# Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Adjustment among College Students: Moderating Role of Psychological Capital

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#### Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate the impact of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) on the academic adjustment of college students, with the moderating role of Psychological Capital (PsyCap). It was hypothesized that SRL and PsyCap would positively correlate with college students' academic adjustment. Additionally, it was hypothesized that Psychological Capital would moderate the relationship between SRL and academic adjustment. A sample of 250 students (129 males and 121 females) was selected for the study. The Academic Adjustment Questionnaire, the Psychological Capital Questionnaire, and the short version of the MSLQ were used to measure the study variables. The correlation matrix indicated that SRL positively correlated with the academic adjustment of college students. Factors of Psychological Capital were also positively correlated with academic adjustment. The results further revealed that SRL was a significant predictor of academic adjustment. Moreover, Psychological Capital moderated the relationship between SRL and academic adjustment.

Keywords: Self-regulated Learning, Academic Adjustment, Psychological Capital

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## 1. Introduction

Developing learning habits and adapting learning tactics to new learning situations is a huge issue for the students (Bruinsma, 2004). Ineffective teaching practices can make learning harder for them. It is also well recognized that the adoption of self-organized learning practices is linked to academic success (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). Independent learners who can employ a range of learning methodologies to attain specific learning goals are referred to as self-learning or self-study (Kitsantas et al., 2008). SRL explains the process of self-learning in which students use self-directed goals and tactics to transform their mental capacities into instructional processes (Zimmerman et al., 2015). Pintrich (2000) demonstrates SRL as "Learners define learning goals and analyze, monitor, and assess their thoughts, motives, and behaviors in this productive and constructive program. They attempt to control, guided by their own ambitions and objectives as well as the pressures of the situation e.g. the region's characteristics". Setting objectives, tracking, adopting techniques, and measuring achievement are all regarded to be ways for self-disciplined students to better their education (Boekaerts et al., 2000). SRL is regarded by researchers as only a collection of technical abilities in a specific personality attribute or area of expertise and is viewed as a framework for achieving effective learning goals by including self-awareness, knowledge, and practice (Zimmerman, 2002).

SRL is also no longer seen as an "integrated" structure that students either use or do not use. Instead, the concept of modern academics develops a number of tactics, some of which students can use to convey their circumstances and motivation level when discussing a certain problem (Kaplan, 2008). The interaction of self-awareness, motivation, emotions, and attitudes with the learning context and environment leads to intellectual learning, academic accomplishment, and success (Ben-Eliyahu, 2019).

In addition to SRL, self-efficacy, or belief in one's abilities, is crucial for self-discipline and achieving educational goals (Shea&Bidjerano, 2010). Psychological Capital (PsyCap) also plays a significant role, encompassing confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans et al., 2007). PsyCap enhances motivation and performance, encouraging students to persevere and achieve their goals (Honicke& Broadbent, 2016). Focusing on positive attributes and strengths,

PsyCap helps individuals achieve better results through internal motivation (Luthans et al., 2007).

Together, SRL and PsyCap form a powerful combination that supports students' academic adjustment and success, helping them navigate the challenges of their educational journey with confidence and resilience.

Learners who use self-directed learning adopt systematic strategies for thinking, motivation, and behaviour (Zusho, 2017). Effective learning methods, effort management, and problem-solving are crucial for classroom performance (Pintrich, 2004). These metacognitive control strategies, linked to self-regulation, directly impact academic success (Schunk &Ertmer, 2000).

On the other hand, Psychological Capital (PsyCap) includes confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience, and is vital for effective learning and motivation (Carmona-Halty et al., 2019). First-year students must develop self-guided learning habits to adjust to new environments, but often their high school preparation is insufficient (Brink worth et al., 2008). However, many first-year students lack the self-regulatory abilities expected in university settings, which can lead to academic difficulties (Abott-Chapman & Kilpatrick, 2001; Cook & Leckey, 1999).

Motivational beliefs and self-regulatory learning are critical for academic success. Self-efficacy, a predictor of procrastination, shows that self-confidence impacts students' ability to manage setbacks and delays (Wäschle et al., 2014; Klassen et al., 2008).

