A STUDY OF ADJUSTMENT (ACADEMIC, SOCIAL AND TO THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT) AMONG MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AT JORDANIAN UNIVERSITIES AND ITS CORRELATION WITH THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: This paper aims at examining the adjustment (academic, social and to the urban environment) and its correlation with academic achievement among Malaysian students in selected governmental universities in Jordan. Relevant qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. 386 Questionnaires were distributed randomly. The questionnaires were designed to measure the extent of academic and social adjustment and the adjustment to the urban environment. They were backed up with a brief interview covered 50 students and revolved around the difficulties the students faced during their stay in Jordan. The findings revealed that the students reached a acceptable level in adjustments. The male students achieved better social and academic adjustment than the female students while the adjustment of female students to urban environment was more than that of the male students. The mean of academic achievement for females was better than that for the males. Further, there is a positive and strong correlation among the adjustment dimensions. Furthermore, there is a correlation between each of the adjustments and the academic achievement, but the relationship is very low.

Key words: academic achievement, academic adjustment, social adjustment, urban adjustment.

1. Introduction

Malaysia is among few countries in the world that send a large number of scholarships students abroad to pursue their studies at the international universities. Malaysian concerned authorities provide the students with the necessary and adequate supports and services to enable them to adjust and face the multiple challenges and stress in a different culture and new academic environment and social climate (Rahimin Affendi et.al, 2007).

Adjustment is an important factor that helps university students to be successful in their studies, particularly those who study overseas. On the one hand, university is a new environment which is totally different from school atmosphere. It is considered a place of transformation for the students from adolescence into adulthood (Rautopuro &Vaisanen, 2001) and start planning for the future, deciding on difficult tasks, and becoming financial and emotional independent (Smith and Ren, 2007). On the other hand, the international students face bigger challenges when studying in a socially and academically different culture, or in an environment which is also different from theirs

According to (Justice& McLachlan, 2009; Shaydenko &Tsze 2011; Fang Chen& Jyh Chen, 2009; Alfonso, 2012) the level of social adjustment of the students differs according to their personality, social characteristics, cultural, demographic, and academic. Some study (Saghir, 2001; Poyrazli& Kavanaugh, 2006; Al-Zubaidi& Rechards, 2012) revealed that the degree of proficiency of language was the most important predictor of social adjustment level, followed with a knowledge of norms and values of the community, and the marital status of students. Other studies (Alfonso, 2012; Jiang, 2010; Pedersen, 1995) showed that the academic achievement had

predicted a good level of adjustment (academic, personal, and emotional) and both had a strong relationship with the personality of the individual.

Arthur (1997) and Neuliep (2003) have emphasized on the importance and the necessity of creating a set of procedures, activities and exercise efforts to change their daily habits, strategies and their attitude towards dealing with other people and the adjust to the new environment. It has been suggested by Abdullah (2009); Fang Chen and Jyh Chen (2009) that the new intakes that arrive in the country of study need some familiarization programs to enable them to adjust to the emerging conditions, as well as intervention of social media, which aims to strengthen relations between the university students, increase their feelings toward the university, and their perceptions about future success at the university (David et al, 2012). Furnham (1986); Shu-chuan Lin (2011) suggested also establishing training programs for the development of social skills, and educating new students to establish positive relationships and how to communicate with others. These studies also recommended intensifying these programs for females because they are less involved in social activities than males.

1.2 Problem of the study and questions

The adjustment is one of the most important factors for success in life, whether it is in social or academic. The positive adjustment of the individual gives him the ability to establish positive relations with others and interact with them, to cooperate in completing tasks and to face life's difficulties. The student needs a high level of adjustment to face the challenges (social and academic) during their study with colleagues, professors and staff. The challenges become increasingly difficult for students who are studying abroad due to the change in the atmosphere surrounding them (the community, the nature of the climate and the environment, food and beverages, the nature of social life, the dominant culture in the new country). So, the positive adjustment process is very important for the students and essential factor to achieve the goal of academic success. Studies have shown that many students who suffer from problems and difficulties will lead them to stress and inability to adjustment, which negatively affects their academic level. The Malaysian government is keen to follow up their student learning within the academic

and social conditions of the country of their study and provide help to these students to face the challenges and stress.

