A Comparison Study on the University Life Adjustment: The Case of Students with Disabilities

Alawad, Waad Abdullah
Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal university, Saudi Arabia

Abeer Toson Ahmed
Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The study aimed at identifying the university adjustment among students with disabilities according to their different characteristics. Descriptive design was implemented using stratified randomization method to collect data from the study sample which comprised of (254) male and female students studying in Saudi universities. The results revealed that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of adjustment based on gender, type of disability. On the other hand, significant differences were found in the level of adjustment to university based on academic year and university types. Based on the results, the study recommended expanding the development several academic and social among students with disabilities that helps them to achieve their goals at the university.

Key words: Adjustment, students, disabilities, universities.

Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made great progress in improving the care and services provided for students of special education in all categories. In this regard, the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2030) emphasized the empowerment of people with disabilities. To achieve this goal, it established solid legislative and regulatory frameworks that meet their specific needs and enhance their integration into society. In addition, it intended to achieve the
maximum benefit from existing opportunities in society. In the field of education, it aimed at enabling people with disabilities to obtain an education that suits their abilities and ensuring their effective integration into society. It also highlighted the importance of providing with all the necessary tools and facilities to achieve success and obtain suitable job opportunities through the development of effective educational policies and programs. The transition stage from secondary to post-secondary education is a crucial stage in their lives and they need support and assistance not only in the academic aspect, but in all aspects, through the provision of appropriate transport services programs to meet their needs and demands and help them overcome all obstacles. Saudi universities accommodate many male and female students with disabilities, who receive transition services. The numbers and percentages of these students vary in different universities, but all of them annually accept many people with disabilities in different specializations, because these students have special needs that distinguish them from other students. To have stable university life, it is necessary to give special attention to the actual reality of their adjustment to university life. This research complements the research efforts in this field by attempting to bridge the knowledge gap related to services and adjustment to university life among students with disabilities. This research will not be limited to the identifying adjustment level among students but will go beyond it by identifying differences in its level according to different characteristics. Additionally, the study contributing to scientific knowledge on the subject of adjustment to university life among students with disabilities.

**Research Questions**

- Are there differences in the ability to adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to the academic year?
- Are there differences in the ability to adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to the type of disability?
- Are there differences in the ability to adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to gender (males, females)?
- Are there differences in the ability to adjustment to university life among people with disabilities depending on the university they are enrolled in?
**Research Objectives**

The study aimed at identifying the level of university adjustment among students with disabilities. Additionally, the study aimed at identifying the differences in the ability to adjust to university life according to the different characteristics of the research sample (gender, university, type of disability, academic year).

**Literature Review**

The study presented the most important Arab and foreign studies that dealt with adjustment to university life for people with disabilities and clarified the most important methodological aspects and the degree of agreement and difference with the available research. The study of Shaflot and Battal (2019) sought to identify the reality of transition services for students with learning difficulties in the secondary stage from the point of view of students and teachers, and to identify the extent to which transition services meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. The study sample consisted of 10 teachers and 117 students with learning difficulties. The researcher used the descriptive approach. The questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection. The study concluded that the study sample of teachers and students with learning difficulties believe that all transition services are provided to a moderate degree.

The Campsen study (2009) investigated the personal social and institutional factors influencing students with disabilities joining the university and the experiences of adjustment. The study used the qualitative approach by interviewing 9 students with disabilities and four university staff, a questionnaire was also used for the adjustment of students at the university, the study found that the most important personal factors affecting students with disabilities are motivation, independence and academic self-confidence, personal and family relations and participation in university activities were among the most important social factors, and institutional factors affecting students include the size of the educational institution, culture and support services, the study also showed that these factors combined significantly affect the adjustment processes of students with disabilities.

Sandra, Janiga and Costenbader (2002) conducted a study that aimed to find out the opinions of service coordinators for students with disabilities in 74 colleges and universities in the state of New York. It used the descriptive method, and the questionnaire was used as a data collection tool.
tool. The study found little satisfaction with transport services and rated students' readiness for self-advocacy as the greatest weakness of existing relocation services.

To find out the differences in the levels of adjustment at university between students with and without disabilities, Adams and Proctor (2010) conducted a study on a sample of 230 males and females. Half of them were students with disabilities and the other half were normal students. The questionnaire was used as a data collection tool. The study concluded that there are differences in the levels of adjustment between disabled and non-disabled students in favor of the non-disabled.