Schunk & Zimmerman (1998) proposed a threedimensional SRL model: forethought, performance/volunteering, and self-reflection. Competent students set clear goals and monitor their learning processes to maximize outcomes (Wolters, 2003). Selfdiscipline significantly influences academic performance and adjustment to a new educational environment (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994).

Academic adjustment is crucial for academic success and satisfaction with the educational environment (Mohamed, 2012; Clark & Hall, 2010). Many first-year students struggle with this transition, leading to lower academic performance and higher dropout rates (Hassel & Ridout, 2018; Crisp et al., 2009). Effective academic reform requires understanding the challenges students face and providing the necessary support (Kamphorst et al., 2013; Aspelmeier et al., 2012; Kuh et al., 2006).

Psychological tools, such as PsyCap, help students improve their academic skills and overall well-being. PsyCap, encompassing confidence, hope, optimism, and

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resilience, has been shown to positively impact GPA and student engagement (Siu et al., 2014; Vanno et al., 2014). High PsyCap levels are associated with greater internal motivation and academic success.

Academic change is influenced by several factors, including students' learning capacity, motivation, perception of their educational goals, related strategies for their achievement and satisfaction with the learning environment. Academic adjustment is the ability of a learner to find balance and satisfaction while addressing academic issues effectively (Al-Khatib et al., 2012). It has been suggested that to gain knowledge, pupils require high levels of intellectual and critical thinking, as well as scholarly writing (Muhammad, 2012). For many high school and college students, transitioning from high school to college or from college to university can be a stressful process. For some first-year students, academic adjustment has been difficult since their pre-college experience has prevented them from adequately preparing for college. Students should adjust from high school subjects to college and higher education institutions by learning new teaching methods (Abdullah et al., 2009). Individuals' lives alter dramatically once they graduate from high school and enroll in high school, college, or university. Their decision to attend college or university will be based on developmental and educational considerations (Friedlander et al., 2007). Students' lives are complicated by issues that arise both inside and outside of the college or university (Nazione et al., 2011). As a result, undergraduate academic exchanges are confusing and mystifying to students. Small teaching sessions with good opportunities for personal interaction with instructors have piqued the interest of students. Thus, according to the observations of Brink worth et al. (2009), Students must adjust to their new learning environment by developing independent reading habits. The focus of the study was on how students employed various tactics to maintain self-control while at work. The psychological framework in which people make sense of their individual meaning and preserve that character - as a learner - is provided by the social and cultural role of the "learner" in a given setting (Kaplan & Garner, 2017). Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) is now thought to be a collection of modest, interconnected processes. These include strategic planning, effective technology for organizing, processing, and storing information, observation and meta-cognition, volunteer labor and supervision, time management, and supportive beliefs (e.g., performance, goal setting,

atmosphere, as well as feelings of pride and satisfaction in someone's work. There are numerous crucial steps to mastering self-control. The meta-analysis of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) revealed that effort and time management, as well as learning environment management, had the greatest observed GPA prediction among all the learning strategies included in the MSLQ (Credé & Phillips, 2011). In addition, Wintre et al., (2011) According to the study, first-year students who maintained their high school GPA in their first year of college had superior time management abilities than those who had a lower GPA (Hurtado et al., 2007) Student time management skills were 8 revealed to be a significant predictor of educational transformation. Because they are familiar with the formal and controlled state of higher education, first-year students typically do not have the selfregulatory abilities necessary of a university campus, contrary to university lecturers' expectations (Cook &Leckey 1999). This lack of regulatory ability may cause issues with university renovations. Abott-Chapman et al., (1992) studies demonstrated that students with poor reading skills are more likely to struggle in school. As a result, we anticipated that self-regulatory study behavior would aid in improvement and success. Several evidencebased studies have looked into the shortcomings in motivating beliefs and self-regulatory learning. However, the research uses inspiring ideas or self-control to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and self-regulation. Your efficiency has been discovered through procrastination (Wäschle et al., 2014). Selfassurance is a predictor of setbacks, and it results in persons who can self-report and report a minor setback. Despite the fact that self-efficacy is a predictor of procrastination, several studies show only a minor link between efficiency and procrastination. Independence is viewed as a "manifestation of your specific beliefs in the background," rather than a personality trait (Klassen et al., 2008). This could explain why earlier findings in an unclear or unspecified domain reveal a weak or moderate association between efficiency and delay. While selfconfidence is a key component of procrastination, researchers are also looking into experimental anxiety. Summarising that SRL and PsyCap are critical for students' academic adjustment and success. These factors support students in navigating educational challenges

attention, and detail). Creating a conducive learning

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with confidence and resilience, leading to improved academic performance and personal growth.

