RJSSER
Research Journal of Social Sciences & Economics Review

Association of Social Support and Type 'A' Personality with Students Distinction at University Level

* Tabassum Faiz Soleheria, PhD Scholar

** Amjad Reba, Assistant Professor (Corresponding Author)

Abstract
This study sought to find out the association between social supports and Type 'A' personality patterns with students' distinction at the university level. The study has two objectives and two hypotheses. The study was conducted at the University of Peshawar and various departments of the University were randomly selected; the sample included Thirty (30) purposively selected participants. All the respondents were those who were high achievers in their respective departments. A quantitative approach was used to analyze the study findings. The sample consisted of 30 students, and about 60% of them were classified as Type 'A' and the categorization was based on scores they obtained on the Type 'A' scale. The results revealed a momentous association between personality patterns and academic distinction. Results demonstrated that Type 'A' students are more dominant, responsible, and academically successful; they have a happy-go-lucky and enthusiastic personality. It is also revealed through results that the factor of social support is highly significant and shows that academic success depends on social support in great deal. These findings suggest that family help, emotional support, and social environment have an important role in individual success in educational lives. High scorers have a better family interaction pattern than other students who have minimal or no social support. The study recommended that for stakeholders. Parental awareness programs about the significance of family interaction must be provided through various gatherings like parent-teacher associations. Teachers should help their students to become more confident and to express their ideas and views freely. Their support will increase the chances of greater academic success in their life.
Keywords: Social Support, Type A Pattern, Distinction, University Level, Success, Personality

Introduction

An education is a process that is a complete package for an individual and this process makes him or her fit into any kind of role in his life successfully. A comprehensive and generous education equips a man to carry out all his assignments and duties skillfully. From whatever angle we approached education we reached broadly the same conclusion; education is the process of learning that is how to live and how to gain a livelihood. However, in today's materialistic world, an educational degree that can't help you earn a livelihood seems to be useless. Look around and we will find an army of highly educated youth in search of a respectable job but this is a reality that only those get respectable jobs who have secured high grades in other words this is right to say that the ones who are high achievers will get the best job. There is a difference between education and education with distinction. The latter rules the world, more so in our country.

Though all the students in a given class do pass the exam some get distinction. Previous research shows that effective study habits, high achievement motivation, social support, and Type 'A' personality patterns also play important roles in students' success. Behavioral scientists have observed through various research that there are differences in people's desires for higher achievements because some people seem to be less bothered about their accomplishments while others have a strong drive to accomplish something great in their lives. This topic is highly debatable and that's why this is an important research area for educationists. Certain traits of people have been noted by scientists to be associated with a strong accomplishment drive. The inclination to choose goal-oriented activities that lead to success and to strive for accomplishment is known as achievement motivation. Thus this is

---

* Institute of Education & Research, University of Peshawar
** Institute of Education & Research, University of Peshawar

_____

true to some extent that motivation for achievement is seen to be the keystone for a successful and happy existence.

In this study, the researcher has tried to bring together the possible factors associated with distinction and what is their relationship to each other. The interrelationship of these factors clearly shows that distinction does not depend upon a single factor and it's a combination of many factors such as effective study habits, personality, achievement motive, and social support. In this study, the focus will be on type 'A' personality patterns and social support.

Social Support

Social support is a very important and significant element for happiness in people's lives. We all do have people around us who give us different types of support but if someone has no support then this would surely be a traumatic thing that can happen in their especially when they face some kind of injury or have a difficult time in studies, problems in taking important decisions or to cope with illness. Social support has been one of the most widely studied social phenomena for the last half-decade. Social support can be defined as the exchange of assistance through social relationships, fulfillment of basic social needs, endorsement, regard, belongings, personal feeling of belonging, of being accepted or being loved, of being needed all for one & for what one can do for others. In the present study, it is proposed that social support is an important factor in boosting university students' academic distinction.

The emotional and physical support that we receive from friends, family, coworkers, and other people is known as social support. It is commonly recognized that we live in a community surrounded by those who cherish, value, and think highly of us. One approach to classifying the benefits of communication in a given situation is through social support. If a person has a supportive environment then his communication will be positive and fruitful with his family and friends.