The aim of this study is to measure the level of adjustment (social, academic, and to the urban environment) and it is relationship to academic achievement among the Malaysians students in Jordanian universities as Malaysia is one of the countries that sends students to study abroad. It also aims to identify some of the variables and the difficulties faced by those students and affect their adjustment and stand in the way of achieving success and academic achievement. The study will answer the following questions: (a) What is level of Adjustment achieved by Malaysian students in the Jordanian universities? (b) Are there any significant differences in the level of Adjustment and academic achievement of Malaysian students in Jordanian universities in relation to these variables (gender, marital status and University)? (c) Is there a significant correlation between students' level adjustment and achievements and to what extent the level adjustment explains from students' achievement?

2. Research design
2.1 Participants and sampling:

The population of the study is composed of Malaysian students who are studying in the Jordanian Universities. The researchers distributed the questionnaire of the adjustment to a random sample from the society of the study which amounted to 386 students distributed as follows: university of Jordanian (10 males and 5 females), Yarmouk (72 males and 88 females), Mu'tah (12 males and 41 females), Science and Technology (22 males and 15 females),and Al Bait (12 males and 41 females). They were backed up with a brief interview covered 50 students and revolved around the difficulties the students faced during their stay in Jordan.

2.2 Study's Instrument:

In this study the researchers used the scale of adjustment which consists of 47 items, distributed on three dimensions namely, (social dimension, academic dimension and environmental urban dimension). The researchers examined the correlation among these items by using Person's correlation coefficient analysis. See Table 1.

Table 1 the correlation coefficient between the social dimensions

		The social dimension	The academic Dimension	Urban environment
The social dimension	Pearson Correlation	1	.471**	.477**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	386	386	386
The academic Dimension	Pearson Correlation	.471**	1	.291**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	386	386	386
Urban environment	Pearson Correlation	.477**	.291**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	386	386	386

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As the table 1 shows there is a significant and medium correlation between the social dimension and the academic dimension and also with the environmental and urban dimension while the value of Person's correlation r equal (0.471and 0.477) respectively. Meanwhile, it is small between the academic dimension and the environmental and urban dimension (r = 0.291) Cohen (1988).

2.3 Reliability of the instrument:
According to Pallant (2007) reliability refers to the internal consistency, which means that to what extent the items of the instrument hang together. In other words are they all measuring the same underling construct, (in this case social adjustment). Regarding, to many statistical references the main test used to checking the reliability or the internal consistency is Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, and the value of it should be more than 0.7 (Pallant 2007) to ratification that there is an internal consistency in this instrument. See table 2

Table 2 the coefficient reliability of Adjustment scale

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
The social dimension	.753	.752	21
The academic Dimension	.678	.695	13
Urban dimension	.689	.701	13
Adjustment T.S.	.868	.871	47

From the table 2 we note that the value of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the whole instrument is (0.868). This means that there is a very good internal consistency. The values of it for each dimension (social dimension, academic dimension and urban dimension) are (0.753, 0.678m, 0.689) respectively. These values are acceptable.

3. Results and discussion:
The study answers the three questions below:

3.1 The first question:
What level of Adjustment achieved by Malaysian students in Jordanian universities?
To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the study sample responses were calculated. See Table 3.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations scores on the Adjustment scale as a whole and its dimensions

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The social dimension	386	2.1917	.40712
The academic Dimension	386	2.0984	.38900
Urban environment	386	2.4041	.49662
Adjustment (all)	386	2.1813	.39248

From the table 3, we can say that the level of Adjustment achieved by Malaysian students who are studying in the Jordanian universities is acceptable in general (M=2.18). As the table shows, the highest adjustment is in urban environment dimension (M=2.4). The lowest adjustment is in the academic dimension (M=2.09). Meanwhile the social dimension is in the middle (M=2.19). This result explains that Malaysians students do not enjoy a high level of adjustment (academically, socially and urban). It indicates that the students are facing difficulties and problems in order to adjust and achieve the goals and success. The main difficulty, according to what the students said during the interviews conducted by the researchers, they face in the Academy is the language, Because of the Lecturers, local students and the staff at the university do not use the standard Arabic language in their communication. This makes the Malaysian students confused and anxious as they read books and references in standard Arabic. Therefore they will refrain from participation and interaction with classroom climate or outside the classroom. This result is in line with the studies of Tinto (1996), Saghir (2001), Barron (2006)Where the results show that students have difficulty in language, as (Tric, 2007) indicated that faculty members believed that the international students prefer spending time with co-national peers, due to their limited ability to communicate in English (second language).
This problem is probably less influential in the social dimension of adjustment because the student does not need to use the standard Arabic language in the community and outside the academic environment, where the street Arabic language which is not much relevant of the academic field is used. Thus, it is understandable that the averages of answers of the students on social adjustment are higher than that on academic adjustment. But The mean of social dimension and urban environment dimension is still acceptable as (M=2.19), (M=2.4), as the table 3 shows, this is mean that students face some problem in their social and the urban environment adjustment. This has been indicated during the interviews as the students mentioned that they had a problem in communicating with the local community because of the different customs and traditions. The students also said that: "some of the difficulties we face relate to the environment. For example, lack of water and high prices. Some other difficulties relate to the community such as ill-treatment, heavy-handed, always angry and non-smiling people, absence of social activities for foreign students and lack of participation by local students. This result agreed with (Ward, 2001) who confirms that local students are uninterested in initiating contact with their international peers.