This study aims to examine the relationship between selfregulated learning, the components of psychological capital (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience), and academic adjustment among college students. Specifically, it seeks to explore whether psychological capital moderates the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic adjustment. It is hypothesized that self-regulated learning, psychological capital, and academic adjustment will exhibit a positive association. Furthermore, the moderating role of psychological capital is expected to strengthen the relationship between selfregulated learning and academic adjustment, suggesting that higher levels of psychological capital may enhance students' ability to adapt academically through selfregulated learning strategies.

Figure I: Conceptual Framework of the Study



## 2. Method 2.1 Research Design

The study employs a co-relational descriptive research approach and is quantitative in nature. This research approach was appropriate for establishing the relationship between variables that reflected people's answers.

## 2.2 Sample

A convenient sampling strategy was employed to recruit participants for the study. A total of 250 Muslim students, newly enrolled in their first year and first semester of BS programs at various colleges, were selected. The participants ranged in age from 16 to 20 years

## 2.3 Instrument(s)

**2.3.1** Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (AAQ); The Academic Adjustment Questionnaire is a 28-item scale and is an abbreviated form of the Hebrew Students

Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) devised by Baker and Siryk (1989) to determine the four distinct aspects of subject preparation. AAQ has 28 items and contains four scales. The suitability of items is assessed on a nine-point Likert scale from "Very suitable" (1) to "Not suitable at all" (9). The first section consists of six items measuring the academic achievement of students and their educational needs (items included are: 2, 8, 15, 19, 21, 22); the second section contains eight elements that assesses the ability of a student's community in relation to their interactions with their peers (items included are: 3, 5, 7, 11, 16, 20, 24, 25); the third category contains seven elements for students' emotional and personal well-being (items included are: 1, 4, 9, 12, 14, 17, 26); The final scale has seven items that measure the satisfaction of students with their institution (items included are: 6, 10, 13, 18, 23, 27, 28). Item number 1, 4, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 26 are reverse coded. The score range of AAQ is 28-252, where high scores indicate high levels of educational attainment. The reliability of the original SACQ was .92 - .95, in total, and in the following four levels: academic .81 - .90, social .83 – .90, personal – emotional .77– .86, and institution .85 – .91. The AAQ reliability scores here were absolutely high .86; and four categories: education .61, social .78, personal-emotional .85, and institutional.77.

**2.3.2** *Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ);* Psychological capital is a constructive concept that reflects a positive attitude towards human development (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans& Youssef, 2004). Generally, it is considered within the domain of positive psychology, as well as in the case of particularly positive behavioural tests. It is built on four skills: (1) Self-efficacy: the ability to work effectively and the confidence to make the effort necessary to succeed in the execution of challenging tasks; (2) optimism: a positive definition of success in present and future; (3) hope: preserving goals, and where necessary, redirecting the paths to goals for success; (4) resilience: the ability to step back and forth when faced with difficulties and difficulties to achieve success (Luthans et al., 2007).