According to Lourel et al. (2013) and Awang et al. (2014) in separate studies that social support is a multifaceted notion that encompasses the psychological and social support that an individual obtains from friends, family, and the community. Poots and Cassidy (2020) commented after conducting quantitative and qualitative studies (Scanlon et al., 2020) those students from different fields and nations have shown the connection between social support and favorable outcomes (Cornelius et al., 2016).

Pluut et al. (2015) concluded that social support is a necessary component of success. It assists a person in managing stress in life, scholastic difficulties, a crisis in their education, physical or mental disease, childbirth, AIDS, feelings of bereavement, loneliness, or adolescent depression. Without any social support, students reported feeling more insecure and lonely.

A different study by Cage et al. (2021) found a correlation between social support and better educational experiences. In the study, they found a significant association between improved educational grades through better social support.

Research on social support by Brailovskaia et al. (2018); Scanlon et al. (2020); Maymon et al. (2019) has shown that this notion, which comes from friends, family, and the academic community can positively affect students' educational experiences and have a positive impact on their well-being and academic performance.

Social support is essential because it fosters interpersonal relationships and emotional expression, encourages positive behavior, improves health, and lowers stress. Episodes of depression, anxiety, and frequent injuries are increased due to a lack of social support.

Type 'A' Personality Pattern

Every person on the earth has a unique and versatile personality. That being said, each unique personality can be classified as either Type A or Type B. The typical personality type is Type B. Most of the time, they are composed and serene. It takes a lot to get under their skin. They rarely experience overstress, and when they do, they usually respond positively rather than negatively.

According to Fayez and Labib (2016) personality is defined as the internal processes that have combined to form emotions, interpersonal relationships, and attitudes that balance a person's reaction, behavior, and interaction with others. As a result, personality becomes a major factor that significantly influences how people behave. Numerous theorists have been noted for their varied perspectives in classifying and measuring personality types and features (Kantan et al., 2017). In light of this, the current study looked at personality type A and how it affects university students' academic standing.

_____

Radsepehr et al. (2016) reported that Type A is multitasking and highly motivated to take on additional work duties to succeed, so their personalities are commonly referred to as "workaholics". Aabida, Imran, and Arshad (2019) assert that every person possesses unique personality traits that impact several aspects of life, including the academic achievements of pupils.

Mahajan and Rastogi (2011) stated in their research that Type an individuals are people with high standards who typically work in a rush. According to one of the studies on type 'A' personality patterns an author reported that Type 'A' personalities prefer to be in charge of everything around them, which makes them difficult to get along with as team leaders because of their perfectionism (Darshani, 2014). Type B personalities, in contrast to Type 'A' personalities, are more laid back and detest antagonism (Cherie et al., 2013).

In contrast to other research, Sameen and Burhan (2014) demonstrated that Type 'A' personalities exhibit creative traits. All of this is a result of the type 'A' personality's propensity to take on excessive responsibility, rise to new challenges, put in lengthy workdays, and show greater attention to their tasks.

While completing a degree and achieving good grades are commonly considered indicators of learning or performance, these are not the sole desirable goals of a university education. The current study examines those variables that are associated with university academic success. Numerous educational and psychological scholars have written about this, demonstrating that there is a clear correlation between personality and accomplishment. For several reasons, it is crucial to look at these issues. Although for slightly different reasons, taxpayers, educators, administrators, and students are all interested in this field.

It's conceivable that the same elements that predict academic distinction at the university level will also predict persistence at lower levels if we can pinpoint them. Additionally, identifying the characteristics of successful students ought to improve the effectiveness of the university academic process.

Generally, the phenomenon supported by research indicates that Type "A" students and social support from parents, siblings, friends, and teachers boost academic performance and this is a prediction more than any other predictor explored to date. These factors should be recognized as the keystones of academic success.

Many significant personality traits are disregarded in people in general and in students in particular, and as a result, these traits have a detrimental impact on students' future academic success. Thus, there was a need for extensive research on the ways and degrees to which students' personalities affect their academic performance.