3.2 The second question
Are there any significant differences in the level of Adjustment(academic, social and to the urban environment) and academic achievement of Malaysian students in Jordanian universities related to these variables (gender, marital status, University)?

a- gender
To answer this question related to gender variables(male, female) we use Independent Samples T Test which has been designed to explore whether the means of the two groups differ significantly (Muijs, 2011).see Table 4 and Table 5

Table 4. Means and standard deviations scores on the Adjustment dimensions by variable gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The social dimension	Male	170	2.2294	.44888
	Female	216	2.1620	.36934
The academic Dimension	Male	170	2.1706	.46188
	Female	216	2.0417	.30973
Urban environment	Male	170	2.3647	.49487
	Female	216	2.4352	.49693
C. Percentage G.P.A.	Male	170	2.03	.467
	Female	216	2.88	.625

Table 5. Independent Samples T Test Results for Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
The social dimension	Equal variances assumed	15.283	.000	1.617	384	.107	.06737	.04165	-.01452	.14927
	Equal variances not assumed			1.581	324.629	.115	.06737	.04262	-.01648	.15123
The academic Dimension	Equal variances assumed	48.052	.000	3.273	384	.001	.12892	.03939	.05147	.20637
	Equal variances not assumed			3.128	282.024	.002	.12892	.04122	.04779	.21006
Urban environment	Equal variances assumed	3.422	.065	-1.386	384	.167	-.07048	.05086	-.17047	.02951
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.387	363.648	.166	-.07048	.05083	-.17044	.02948
C. Percentage G.P.A.	Equal variances assumed	19.756	.000	-14.856	384	.000	-.855	.058	-.968	-.742
	Equal variances not assumed			-15.369	382.990	.000	-.855	.056	-.964	-.745

The table 5, shows that the Sig. value of the all variables was less than 0.05 so we should read the bottom row except urban environmental dimension, and should read the up row. So that there are significant differences between the two groups (male and female) in the academic dimension in favor of males and in their achievement in favor of females. This result differed with the study (Noor-Azniza et al, 2011), where the results revealed no differences between the genders. But it conform with the result of Cook's study (1995) which shows that female students face a lot of the problems during the adjustment and the establishment of relations on campus compared with male students. But this study's result reflected in the achievement, shows that the females have better educational achievements compared to the males. This possibly can be attributed to the time spared by those females who could not adjust with the community and allocated for studying and preparing for exams. In order to overcome the difficulties the females face in the adjustment, Furnham (1986) suggests intensifying training programs for the development of social skills for females because they are less involved in social activities than males.

B: marital status
To answer this question related to Marital Status variables (Single, Married) we use Independent Samples T Test, because the means of the two groups differ significantly. See Table 6, Table 7.

Table 6: Means and standard deviations scores on the Adjustment dimensions by variable marital status

	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The social dimension	Single	371	2.1833	.40113
	Married	15	2.4000	.50709
The academic Dimension	Single	371	2.1024	.37528
	Married	15	2.0000	.65465
Urban environment	Single	371	2.3908	.49410
	Married	15	2.7333	.45774
C. Percentage G.P.A.	Single	371	2.51	.710
	Married	15	2.53	.516

Regarding to the table 7 are there are significant differences between the two groups (married and single) in two dimensions (social dimension and urban environmental dimension) because the Sig value of t test in these dimensions less than 0.05 in favor of married group. The mean of the married group in both dimensions were (M = 2.4000) (M = 2.7333). Meanwhile, the mean in the non married group in both dimensions were (M = 2.1833) and (M = 2.3908) respectively. From the results it is clear that the marital status factor has a great role in the adjustment and is very important for the students who are under pressures during the study.
Although Alsageer (2001) and Poyrazli& Kavanaugh (2006) concluded that unmarried students reach higher levels of adjustment compared to married students, because most of the married students living abroad leave their wives behind. But the Malaysians students in the current study, are residing in Jordan with their wives so the factor of marital status is a positively contributing factor in helping them to adjustment and cope with the difficulties.