PCQ comprises 12 items whose validity is assessed on a Likert rating of five points from "I strongly disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). It consists of four scales of six objects, each designed to test one of the four targeted mental skills: Self-efficacy (items included are: 1, 2, 3), hope (items included are: 4, 5, 6), Optimism (items included are: 7, 8, 9) and Resilience (items number are 10,

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11, 12). The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the all-inone questionnaire was .93. Similarly, the reliability of the PCQ used in the current study was very high .89

2.3.3 Motivated **Strategies** for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ); The short version of MSLQ was used to evaluate thematic learning. This means how much control the student has over himself. There are 44 statements in this scale which will be examined on a seven-point letter scale which is completely wrong (1) to perfectly correct (7). The MSLQ includes a set of scales and measures the application of students' motivational beliefs and learning strategies (cognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral strategies) from a psychological perspective. The MSLQ consists of two phases: the stimulus phase and the learning strategy phase. The Motivation Phase is divided into three categories: value, expected time, and test hassle. The components of a learning strategy consist of three types of scales: psychological, meta-cognitive, and behavioral strategies. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is as follows: 0.88 scale; 0.81 from autonomy; 0.81 by advertising; by selfregulation, reasoning strategy, self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and tested anxiety scale 0.75, 0.76, 0.75, 0.70, and 0.77, respectively. Reliable coefficients show that MSLQ demonstrates considerable reliability (Pintrich& de Groot, 1990).

## 2.4 Procedure

The data was collected using three questionnaires based on the variables under consideration. These surveys as well as scales were created using Google form, which provided all of the essential data. The participants were all well-informed about the research's objective, methodology, and timing. To ensure their voluntary participation, informed consent was provided. All of the information gathered was examined using statistical software.

## 2.5 Data Analysis

SPSS version 22 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics was run for demographic information of the participants. To obtain the reliability coefficient of the scales, reliability analysis was used. Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis was used to determine the relationships between the study variables. Simple Regression Analysis was used to examine the impact of IV on DVs. Simple Moderation Analysis was used

through PROCESS (by Andre Hayes) in order to demonstrate the moderator's effect.

## 2.6 Ethical Consideration

The APA ethical standards were followed to avoid any ethical violations during the study.

### 3. Results

Table1 show the gender-wise distribution of the participants i.e. 121 respondents (48%) were Female and 129 participants (52%) were Male. One hundred and fifteen (46%) participants were from Rural background and 135 (54%) were from Urban background.

Table 3, Correlation matrix indicates that Self-regulated learning has a positive relationship with Academic adjustment of the college students (r=.49, p<0.01). Self-efficacy and Academic adjustment are positively correlated (r=.62, p<0.01). Hope and Academic adjustment have a significant positive correlation (r=.58, p<0.01). Optimism and Academic adjustment are positively correlated (r=.61, p<0.01). Whereas Resilience and Academic adjustment are positively associated (r=.66, p<0.01).

Table 4, indicated that Self-regulated Learning is a significant predictor of Academic Adjustment,  $\beta$ = -.13, *F*=125.2, *p*<0.05. The value of  $R^2$  (.60) explained 60% variance in Academic adjustment accounted for by Self-regulated Learning. Interception effect shows that Psychological Capital moderates the relationship of Self-regulated Learning and Academic Adjustment significantly  $\beta$ = .01, *F*=125.2, *p*<0.05. *Table 1* 

# Frequencies and percentages of demographic variables of Study (N = 250)

=====				
Variables	Category	f	%	
Gender				
	Male	129	52	
	Female	121	48	
Area of Residence				
	Rural	115	46	
	Urban	135	54	

Note: *f*= Frequency, %= Percentage.

### 4. Discussion

It was hypothesized that there will be a positive association between Self-regulated Learning, Factors of Psychological Capital (Self-efficacy, Hope, Optimism, Resilience) and Academic Adjustment among college

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students. Hypothesis was accepted and results indicate that Self-regulated Learning, Self-efficacy, Hope,

Optimism, Resilience and academic adjustment have a positive correlation.

Table 2,

<i>Psychometric Properties for MSLQ, AAQ, PCQ and the subscales of PCQ (N=250)</i>					
Scale	М	SD	Range	Cronbach's $\alpha$	
MSLQ	213.5	46.7	44 - 308	0.96	
AAQ	151.5	36.3	28 - 252	0.91	
PCQ	48.3	12.52	12 - 72	0.90	
Self-Efficacy	12.2	3.58	3 - 18	0.72	
Норе	16.3	22.64	4 - 24	0.78	
Resilience	11.6	11.8	3 - 18	0.70	
Optimism	8.2	6.4	2 - 12	0.67	