The literature evaluation provides sufficient evidence to substantiate the significance of these elements in determining students' success in college or university. Numerical data gathered from respondents from various departments of the University of Peshawar is presented and discussed through data analysis to provide a thorough understanding of these aspects and their interactions.

Problem Statement

There is a very strong relationship between education and learning because learning plays an important role in the process of education and further in the academic success of students. Every student wants to get higher marks and wishes to become a topper but many of them can't achieve distinction despite so much hard work. To hundreds of students, the issue that continues to plague them throughout their whole college and university life is the matter of grades. Some students go their whole lives without really knowing the proper and most effective ways to study and receive 'A' grades on their tests. On the other hand, some individuals seem to pull it off without any problem at all. In this study, the researcher has tried to bring together the possible factors associated with distinction. The interrelationship of these factors clearly shows that distinction does not depend upon a single factor and it's a combination of many factors such as effective study habits, personality, achievement motive, and social support. In this study, the focus will be on type 'A' personality patterns and social support.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were:

_____

1.   To find out the association of social support with students' distinction at the university level.
2.   To investigate the association of type 'A' personality with students' distinction at university level.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

H1:   There is no significant association between social support and students' distinction at the university level

H2:   There is no significant association between Type 'A' personality pattern and students' distinction at university level

Significance of the Study

Many of the students studying for master-level degrees consider this stage as the end of their academic life. Almost every one of them will have dreams of getting into practical life but the ground realities are altogether different, much of their dreams unrealized. And very soon they come to know that only those who are the fittest are. So in a competitive job market, it has been observed that the toppers get Lion's share. Similarly, it has been also observed that such students easily get scholarships for higher studies after a master's degree. Therefore, the researcher wants to bring to light all the undiscovered factors and methods employed by the toppers to get to that position. The researcher wants to find out those factors to give a complete recipe for success for students of today to enable them to survive in tomorrow's ruthless world.

Limitations of the Study

There are also certain limitations to this study.

1.   Environmental factors, such as exhaustion or stress from coursework, might have contributed to the results. Such things cannot be determined because the data was not gathered under strict study controls.
2.   Motivation is the other overall study drawback. Students who are required to complete these kinds of inventories frequently lack the drive to answer honestly and take the test seriously. This could have led to the effect of the data from these children on one or more measures.

Operational Definitions

Social support

The term social support is an idea that one is respected and appreciated, loved and cared for, and part of a network of communication and shared responsibilities is known as social support.

Type 'A' Personality

The term "type "A" describes a certain behavioral and psychological pattern linked to high accomplishment, competitiveness, and impatience.

Methodology

Research Design

This design of the study is quantitative and descriptive because it uses numerical data to measure and analyze to determine how variables social support and Type 'A' Personality patterns are associated with one another.

Population and Samples

Population

All departments of the University of Peshawar constituted the population of this study. There are a total of forty-eight departments in the university, so all students with distinction at the university level were included in the population of this study.

Sample

A list of departments of the University of Peshawar was received from the administration. It came to focus that approximately 50-plus departments could provide postgraduate-level education. Only ten departments were selected randomly using the lottery method. As far as the distribution of the sample size among the ten departments is concerned, a list of position-holder students was provided by the respective departments. This list of all position-holder students served as a sampling frame for the study. The sample was chosen by using the Google calculator; three respondents were selected from each department. In this way, thirty students constituted the sample size. The participants were constituted only as distinction holders from the selected sample.

Sources and Nature of Data

This study used a survey methodology. When gathering data, primary and secondary sources were both employed. While secondary sources of data included the internet, journals, and libraries, primary sources were gathered in the field.

Research Instruments

The questionnaire was used as a tool of research to collect the data. A structured type of questionnaire was prepared in which all of the questions were directive type to get exact information from respondents. There were four to five options for each question. The respondents were directed to encircle the choice which best describe their feelings and thinking for the specific variable.

Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part 1 consists of questions about social support, and Part II consists of questions on Type 'A' patterns.