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Table 7. Independent Samples T Test Results for marital status

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper	
The social dimension	Equal variances assumed	6.686	.010	-2.029	384	.043	-.21671	.10679	-.42668	-.00674	
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.635	14.717	.123	-.21671	.13258	-.49977	.06634	
The academic Dimension	Equal variances assumed	4.515	.034	1.000	384	.318	.10243	.10245	-.09901	.30386	
	Equal variances not assumed			.602	14.374	.557	.10243	.17015	-.26162	.46647	
Urban environment	Equal variances assumed	7.600	.006	-2.639	384	.009	-.34250	.12979	-.59769	-.08731	
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.832	15.349	.012	-.34250	.12094	-.59976	-.08523	
C. Percentage G.P.A.	Equal variances assumed	2.251	.134	-.143	384	.886	-.027	.185	-.391	.338	
	Equal variances not assumed			-.192	16.221	.850	-.027	.138	-.320	.266	

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D: University

To answer this question related to university variables (Jordanian, Yarmouk, Mu'tah, Science and Technology, Al Bait University) we use one-way ANOVA as it is shown in Table 8?

Table 8. one-way ANOVA Results for university variables

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Adjustment	University of Jordan	15	2.0000	.00000	.00000	2.0000	2.0000	2.00	2.00
	University of Yarmouk	160	2.1750	.38116	.03013	2.1155	2.2345	2.00	3.00
	University of Mu'tah	53	2.1132	.31988	.04394	2.0250	2.2014	2.00	3.00
	Jordan University of Science and Technology	37	2.0811	.36350	.05976	1.9599	2.2023	1.00	3.00
	Al Bait University	121	2.2727	.44721	.04066	2.1922	2.3532	2.00	3.00
	Total	386	2.1813	.39248	.01998	2.1421	2.2206	1.00	3.00
C. Percentage G.P.A.	University of Jordan	15	2.33	.488	.126	2.06	2.60	2	3
	University of Yarmouk	160	2.51	.604	.048	2.42	2.61	1	4
	University of Mu'tah	53	2.83	1.014	.139	2.55	3.11	1	4
	Jordan University of Science and Technology	37	1.95	.880	.145	1.65	2.24	1	4
	Al Bait University	121	2.55	.499	.045	2.46	2.64	2	3
	Total	386	2.51	.703	.036	2.44	2.58	1	4

The above output shows us a descriptive and statistic table according to one-way ANOVA, included the means, standard deviations and standard errors of the means for each group. From the columns of means and standard deviations we see that the highest mean to level of adjustment was in Al-Bait University (M = 2.27) with also the highest standard deviation (0.447). Meanwhile, the lowest mean was in the University of Jordan with standard deviation (0.000). At the same time, the highest mean of students' achievement was in the University of Mu'tah (M = 2.83) with standard deviation (1.014). In contrast, the lowest mean was (M = 1.95) in Jordan University of Science and Technology with standard deviation (0.88).

Table 9 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Adjustment	15.139	4	381	.000
C. Percentage G.P.A.	20.476	4	381	.000

From Table 9, the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance we see that the value of sig to level of adjustment and achievement were .000 less than 0.05. That means the data violated the homogeneity of variance assumption and also it broken the assumption normality. Therefore, we need to consult the output of Robust Tests of Equality of Means (Welsh and Brown- Forsythe).

Table 10 Robust Tests of Equality of Means^b

		Statistic^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Adjustment	Welch	.	.	.	.
	Brown-Forsythe	.	.	.	.
C. Percentage G.P.A.	Welch	5.686	4	72.064	.000
	Brown-Forsythe	8.134	4	146.642	.000

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

b. Robust tests of equality of means cannot be performed for Social Adjustment because at least one group has 0 variance.

The previous output shows us the Welch and Brown-Forsythe. From table 10, we see that there is no information display in the level of adjustment row because the Robust Tests of equality of means cannot be performed when at least one group has Zero variance. But for the students' achievement we conclude that there are significant differences among the groups because the significance value is less than 0.05.

