with a more resilient personality that facilitates adaptation to change under pressure and prevents viewing change as a threat, instead considering it as a challenge. These findings highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in developing resilience and consequently improving academic adjustment (Mohamed et al., 2025).

The study by Basharpour and Eini (2021) on students with learning disabilities showed that academic resilience plays an important mediating role in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic adjustment. These findings emphasize the importance of resilience in the academic adjustment process.

Sadoughi (2018) in research on 220 medical science students examined the role of academic resilience in predicting academic adjustment and performance. Results showed that academic resilience has a significant positive correlation with academic adjustment and academic performance.

Perceived social support is also considered one of the important factors influencing academic adjustment. Social support refers to an individual's perception and belief about the availability of support from their social network, which includes family, friends, classmates, and professors. This type of support, which emphasizes the individual's subjective perception of available support, often has a stronger impact on mental health and adjustment than actual received support (McLean et al., 2022). In the university environment, perceived social support plays various roles. This type of support can act as a protective buffer against academic stress and help students better cope with academic challenges. Additionally, social support provides the foundation for better student adjustment by strengthening the sense of belonging, increasing self-confidence, and improving coping skills (Acoba, 2024). Research has shown that students who report higher levels of perceived social support have better academic performance, lower levels of stress and anxiety, and more effective adjustment to the university environment. This support can manifest in various forms including emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support, each playing a specific role in the academic adjustment process (Tan et al., 2022). The research by Tinajero et al. (2020) on Spanish students showed that perceived social support, especially family support, is a strong predictor of academic success. This study also showed that satisfaction with social support has a more important role in predicting academic performance than the quantity of support. Students who perceive adequate social support have lower stress levels, greater self-confidence, and ultimately better academic adjustment. Given the increasing importance of academic adjustment in student success and the need to identify effective factors, the present research was conducted with the aim of examining the role of emotional intelligence, resilience, and perceived social support in predicting students' academic adjustment. The research hypotheses are:

1. Emotional intelligence predicts academic adjustment.
2. Resilience predicts academic adjustment.
3. Perceived social support predicts academic adjustment.

Method

Sample and Sampling Method

This research is descriptive-correlational in nature. The research population consisted of 555 students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology at Birjand University in the academic year 2022-2023, of which 237 were selected using stratified random sampling method (based on gender) according to Cochran's formula.

Tools Used

Perceived Social Support Questionnaire:

This scale was developed by [Zimet et al. \(1988\)](#) and contains 12 items. This scale measures three components: family support (questions 3, 4, 8, 11), friends support (questions 6, 7, 9, 12), and support from others (questions 1, 2, 5, 10). The scoring of this scale is on a 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The score range for the entire scale is between 12 to 60 and for each subscale is between 4 to 20, where higher scores indicate greater perceived social support. Zimet et al. (1988) reported the internal reliability coefficient of this scale using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.88 for the entire scale, 0.87 for the family support dimension, 0.85 for the friends support dimension, and 0.91 for the support from others dimension. In another study conducted in Iran, Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.73 for the entire scale, 0.76 for the family support dimension, 0.68 for the friends support dimension, and 0.73 for the support from others dimension. Also, in the research by [Akhondi et al. \(2024\)](#), Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score of the social support scale was 0.84, and for the subscales of family support, friends, and others, it was 0.88, 0.84, and 0.78, respectively. In this research, the reliability of the questionnaire was estimated at 0.87 using Cronbach's alpha method.

Resilience Questionnaire

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale was developed in 2003 and contains 25 questions that are scored on a five-point Likert scale (always true with a score of 4 to completely false with a score of 0). The minimum score on this scale is zero and the maximum score is one hundred [Jafari Shal Koochi et al. \(2020\)](#). Research has shown that the psychometric properties of this scale, namely validity (concurrent and divergent) and reliability (internal consistency and test-retest), are valid and acceptable. Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire scale was reported as 0.89 [\(Connor & Davidson, 2003\)](#). Also, the reliability of the questionnaire in the present research was estimated at 0.85 using Cronbach's alpha method.

Academic Adjustment Questionnaire

This scale was developed by [Baker and Siryk \(1984\)](#) and contains 24 items that are scored with a seven-point Likert scale (not at all to completely), where each item has a value between one to seven. The subject's score on this scale ranges from 24 to 168. In the study by [Baker and Siryk \(1984\)](#), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the academic adjustment subscale was higher than 0.8. In the research by [Azarian, Mahdavian, & Jajarmi \(2020\)](#), the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire scale was 0.81. In the present research, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire questionnaire was 0.80.

Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS):

In this research, the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was initially developed by [Goleman \(1995\)](#). [Mayer and Salovey \(1997\)](#), who considered emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize the meaning of emotions and relationships, developed the questionnaire with five subscales: self-motivation (questions 1, 9, 15, 20, 21, 26, and 31), self-awareness (questions 10, 6, 12, 14, 24, 27, 32, and 33), self-control (questions 2, 5, 16, 11, 18, 23, and 30), social awareness or empathy (questions 3, 4, 17, 22, 25, and 29), and social skills (questions 7, 8, 13, 19, and 28), totaling 33 questions. In this instrument, questions 9, 10, 12, 14, 20, 24, 25, 27, 30, and 31 are reverse scored. Participants respond to questions on a five-point scale from never to always. In this questionnaire, each participant receives six scores: five scores for each component and one for the total questionnaire score. In [Mansouri's study \(2001\)](#), the internal consistency of the test using the internal consistency method was 0.85. Additionally, in this study, the results regarding the correlation of individuals' scores on the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and the Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Test provided positive evidence in support of the construct validity of this instrument. In the present study, the reliability of the entire questionnaire was estimated at 0.87 using Cronbach's alpha method.

Results

For data analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between predictor and criterion variables, and stepwise regression analysis was used to predict the criterion variable based on predictor variables. Given that the regression points were scattered around a 45-degree slope line, the assumption of normality was confirmed. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.95, indicating that the assumption of error independence was met. To examine multicollinearity between independent variables, the variance tolerance index was used, and the variance inflation factor was less than 2, therefore the regression assumptions were satisfied. In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of research variables along with their minimum and maximum values are reported.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum and Maximum of Variables

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Emotional Intelligence	80	119	98.76	7.51
Resilience	48	75	60.15	4.74
Social Support	33	52	42.25	3.59
Academic Adjustment	24	168	90.23	24.17

As observed in Table 1, the mean and standard deviation of research variables in the sample group of students are reported. Additionally, the correlation matrix of research variables is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Research Variables

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Resilience	Social Support	Academic Adjustment
Emotional Intelligence	1			
Resilience	0.03	1		
Social Support	-0.01	-0.08	1	
Academic Adjustment	0.49*	0.63*	0.31*	1

* $P < 0.01$

Based on the findings obtained from Table 2, the strongest relationship was observed between resilience and academic adjustment ($r=0.63$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a positive and strong relationship between these two variables. This finding suggests that students with higher resilience have better academic adjustment. Additionally, a positive and significant relationship was observed between emotional intelligence and academic adjustment ($r=0.49$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that students with higher emotional intelligence demonstrate better academic adjustment capability. Furthermore, a positive and significant relationship was found between social support and academic adjustment ($r=0.31$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis

Step	Predictor Variable	R	R ²	R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig.	Durbin- Watson
1	Resilience	0.63	0.39	0.39	146.82	1	225	<0.001	
2	Resilience, Emotional Intelligence	0.79	0.62	0.23	134.45	1	224	<0.001	
3	Resilience, Emotional Intelligence, Social Support	0.87	0.75	0.13	116.40	1	223	<0.001	1.95

The results of stepwise regression analysis in Table 3 showed that predictor variables entered the model in order of their predictive power. In the first step, the resilience variable entered the model with a multiple correlation coefficient of 0.63, which was able to explain 39% of the variance in academic adjustment ($R^2=0.39$, $p<0.001$). This result indicates that resilience is considered the strongest predictor of students' academic adjustment.

In the second step, the emotional intelligence variable along with resilience entered the model, increasing the multiple correlation coefficient to 0.79. These two variables together predicted 62% of the changes in academic adjustment ($R^2=0.62$, $p<0.001$). In the third step, the social support variable was also added to the model, bringing the multiple correlation coefficient to 0.87. The three variables together explained 75% of the variance in academic adjustment ($R^2=0.75$, $p<0.001$).

Table 4. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	β		
1. Resilience	3.20	0.26	0.63	12.12	<0.001
2. Resilience	3.13	0.21	0.62	14.95	<0.001
Emotional Intelligence	1.53	0.13	0.48	11.6	<0.001
3. Resilience	3.28	0.17	0.64	19.19	<0.001
Emotional Intelligence	1.55	0.11	0.48	14.37	<0.001
Social Support	2.43	0.23	0.36	10.79	<0.001

In Table 4, the B and β values represent the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients, respectively, which indicate the effect size of predictor variables in the regression equation. According to the t-values observed, the effect of all variables in the regression equation is significant ($p<0.01$). The positive values indicate that the effect of the variable on the criterion variable is positive. Based on this, according to the table, if other conditions remain constant, with a one-unit increase in each of the variables of resilience, emotional intelligence, and social support, we will have increases of 0.64, 0.48, and 0.36 units respectively in the academic adjustment variable. According to the table results, all research hypotheses were confirmed.

Discussion & Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to examine the role of emotional intelligence, resilience, and perceived social support in predicting academic adjustment among students. The results of correlation analysis showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic adjustment. This finding indicates that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence demonstrate better adjustment ability to the academic environment. The results of stepwise regression analysis also showed that emotional intelligence has significant predictive power for academic adjustment. This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies. [Mousavi et al \(2012\)](#) in a study on female pre-university students in Tehran, reported a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and educational adjustment. Also, the results of this research are consistent with the findings of [Okhovvat et al \(2024\)](#) who confirmed the direct and significant relationship between the total score of emotional intelligence and all its dimensions with the total score of academic adjustment in their research on midwifery students.