Administration of the Questionnaire

In selected departments, the sample participants were contacted through proper channels and as per the rules and regulations. Ten distinct departments of the University of Peshawar were selected for the data for the study. Every student received instruction for giving responses on questionnaires up to the best level. In each department, three randomly chosen students received questionnaires. The researcher spoke with each student one-on-one while visiting each department. Every student received a brief explanation of the primary goals and objectives of the study. Following the completion of the questionnaire, the researcher verified that each statement had been addressed by looking at the answer sheets. The surveys were immediately gathered. Each respondent received a personal thank you from the researcher for their help.

Pilot Study

A detailed questionnaire consisting of relevant information in the light of main objectives was prepared. It was pre-tested on 10 students other than the sample students. It was discussed with the supervisor and other experts. All the suggestions were integrated and the questionnaire was finalized.

Data Analysis

Using questionnaires, all of the data was gathered from the University of Peshawar's chosen students. Data was collated, analyzed, and interpreted after it was collected. The primary data served as the major basis for analyses. The proper variable averages, percentages, and tabulations were applied.

Result and Discussions

The interpretation and analysis of data are covered in this section. Every detail is included, along with explanations in each part and the relevant tables as needed. The goal of the current study was to ascertain whether there was any correlation between several variables and academic distinction at the university level. The research findings provide a wealth of data to back up each hypothesis.

There were two variables in the present study. These variables were measured through two different factors I-e social support and Type 'A' pattern of personality.

The present study is conducted to find out the factors associated with students' distinction at the university level. To study these factors students who were distinction holders from different departments of the university were tested. These factors were studied by the administration of a questionnaire composed of different questions about social support and Type 'A' questions.

This chapter is about data analysis and interpretation which includes:
i)   Type 'A' personality
ii)   Social support

Type 'A' personality

Hypothesis I:

Type 'A' questions are designed to measure the behavioral style of Type 'A' people. The scale contains 12 pairs of statements designed to assess competitiveness, time urgency, and aggressiveness. Each pair has 1 item characteristic of Type 'A' people whereas the other item is characteristic of Type B people. The respondent is asked to choose one item from each pair. Items 1B,2B,3A,4B,5A,6A,7B,8A,9B,10B,11A and 12A constitute Type 'A' characteristics. Items 1B, 3A and 6A are based on aggressiveness/hostility.2B, 7B, 9B, 11A, 12A are based on time urgency, and 4B, 5A, 8A, and 10B are based on the competitiveness aspect of personality. The other 12 items are type B items.

The present study was designed to investigate the relationship between university distinction and various factors. One of the major factors is the Type 'A' personality pattern of the students who got distinction. The sample consisted of 30 students, and about 60% of them classified as Type 'A' based on scores they obtained in Type 'A' questions. The results also suggest that a significant relationship exists between academic successes and Type 'A' personality.

The results reveal a significant relationship between personality patterns and academic distinction.

According to the results, Type 'A's and Type B's, as described by the JAS, did not differ in how they attributed their successes; but, Type 'A's made more internal attributions for failure than did Type Bs. This discrepancy in attribution resulted from the Type 'A' personality's propensity to blame incapacity for failure. Type "A," as described by SI, had no bearing on attributions.

The results of the present study are in line with the available research evidence therefore the first hypothesis was not proved.

Social Support

Hypothesis 2

The results of the social support question indicated that there is a strong relationship between academic distinction and social support received by students. It proved the above hypothesis that high scorers will show high social support from all the agents of socialization including parents, friends, and teachers. This is thus proved that if students have high social support then they will show excellent academic performance.

Table 3.2 (i) distribution of the respondents who have several people whom they can talk

Responses	Number	Percentage %
Definitely False	0	0%
Probably False	1	3.3%
Definitely true	19	63%
Probably true	10	33.33%
Total	30	100%

Table 3.2 (i) indicated that most of the respondents in response to item (i) definitely true and they believed that there are lots of people to whom they can talk when they feel lonely. Others followed by 33.33% to probably true. The other reasons were not considered important by the respondents which could be seen as significantly different.

Table 3.2 (ii) Distribution of the respondents who feel that they have no one to talk

Responses	Number	Percentage %
Definitely False	28	93%
Probably False	0	0%
Definitely true	0	0%
Probably true	2	7%
Total	30	100%

Table 3.2 (ii) indicated that most of the respondents which are about 93% were not in favor of the statement and they don't agree that they have no one to whom they can talk about their educational problems. There were only 7% who were in this view that they have no one to whom they talk about their educational issues and problems.