From the first part of the table which relates to the social adaptation, we can say that there was no significant difference among all the groups because the values of sig are more than 0.05. In the second part which relates to the students' achievement we notice that there are many significant differences among the groups. For instance, there is a significant difference between the University of Yarmouk and University of Mu'tah and also between Jordan University of Science and Technology. Also there is a significant difference between University of Mu'tah and Jordan University of Science and Technology. Lastly, there was a significant difference between Jordan University of Science and Technology and Al-Bait University. To know to which groups these differences return we need to compare between the means. In the first case the difference between the University of Yarmouk (M = 2.51) and the University of Mu'tah (M = 2.83) is in favor of the last one. The difference between the University of Yarmouk (M = 2.51) and Jordan University of Science and Technology (M = 1.95) is in favor of the University of Yarmouk. So that the difference between the University of Mu'tah and Jordan University of Science and Technology in favor of the University of Mu'tah. Lastly, the difference between Jordan University of Science and Technology (M = 1.95) and Al-Bait University (M = 2.55) is in favor of the last one.

The overall adjustment was significantly different from one university to another. Jordanian universities have developed various types of campus environment. The culture of students of Mu'tah University and the Al Bait University is different from the culture of students of the University of Jordan University of Science and Technology. The former tends to have the culture of nomadic or rural and and social atmosphere of simplicity of living. This environment is suitable to the nature of the Malaysian people who love the simple life and the rural atmosphere. Thus, we find a high level of adjustment of students of the Al Bait University and Mu'tah, compared to other universities. As for the culture of students at the University of Science and Technology and the University of Jordan, the dominating trend is that the students lack social interaction with others particularly with the foreigners. The students of these two universities have come from the elite group in the major urban areas of Jordan. Therefore we find a low level of adjustment of Malaysian students, and the difficulty of life. Ward (2001) has pointed out that most studies have concluded that local students are uninterested in initiating contact with their international peers

3.3 The third question

Is there a significant correlation between students' level of adjustment and achievements and to what extent the level adjustment explains from students' achievement?

Table11 Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.059[a]	.003	-.004	.705	.003	.441	3	382	.724	1.255

a. Predictors: (Constant), Urban environment, The academic Dimension, The social dimension

b. Dependent Variable: C. Percentage G.P.A.

The previous table is an important output because it gives us the measures of how well of the overall model. The main value in this table is R square which varies between 0 and 1 and it shows us to what extent our model good or not (Muijs, 2011). In this case R square was 0.003 which means that the model is poor fit for this data, in other words the dimensions of adjustment explained only this value from the whole students' achievement.

Table 12 one-way anova [b] Results for the correlation between the social adjustment and C. Percentage G.P.A.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.657	3	.219	.441	.724[a]
	Residual	189.819	382	.497		
	Total	190.477	385			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Urban environment, The academic Dimension, The social dimension

b. Dependent Variable: C. Percentage G.P.A.

The table above shows us that there is no significant correlation between the adjustment the students and their achievement, because the sig value is more than 0.05.

Table :13 Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	2.351	.322		7.294	.000	1.718	2.985
The social dimension	-.109	.139	-.062	-.783	.434	-.382	.165
The academic Dimension	.073	.103	.049	.706	.481	-.130	.275
Urban environment	.083	.105	.055	.794	.427	-.123	.289

a. Dependent Variable: C. Percentage G.P.A.

From table 13, the output contains many columns; the two main columns are column B and column Beta. The first one showed us the value of the dependent variable (students, achievement) will change if the independent variables (the social dimension, academic dimension and urban environmental dimension) value changed one unit. From the table we can see that the students' achievement reduced -

0.109 when the mean of the social dimension increased 1 score. Meanwhile, it increased 0.073 and 0.083 when the mean of the academic dimension and urban dimension increased 1 score. Secondly, column Beta is very important to arrange the independent variables based to the amount of its effect. In other words, the variable which has the large value of Beta meant that has the strongest effect in the dependent

variables. In the bottom line, there is a relationship between academic achievement and the level of adjustment to the students, but the relationship is very low. This result may be related with an acceptable level of adjustment to the students. It means that, the adjustment of students is not low and is not high. So this level, cannot predict a high achievement of students. This differs with Pedersen, (1995) who showed that the academic achievement had predicted a good level of adjustment.

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