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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Peer-Support, Self-efficacy, University Adjustment, University Life, Gender Differences.	Objective: To find relationship between peer-support, self-efficacy, and adjustment to university life among first-year students. Study Design: It was quantitative correlational research design. Place & Duration: The study was conducted among students of Superior University from 2025-2026. Methodology: To select 150 1st year university students aged 18–24 years non-probability convenient sampling technique was used, including 45.3% males and 54.7% females. Data were collected using standardized measures of peer support, self-efficacy, and university adjustment. Relationships, gender disparities, and determinants of university adjustment were investigated using multiple linear regression, Pearson correlation, and independent-samples t-tests. Results: Descriptive findings showed peer support ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.70$) and university adjustment ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.56$), while self-efficacy was moderate ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.57$). Peer support and university adjustment were significantly positively correlated, according to Pearson correlation analysis ($r = .44$, $p < .001$) and between self-efficacy and university adjustment ($r = .52$, $p < .001$). Gender differences were significant for peer support and university adjustment, with female students scoring higher than males, while no significant gender difference was found in self-efficacy. Conclusion: Peer support and self-efficacy had positive associations with university adjustment for first year students. Enhanced self-belief and peer relationships may help students to cope better with academic, social and emotional challenges.
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Introduction

The transition from school or college to university is a key developmental period during which students encounter new academic challenges, social relationships, responsibilities and expectations. (1) Adjustment problems are especially common among university freshmen, who must adapt to new learning environments, establish new social networks, and become more independent. Successful adaptation to university life requires the capacity to manage academic demands, establish positive interpersonal relationships, and cope with emotional challenges within the university setting. The transition period can be challenging and may threaten students' academic performance, psychological well-being, social functioning and overall university experience.(2)

Peer support is one important factor that can help with successful adjustment. Peer relationships can provide emotional support, practical help, companionship and exchange of experience for students. Supportive peers can help students deal with feelings of loneliness, academic pressures and increase their sense of belonging in the first year of university. (3)Therefore, students with higher perceptions of peer support may find it easier to cope with the challenges of entering a new academic and social environment. Conversely, lack of peer support may lead to social isolation and difficulties adjusting to university life. (3, 4)

Another important psychological factor is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to perform well in activities and also to cope well with difficult circumstances. (5) Students with higher self-efficacy generally face social and academic problems with more confidence, persist after failures, and develop useful coping methods. (6) At university, self-efficacy may help students cope with academic responsibilities, adapt to new learning environments, and maintain motivation in spite of setbacks. Thus, students with higher self-efficacy beliefs may be better adjusted to the transition to university. (7)

Peer support and self-efficacy may also be complementary social and psychological resources interacting with each other. Peer support provides external help and encouragement, while self-efficacy is an internal belief in one's ability to handle challenges. (8) It is particularly important to understand these factors for first-year students, as adjustments during this time may impact their future academic engagement, relationships, and overall university experience.(9)

Although existing literature shows the importance of social support and self-efficacy in student well-being and academic functioning, to understand their specific contribution to adjustment among first-year university students further research is required. (10)

In particular, examining whether peer support and self-efficacy are associated with adjustment, whether they differ according to gender, and whether they significantly predict university adjustment can give a better understanding of the transition to university.(11) Thus, the current study looks at how first-year students' adjustment to university life, peer support, and self-efficacy are related. It investigates whether peer support and self-efficacy predict students' adjustment to

university life, looks at gender differences in these variables, and focuses on the links between peer support and adjustment as well as between self-efficacy and adjustment.

Material & Method

To examine the relationships between peer support, self-efficacy, and adjustment to university life among first-year Bachelor's students quantitative correlational research design was used among first-year students enrolled in universities during the academic year 2025, with data collected through an online questionnaire distributed via university-affiliated platforms, classroom announcements, social media groups, and email. The study population was 150 students, 18-24 years old, of whom 68 (45.3%) were males and 82 (54.7%) females. Non-probability convenience sampling was used to select the participants. Eligibility criteria were: first year of a Bachelor's degree; aged 18-24 years; understood the language of the questionnaire; and provided informed consent. The study excluded students who were in their second year, who were seniors, who did not give consent, who gave significantly incomplete answers, and who were unable to understand the items of the questionnaire. Data were gathered via a demographic information sheet, the 22-item Peer Support Questionnaire (PSQ), the 10-item General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES), and the 36-item Adjustment to College Scale (ATCS). The questionnaire was estimated to take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson product-moment correlation, independent-samples t-tests, and multiple linear regression were performed. Ethical approval and institutional permission were obtained prior to data collection. Participants gave informed consent and were told that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranty during the whole study. The data collected were safely stored and used solely for academic and research purposes.