Table 3.2 (iii) Distribution of the respondents who feel that their family thinks highly of them

Responses	Number	Percentage %
Definitely False	0	0%
Probably False	3	10%
Definitely true	24	80%
Probably true	2	7%
Total	30	100%

Table 3.2 (iii) indicated that 80% of the respondents felt that their family thinks highly of them and their intimate family feels proud of them. And 10% of the respondents were those who were not sure about their family's feelings towards them. Only 7% were undecided about any feelings of their family about them.

_____

Table 3.2 (iv) Distribution of the respondents who feel that their family don't have confidence in them

Responses	Number	Percentage %
Definitely False	26	87%
Probably False	4	13%
True	0	0%
Probably true	0	0%
Total	30	100%

Table 3.2 (iv) showed that 87% of the respondents did not agree with the item and they disagreed with the feelings that their family doesn't have confidence in them. Their response means that they were sure about their family and that they have strong confidence in them. Thus majority of the respondents were in favor of the statement as false. And 13% were those who may have no awareness about their family thinking about whether their families trust them or not. Other reasons were not considered important by the respondents.

The results of the present study are in line with the available research evidence therefore the second hypothesis was not proved as well.

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This section includes findings, conclusions, and recommendations that were drawn from the analysis of the data.

Findings

Type 'A' personality pattern

It is a lifelong belief that education plays a vital role in human development. It helps to polish the individual's personality. Simultaneously every personality variable has its impact on the outcome of a person's educational level and academic success. Personality factors themselves have a role to play in the determination of success and failure of educational achievements. Type 'A' personality pattern of the individual is also an important variable that plays a pivotal role in individual success, it can be concluded that many people who have Type 'A' pattern of personality strive for success very hard.

The purpose of the present study was to find out the relationship between the Type 'A' pattern of personality and academic distinction at the university level. Information from the collected data and their results led to the following findings:

i. The Type 'A' students are very competitive people, they consider everything to be a challenge.
ii. The Type 'A' people operate at the maximum possible speed. They want to achieve big goals but they think that time is very limited and this results in excellent performance, it can be educational success or any other job.
iii. The important finding is a significant relationship between Type 'A' behavior and achievement motivation among these students.
iv. Furthermore, there is evidence to support the hypothesis that Type 'A' students are more likely to find themselves motivated to score high in education. Numerous studies have shown that Type 'An' individuals consciously disregard their fatigue if it interferes with their achievement.

Mettlin (1976) suggested that the Type 'A' pattern is particularly common in competitive jobs having high expectations for the quality and quantity of tasks performed.

Social Support

i. An important finding is that there is a highly significant relationship between academic distinction and social support received by those students. This showed that if students have high social support then they will show excellent academic performance.
ii. Data also showed that parental support and friends help also play an important role in the enhancement of the best qualities in students which leads to academic success.
iii. Children from a family where the family members facilitate the environment to make their children independent decision-makers, help to increase their self-esteem and achievement motivation.
iv. It also helps them to become good leaders and successful individuals in their academic lives.

Conclusion

After the interpretation of the collected data, the conclusions were drawn carefully. The purpose of the present study was to find out the relationship of different factors of academic distinction among university students. It has been concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between these

_____

factors and distinction among university students. The results and statistical analysis reveal that scores of both the factors which were Type 'A' pattern personality and social support do correspond generally with the academic distinction at the university level.

Results of the present study demonstrated that Type 'A' students are more dominant, responsible, and academically successful; they have got a happy-go-lucky and enthusiastic personality. It is indicated that the factor of social support is highly significant and shows that academic success depends on social support in great deal. It has been also concluded that family help, emotional support, and social environment have an important role in individual success in educational lives. High scorers have a better family interaction pattern than other students.