The explanation of this finding based on psychological theories shows that emotional intelligence as the ability to identify, understand, use and manage emotions of oneself and others, which was first introduced by [Mayer and Salovey \(1990\)](#), plays a fundamental role in individuals' adaptation to their surrounding environment. Students with high emotional intelligence are able to better manage negative emotions resulting from academic stress, establish more effective social relationships, and have higher motivation for learning. These abilities, according to what [Goleman \(1998\)](#) pointed out, directly affect students' academic adjustment and make them more capable in facing academic challenges.

Research by [Mousavi et al \(2012\)](#) shows that students with higher emotional intelligence have better ability to cope with academic pressures, manage stress, establish positive relationships with classmates and professors, and adapt to environmental changes. These findings highlight the importance of teaching emotional intelligence components to improve students' academic performance.

The results of this research showed that the strongest relationship exists between resilience and academic adjustment, and resilience alone had the greatest contribution in explaining the variance of academic adjustment. This finding indicates that students with higher resilience have better academic adjustment and show more resistance and flexibility when facing academic challenges. This result is consistent with the findings of [Basharpour and Eyni \(2021\)](#) who showed in their study on students with learning disabilities that academic resilience plays an important mediating role in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic adjustment. It is also consistent with the results of [Sadoughi \(2018\)](#) who confirmed the role of academic resilience in predicting adjustment and academic performance in a study on medical students. This characteristic becomes particularly important in the university environment where students face extensive changes in various dimensions of life. The transition from high school to university, dealing with emotional independence from family, establishing new social relationships, and managing new responsibilities are all challenges that require high resilience for effective adaptation ([Siryk & Baker, 1999](#)).

[Mohamed et al. \(2025\)](#) in their study showed that higher emotional intelligence is associated with a more resilient personality that facilitates adaptation to change under pressure and prevents seeing change as a threat and considers it as a challenge. These findings highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in developing resilience and consequently improving academic adjustment. The results of this study also showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between perceived social support and academic adjustment. This finding indicates that students who perceive higher levels of social support from family, friends, and others have better adjustment to the academic environment. Perceived social support, along with the other two variables, had a significant contribution in explaining the variance of academic adjustment. This finding is consistent with the results of [Tinajero et al \(2020\)](#) who showed in their research on Spanish students that perceived social support, especially family support, is a strong predictor of academic success. It is also consistent with the findings of [McLean et al \(2022\)](#) who confirmed the role of perceived social support in mental health and adjustment.

The explanation of this finding shows that perceived social support as an individual's perception and belief about the availability of support from their social network, as defined by [Zimet et al. \(1988\)](#), plays various

roles in the process of academic adjustment. This type of support, according to what [McLean et al \(2022\)](#) pointed out, often has a stronger effect on mental health and adjustment compared to actual received support, because it emphasizes the individual's mental perception of the available support.

Perceived social support includes three main dimensions: family support, friend support, and support from others, each of which plays a specific role in the process of academic adjustment. Family support is usually the most basic form of support that strengthens the sense of security and self-confidence in students. The support of friends and peers plays an important role in facilitating adaptation to the new university environment and establishing social relationships. Support from others, including professors, counselors, and other influential people in the academic environment, can also provide the necessary guidance for academic success.

According to what [Tan et al \(2022\)](#) reported, social support can manifest in various forms including emotional, informational, instrumental, and evaluative support, each of which plays a specific role in the process of academic adjustment.

In summary, this predictive pattern is consistent with positive psychology theories that emphasize the importance of positive individual characteristics in adjustment and success. Resilience as a key construct of positive psychology plays a central role in maintaining mental health and optimal performance when facing stress. Emotional intelligence, as the ability to understand and manage emotions, also plays an important complementary role in this process. The role of perceived social support should not be overlooked either, as this variable shows that in addition to individual characteristics, environmental and social factors also play a role in academic adjustment. This finding highlights the importance of a multidimensional approach in considering factors affecting academic adjustment.

The findings of this research have important implications for theory and practice in the field of higher education. From a theoretical perspective, this study shows that a multivariable model including individual and social factors has high explanatory power for academic adjustment. This finding is consistent with ecosystem theories that emphasize the interaction of individual and environmental factors. From a practical perspective, the results of this research show that to improve students' academic adjustment, multidimensional intervention programs should be designed that focus on developing resilience, emotional intelligence, and strengthening perceived social support. These programs can include teaching stress coping skills, emotion management techniques, resilience development programs, and creating support networks in the university environment. According to what [Rana and Ahmad \(2023\)](#) pointed out, students who have optimal academic adjustment have better performance in courses, higher levels of academic satisfaction, and lower probability of dropping out. Therefore, investing in developing these skills can help not only the individual success of students but also the overall quality of higher education.

This research was also accompanied by limitations that should be considered in generalizing the results. First, the statistical population of this study included only students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology of one university, which limits the generalizability of results to other faculties and universities. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the research limits the possibility of inferring causal relationships and the need for longitudinal studies to examine changes in these variables over time is felt.

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