From the studies mentioned above its can be concluded that the previous studies aimed to find out the extent of the reality of transport services in educational institutions for students with disabilities including Shaflut and Al-Battal (2019), Al-Masry (2017), Janiga and Costenbader (2002), Adams and Proctor (2010). Some research aimed to know the differences of the adjustment levels between students with disabilities and normal students, such as Adams and Proctor (2010). Gillan and Coughlan (2010) also sought to identify the factors affecting the transition to university for people with disabilities and to know their adjustment experiences. Khatiba's study (2013) also tried to reveal the level of psychosocial adjustment among students with learning difficulties and slow learners in Amman Governorate. What made this study different is that it aims to know the reality of transition services and their relationship to adjustment to university life among students with disabilities in the city of Riyadh. The descriptive approach was used in most of these studies except the study of Gillan and Coughlan (2010) and the study of (Kampsen (2009) which followed the qualitative approach. The current study used the descriptive approach. The sample sizes and types varied in the previous studies.

As for the current study, a stratified random sample was selected, consisting of (254) male and female students with disabilities in public universities in the city of Riyadh. This study agreed with all previous studies in the use of a questionnaire as a data collection tool, except for the study (Kampsen (2009), which used the interview as the main tool for data collection, and the study of Gillan and Coughlan (2010), which used the semi-structured interview as the main tool for data collection.

**Research Methodology**
This study used the descriptive approach as it describes the reality of the adjustment to university life for students with disabilities. A descriptive design was implemented through using survey method for data collection. In addition to that, it includes the classification, analysis, interpretation and comparison processes that this approach provides. The importance of this approach is noticed in describing the reality of adjustment to university life for students with disabilities.

**Study Population**

The population of the study consists of (719) male and female students with disabilities studying in the following public universities in Riyadh: (King Saud, Imam Muhammad bin Saud, and Princess Noura bint Abdul Rahman. According to the official statistics issued by (The Authority for the Care of Persons with Disabilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2021), the number of students was distributed among the three universities as follows: King Saud University (326) males and females, Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University (230) males and females, and their number at Princess Nourah bint Abdul Rahman University was (163) female students.

**Table 1.**

Distribution of the Study Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Students No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King Saud</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sample of the Study**

The research sample consisted of (254) male and female students with disabilities who are enrolled in public universities in the city of Riyadh. Because of the different characteristics of the study sample and its heterogeneity in gender and type of disability, as well as the difference in university and school year, the stratified random sample will be the most appropriate sample. As for the required sample size, according to Morgan's table to determine the sample size, the appropriate sample number for the total population size in this study is equal to (254) individuals.
**Study Measurements**

The researchers designed the study tools for data collection. Adjustment to university life scale was developed and modified from the relevant literature. After collecting the initial items for the study, scales were given to a group of experts to review and examine the face validity of the items and suggestions were given and corrected accordingly. Each scale measured by several items that were scaled on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha was used to examine the internal reliability of the university adjustment scale with ($\alpha = 0.955$).

**Study Results**

The first hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences in achieving adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to the gender difference (male, female). To test the hypothesis, a t-test was used for independent groups, as shown in Table (2). Table (2) showed that the third hypothesis was partially accepted, as there were no differences between males and females in the total degree of adjustment to university life with all its dimensions, except for the dimension of adjustment to colleagues’ behavior at university, which showed that there are differences between males and females in favor of the best direction for males. This means that males are more adaptable than females to university mates. This may be due to the fact that the university environment is similar in characteristics between female and male branches and may also be due to the fact that the laws and legislations related to people with disabilities in force in universities are almost identical, and that the differences are noticed in the operational aspects such as programs and activities. This result is consistent with the findings of Al-Ghunaim (2016), Al-Hattab (2015), and Khatibeh (2013) who indicate the absence of these gender differences in achieving adjustment.