Recommendations

The researcher makes a few recommendations that may be looked into further research after considering the findings of the current study.

i. The study did not examine gender disparities. Examining gender disparities may yield important data for a comprehensive investigation of the current study.

ii. It may be possible to expand the study to include people from both urban and rural origins.

iii. There are more than two instructional media used in Pakistani education. Further research must be done to examine how these factors affect academic success.

iv. Teachers have a responsibility to instill a spirit of success in their students. It is common knowledge that students who struggle with expression and cannot make their own decisions are not likely to excel academically. Teachers must help them develop the self-confidence that will enable them to openly voice their opinions.

References

Awang, M. M., Kutty, F. M., & Ahmad, A. R. (2014). Perceived social support and well being: First-year student experience in university. International Education Studies, 7(13), 261-270.

Brailovskaia J, Schönfeld P, Zhang XC, Bieda A, Kochetkov Y, Margraf J. (2018). A cross-cultural study in Germany, Russia, and China: Are resilient and socially supported students protected against depression, anxiety, and stress? *Psychological Reports.*121(2):265–281.

Cage, E., Jones, E., Ryan, G., Hughes, G., & Spanner, L. (2021). Student mental health and transitions into, through and out of university: Student and staff perspectives. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 1–14

Cherie, E., Carmen, C., & Hannay, M. (2013). Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, A/B Personality Types, and Locus of Control: Where Do They Intersect? *American Journal of Management*, Vol.13 (3), pp. 57- 66.

Cornelius V, Wood L, Lai J. (2016). Implementation and evaluation of a formal academic peer mentoring program in higher education. *Active Learning in Higher Education.* 17(3):193–205

Fayez, M., & Labib, A. (2016). Investigating the effect of the" big five" personality dimensions on the compulsive buying behavior of Egyptian consumers. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research, 10(3).*

Kanten, P., Gümüştekin, G., & Kanten, S. (2017). Exploring the Role of A, B, C, and D Personality Types on Individuals Work-related Behaviors and Health Problems: A Theoretical Model, *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 6(7), 29-37.

Lateef, A., Dahar, M. A., & Yousuf, M. I. (2019). Influence of type A and type B personality on academic achievement of university students. *Global Social Sciences Review (GSSR)*, 4(2), 109-118.

Lourel, M., Hartmann, A., Closon, C., Mouda, F., & Petric-Tatu, O. (2013). Social support and health: An overview of selected theoretical models for adaptation. *Social support, gender and culture, and health benefits*, (p 1–20). Nova Science Publishers.

Mahajan, E., & Rastogi, R. (2011). Psychological Wellbeing of Students with Type A and Type B Personalities. IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior, 10(1).Moodley, 2010).

Maymon R, Hall NC, Harley JM. (2019) Supporting first-year students during the transition to higher education: The importance of quality and source of received support for student well-being. *Student Success.* 10(3):64.

McCoy DC, Wolf S, Godfrey EB. (2014). Student motivation for learning in Ghana: Relationships with caregivers' values toward education, attendance, and academic achievement. *School Psychology International.* 35(3):294–308.

_____

Mishra S. (2020).Social networks, social capital, social support and academic success in higher education: A systematic review with a special focus on 'underrepresented' students. *Educational Research Review.* 29:100307.

Pluut H, Curşeu PL, Ilies R. (2015). Social and study related stressors and resources among university entrants: Effects on well-being and academic performance. *Learning and Individual Differences.* ; 37:262–268.

Poots A, Cassidy T. (2020). Academic expectation, self-compassion, psychological capital, social support, and student wellbeing. *International Journal of Educational Research.*

R., K., N., Darshani. (2014). A review of personality types and locus of control as moderators of stress and conflict management. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Vol. 4(2), pp. 1-8.

Radsepehr, H., Shareh, H. & Dehnabi, A. (2016). Comparing Metacognitive Beliefs and Thought Control Strategies among Iranian Students with Three Personality Types, Education in Medicine Journal, 8(1): 1–14

Sara Sameen, & Muhammad Burhan (2014). Creativity and Its Link with Personality Type A/B in Students.Journal of Business Studies Quarterly, Vol. 6.

Scanlon M, Leahy P, Jenkinson H, Powell F. (2020).'My biggest fear was whether or not I would make friends: Working-class students' Reflections on their transition to university in Ireland. *Journal of Further and Higher Education.* 44(6):753–765.