Results

Descriptive statistics were used to assess the peer support, self-efficacy and university adjustment of the 150 first year students. Students reported moderate levels of self-efficacy ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.57$), relatively high levels of peer support ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 0.70$) and university adjustment ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.56$). The internal consistency of all study measures was satisfactory to excellent, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .96 for peer support, .86 for self-efficacy, and .86 for university adjustment.

Pearson correlation analysis was executed to evaluate the between variables. The finding revealed significant positive associations between peer support and university adjustment ($r = .44$, $p < .001$) and between self-efficacy and university adjustment ($r = .52$, $p < .001$). Self-efficacy showed a stronger association with university adjustment than peer support. A significant positive correlation was also observed between peer support and self-efficacy ($r = .31$, $p < .01$). These findings supported both hypotheses that peer support and self-efficacy would be positively associated with university adjustment.

Independent-samples *t*-tests were performed to evaluate gender differences in peer support, self-efficacy, and university adjustment. A significant gender difference was found in peer support, $t(148) = -3.12, p = .002$, with female students reporting higher peer support ($M = 35.79, SD = 6.01$) than male students ($M = 32.11, SD = 5.44$). A significant gender difference was also observed in university adjustment, $t(148) = -2.34, p = .021$, with female students reporting higher adjustment ($M = 66.71, SD = 9.28$) than male students ($M = 62.45, SD = 9.12$). However, the gender difference in self-efficacy was not statistically significant, $t(148) = 1.24, p = .217$, with male students reporting $M = 29.02 (SD = 4.35)$ and female students reporting $M = 27.98 (SD = 3.89)$.

Discussion

The study examined the relation between peer support, self-efficacy, and adjustment to university life among first-year students. The findings demonstrated that both peer support and self-efficacy were significantly and positively associated with university adjustment. Results suggest the importance of social and psychological resources in students' adjustment to university life. Peer support was positively related with university adjustment ($r = .44, p < .001$), meaning that students who reported more peer support tended to be better adjusted. Positive peer relationships can provide emotional support, companionship, practical help, and a sense of belongingness that can help students cope with the academic, social and emotional demands of university life. This result is in line with earlier studies demonstrating that peer relationships and social support contribute positively to first-year university adjustment (12-14). Thus, opportunities for positive peer interaction may be particularly valuable during the early stages of university life.

Self-efficacy demonstrated an even stronger positive relationship with university adjustment ($r = .52, p < .001$). This indicates that students having more trust in themselves to manage difficulties can easily adjust to university demands. More confident students may be more willing to approach university challenges, persist when faced with setbacks, and develop effective coping strategies. This outcome resembles with social cognitive theory found in 1997 by Bandura and previous research demonstrating the importance of self-efficacy in college adjustment (15, 16). The stronger association between self-efficacy and adjustment in the present study suggests that internal beliefs about personal capability may be particularly important during the transition to university.

A significant positive relationship was also found between peer support and self-efficacy ($r = .31, p < .01$). This indicates that students experiencing stronger peer support may also develop greater confidence in themselves to manage with university requirements. Such positive peer interactions can provide encouragement, feedback, shared experiences and examples of how others cope with challenges. Such positive peer interactions can provide encouragement, feedback, shared experiences and examples of how others cope with challenges. (17)

The study also showed significant gender differences in peer support and university adjustment, with female students reporting higher scores on both measures than male students. There was no significant difference in self-efficacy between male and female students ($p = .217$). This

demonstrates that gender differences could be more significant in perceived peer support and adjustment than in students' confidence in dealing with challenges. These findings, however, should be taken with caution as gender differences may vary in different cultural and educational contexts.(18)

The findings have practical implications for universities. Institutions can support first-year students by developing peer-mentoring programs, student support groups, orientation activities, and opportunities for meaningful peer interaction. In addition, interventions aimed at strengthening self-efficacy through academic skills training, goal setting, positive feedback, and problem-solving activities may help students cope more effectively with university demands. Combining social support with strategies that strengthen students' confidence may therefore promote better adjustment. (19)

The use of convenience sampling and a relatively small sample of 150 students limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should use larger and more diverse samples and longitudinal designs to examine changes in peer support, self-efficacy, and adjustment throughout the university transition. Overall, the findings suggest that supportive peer relationships and strong self-efficacy are important factors associated with successful adjustment among first-year university students.(20)

Conclusion

The findings indicate that peer support and self-efficacy are positively associated with adjustment among first-year university students. Supportive peer relationships may help students manage academic, social, and emotional challenges, while greater self-efficacy enables them to cope confidently with academic responsibilities and unfamiliar environments. Overall, both peer support and self-belief appear to be important factors contributing to better academic, social, and emotional adjustment to university life.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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