*Note.* MSLQ = Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, AAQ = Academic Adjustment Questionnaire, PCQ = Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Variables	М	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 SRL	213.5	46.7	-	.49**	.26**	.26**	.25**	.25**
2 AA	151.5	36.3		-	.62**	.58**	.66**	.61**
3 Self- Efficacy	12.2	3.58			-	.74**	.69**	.67**
4 Hope	16.3	22.64				-	.68**	.59
5 Resilience	11.6	11.8					-	.73**
6 Optimism	8.2	6.4						-

#### Table 4

Moderating effect of PsyCap on Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Adjustment (N=250)

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI		p
		LL	UL		
MSLQ	13	.11	34	.08	.00
PCQ	.17	.45	72	1.05	.71
Intercept	.01	.00	.00	.01	.00
R <sup>2</sup>		.60			
F		125.2*			

\*p<.05

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The results align with previous literature, such as Cazan (2012), who found a strong correlation between self-regulation and academic adjustment. Studies by Cazzan&Aniitei (2010) and Kornell & Matcalfe (2006) also support the notion that self-regulation is vital for academic success and adjustment.

Academic self-efficacy is recognized as an important predictor of undergraduate achievement, as reported by Pintrich and de Groot (1990). Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to perform tasks effectively. Anderson et al. (2016) shows that self-efficacy impacts academic adjustment, with higher self-efficacy linked to better academic success. Studies by Bae (2015) and Warsito (2009) further support the positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic adjustment, indicating that students with higher self-efficacy are better adjusted academically.

Hope is another important factor, acting as a mediating variable that influences mental well-being. Studies by Ghavidel and Zarei (2018) and Shirrmohammadi et al. (2010) highlight the positive correlation between hope and life satisfaction. Hopeful individuals are better at setting and achieving goals, leading to better educational and mental well-being. Optimism is also linked with improved academic adjustment, as observed by Perera and McIlveen (2014), with optimism associated with better coping and mental adjustment to stress.

Resilience significantly affects healthy adjustment to life stressors, as documented by Friborg et al. (2003). Resilient students are more likely to participate in school activities and adapt to challenges, leading to academic success and well-adjustment, supported by studies like those of Tusaie and Dyer (2004) and Martin and Marsh (2006).

The second hypothesis stated that the relationship between Self-regulated Learning and Academic Adjustment will likely to be moderated by Psychological Capital among College Students. Interception effect shows that Psychological Capital moderates the relationship of Self-regulated Learning and Academic Adjustment significantly  $\beta$ = .01, F=125.2, p<0.05; thus, accepting the hypothesis.

This aligns with findings by Komarraja and Nedlar (2013), suggesting that undergraduates with high PsyCap are more hopeful, goal-oriented, and persistent in achieving their goals despite obstacles. Self-study strategies, combined with high PsyCap, enhance learning and academic performance.

### 5. Conclusion

This study has explored the relation between selfregulated learning, psychological capital and academic adjustment among college students. On the basis of results, it can be said that self-regulated learning and psychological capital are some important factors for better academic adjustment and academic performance as well. By understanding these factors, teachers and counselors can identify speculative students and increase those students' academic achievement. Teachers and counselors can workon improving the levels of psychological capital in order to maximize the adjustment of their students.

## Limitations

This research has several limitations. The sample was restricted to students from Punjab Province, suggesting that a nationwide study could provide a more comprehensive view. Additionally, the study focused solely on college students, so including university students could offer further insights. Further, the research did not account for additional demographic variables that might affect the outcomes.

### Recommendations

Future research could benefit from a broader scope by conducting similar studies on a larger scale, extending the sample to include high school and university students beyond just college students. Including qualitative analysis would provide a more nuanced understanding of the findings, offering detailed narratives that complement quantitative data.

### Implications

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the impact of self-regulated learning on the academic adjustment of college students, suggesting areas for policymakers and educators to target for improved academic performance. Understanding the role of psychological capital in enhancing self-regulated learning and academic adjustment can help in developing strategies to apply these concepts in various educational contexts. Moreover, this study sets a foundation for future research by establishing baseline data and highlighting the importance of psychological capital and self-regulated learning in academic settings.

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