**Table 2.**

Differences of Adjustment Variable based on Gender Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Male M</th>
<th>Male SD</th>
<th>Female M</th>
<th>Female SD</th>
<th>t. value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>22.609</td>
<td>3.189</td>
<td>20.676</td>
<td>4.146</td>
<td>4.095</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>21.687</td>
<td>3.540</td>
<td>20.799</td>
<td>4.155</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Major</td>
<td>34.557</td>
<td>4.829</td>
<td>33.568</td>
<td>5.769</td>
<td>1.486</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Second Hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences in achieving adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to the difference in the type of disability. To test the validity of this hypothesis, a one-way analysis of variance test was conducted to examine the differences between the following types of disabilities (learning difficulties, motor disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment and other disabilities), as shown in table (3).

**Table 3.**

ANOVA Results on the Adjustment Variable based on Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean-Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>535.119</td>
<td>1.291</td>
<td>0.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within group</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>414.484</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) shows that the third hypothesis is rejected as there were no statistically significant differences between the types of disabilities (learning difficulties, motor disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, and other disabilities) in the total degree of adjustment to university life with its various dimensions; hence, all types of disabilities have one degree of adjustment to university life. This may be due to the fact that the programs and services offered at the university are designed in a way that takes into account the needs of each student according to the type and severity of his disability, and this was explained by the guides for centers for people with disabilities in public universities (King Saud University, Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, Princess Noura bint Abdul Rahman University). This result agreed with the findings of Adams and Proctor (2010) study, but it differs with the result of Khatibeh (2013), which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the level of adjustment according to the different type of disability.
The Third hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences in the achievement of adjustment to university life among people with disabilities according to the difference in the school year. To test the validity of this hypothesis, a one-way analysis of variance test was conducted to examine the differences between the following school years (first, second, third, fourth, and fifth years) as shown in Table (4).

Table 4.
ANOVA Results on the Adjustment Variable based on Study Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean-Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total University Adjustment</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4174.515</td>
<td>11.726</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between groups</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>356.020</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) shows that the hypothesis three was accepted. It was found that there were statistically significant differences in achieving adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to the difference in the school year, whether in the total degree of adjustment to university life or its various dimensions. This result is consistent with the result of the study of Al-Ayed et al. (2010), which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in adjustment according to the different educational level. However, it differs from the conclusion of Al-Ghunaim study (2016), which indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of adjustment according to the different educational level.

Fourth Hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences in the achievement of adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, according to the difference in the university. (King Saud, Imam Muhammad bin Saud, and Princess Nourah bint Abdul Rahman University), as shown in Table (5).

Table 5.
ANOVA Results on the Adjustment Variable based on University Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean-Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total University Adjustment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4296.925</td>
<td>11.147</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>between groups</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>385.471</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>254</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table (5) shows the acceptance of the hypothesis four. It was found that there were statistically significant differences in achieving adjustment to university life among people with disabilities, depending on the different type of university, both in the total degree of adjustment to university life or its different dimensions.

**Conclusion**

The study aimed to identify the level of adjustment to university life among students with disabilities in public universities in the city of Riyadh. It also aimed to identify the differences in achieving adjustment to university life according to the different characteristics of the research sample (gender, university, type of disability, academic year). To measure these differences, a questionnaire was designed by the researchers to collect data, the first questionnaire is concerned with adjustment to university life among students with disabilities. It contains five dimensions: (adjustment to colleagues, adjustment to professors, adjustment to academic specialization, adjustment to activities, adjustment to services and facilities). A number of results were concluded and indicated that there are no statistically significant differences between the types of disabilities (learning difficulties, motor disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, and other disabilities) in the total degree of adjustment to university life with its various dimensions.

**Limitations and Recommendations**

This study has some limitations. The study limited to sample size; therefore, future studies should increase the sample size and extend to universities students in Saudi Arabia. Another limitation related to data collection method where quantitative method was used, and the result could be extended by implementing mix and qualitative methods. Based on the research results, the researchers recommend to benefiting from the findings of the research by specialists in transition services and expanding efforts to develop transition services at the secondary level, with a focus on monitoring the extent to which students with disabilities achieve their goals of joining the university. Furthermore, exchange of experiences between universities in the city of Riyadh in the field of activities and programs offered to students with disabilities and designing appropriate counseling programs to assist students with disabilities in achieving adjustment to
university life. Finally, conducting more studies on students with disabilities at the university level in other variables such as: (life skills at the university, cognitive integration), and conducting more studies on students with disabilities in other universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

**References**


Kampsen, A. (2009). *Personal, social, and institutional factors influencing college transition and adjustment experiences for students with psychiatric disabilities.*


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