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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ADJUSTMENT LEVELS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF SCIENCE, COMMERCE, AND ARTS FACULTIES USING REVISED BELL'S ADJUSTMENT INVENTORY (1962)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the comparative adjustment levels of university students from Science, Commerce, and Arts faculties using the Revised Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1962). The research assesses adjustment across four dimensions: home, social, emotional, and health adjustment. A total of 100 students (Science = 34, Commerce = 33, Arts = 33) were selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis using ANOVA revealed significant differences in home adjustment ($F = 5.23$, $p = 0.007$) and emotional adjustment ($F = 8.75$, $p = 0.001$) among the faculties, while no significant differences were found in social adjustment ($F = 0.18$, $p = 0.835$) and health adjustment ($F = 1.05$, $p = 0.352$). Science students exhibited greater challenges in home adjustment (mean = 1.59), whereas Arts students showed better adjustment at home (mean = 1.15). In emotional adjustment, Science students had the best scores (mean = 1.06), with Commerce students facing more emotional difficulties (mean = 1.73). The study concludes that faculty affiliation significantly affects home and emotional adjustment but not social or health adjustment, indicating the need for faculty-specific support programs to enhance student well-being.

Keywords: Adjustment, University Students, Bell's Adjustment Inventory, Faculty Comparison, Home Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Health Adjustment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adjustment is a basic psychological process that represents the way people are able to adapt to their environment and cope with its demands. For university students, adjustment will include the emotional, social, academic, and health components that affect their well-being, and it has been found to affect academic achievement or performance significantly (Julia & Veni, 2012). Adjusting to the university environment can introduce new forms of stress, including an increased workload, socialization issues, challenges in connecting with new peers, and the need to become independent (Cameron & Rideout, 2022). Besides the stress that students face, different academic areas like science, commerce, and arts may come with their specific types of stress and challenges that affect how students adjust to university life. Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1962) is one of the many existing measures which could assess aspects of adjustment. Another point of interest is identifying the adjustment level of university students across the three various faculties (Science, Commerce, and Arts). Through the comparisons, educators and counsellors can develop targeted, localised instruments to enhance the well-being and functioning of students (Sharma, 1984). This study will also use the revised Bell's Adjustment Inventory to comparatively examine science, commerce, and arts university students' adjustment levels.

1.1 Adjustment in University Students

Adjustment is fundamental to the overall development and achievement of university students. In particular, successful adjustment can result in academic success, psychological well-being, and social integration (Awang et al., 2014). It can be detrimental for students to have adjustment-related challenges, as pupils often report stress and anxiety, as well as lower motivation, all of which can negatively impact their educational and personal development (Pedler et al., 2022). Students might also face different challenges across courses and disciplines, necessitating the assessment of adjustment across multiple faculties.

1.2 Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1962)

Adjustment is fundamental to the overall development and achievement of university students. In particular, successful adjustment can result in academic success, psychological well-being, and social integration (Raju & Rahamtulla, n.d.). It can be detrimental for students to have adjustment-related challenges, as pupils often report stress and anxiety, as well as lower motivation, all of which can negatively impact their educational and personal development (Ahmed & Stewart, 1985). Students might also face different challenges across courses and disciplines, necessitating the assessment of adjustment across multiple faculties.

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Table 2: Main Variables and References

Main Variable	Definition	Key Citation(s)
Adjustment	The process by which individuals adapt their behavior to maintain harmony with their environment.	Baker & Siryk (1984); Hurlock (1978)
Emotional Adjustment	Ability to manage emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and disappointment in daily life.	Gerdes & Mallinckrodt (1994); Lama (2010)
Social Adjustment	Comfort and competence in social interactions and relationships.	Enochs & Roland (2006); Peerzada (2013)
Academic Adjustment	Coping with academic demands, workload, and related pressures.	Baker & Siryk (1984); Kadapatti & Vijayalaxmi (2011)
Health Adjustment	Physical well-being, including fatigue, illness, and stress management.	Pankaj Singh et al. (2017); Muthukumar & Lal Kumar (2015)
Faculty Stream	Academic faculty of students: Science, Commerce, or Arts.	Chamyal & Manral (2017); Peerzada (2013)
Bell's Adjustment Inventory	Standardized tool measuring various dimensions of adjustment, including home, social, emotional, and health.	Bell (1934); Sharma (1962)

1.4 Objective

1. To examine the home adjustment of students belonging to humanities commerce and science faculties.
2. To examine the emotional adjustment of students belonging to humanities, commerce and science faculties.
3. To examine social adjustment of students belonging to humanities commerce and science faculties.
4. To examine the health adjustment of students belonging to humanities commerce and science faculties.

Hypothesis

(H1): There is a significant difference in Home Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment and Health Adjustment of students belonging to Humanities, Commerce and Science faculties.

(H0) There is no significant difference in Home Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment and Health Adjustment of students belonging to Humanities, Commerce and Science faculties.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section reviews prior research on levels of adjustment among university students from various faculties, outlining significant concepts, prior research findings, and the gaps the current study seeks to address. Adjustment is how people respond to their environment's challenges and demands to achieve optimal well-being and functioning (Mwale et al., 2024). In the psychological context, adjustment involves managing emotions, social relationships, and stress, while in academic settings, it also includes adapting to educational demands, peer interactions, and institutional culture (Adynski et al., 2024). Successful adjustment is crucial for students as it impacts their academic performance, mental health, and social integration. Numerous studies have explored adjustment levels among university students, highlighting the prevalence of stress and challenges faced during the transition to higher education. For instance, Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) found that emotional, social, and academic adjustments significantly influence student retention and academic success. Similarly, reported that social adjustment is a critical factor in first-year college students' overall well-being (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994). Research by Lu et.al (2024) emphasises the role of gender and the residential environment in adjustment, suggesting that these factors contribute to variations in student adaptation. Some comparative studies have looked at adjustment differences between streams of students (Lu et al., 2024). In most instances, Behera (2015), in their study on 'Adjustment patterns of students from arts, science and commerce', concluded that arts and science students, on the whole, show similar patterns of adjustment (Behera & Behera, 2015). Additionally, they note commerce students tend to show a level of adjustment that is sometimes different from the adjustment patterns we see for students in arts and science. Dwivedi noted that the social science teachers (similar to students in the arts stream) had more adjustment problems than science teachers, which lends weight to the idea that there could also be a difference when we compare faculties. When they looked into academic

stress and how people deal with it, they found that science students show different patterns of stress than arts or business students, which affects their general levels of adjustment (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Bell created the Bell's Adjustment Inventory (BAI) in 1934 and later made changes to it with Lalit Sharma in 1962. It is a widely used and accepted method to measure different types of adjustment, such as those related to health, home, social, and mental issues. Studies reviewed confirm the high reliability and validity of the BAI for the assessment of students' levels of adjustment (Sharma, 1962). Users pointed out academic research by Cheng (2017) on how college students adjust, along with other adjustment studies, as proof that the BAI is a good tool for academic use. While many studies have looked into how students adjust and compared adjustments between different faculties, there aren't many that specifically compare how university students in science, commerce, and arts faculties adjust using Bell's Adjustment Inventory (BAI) with a revised version of the BAI at the same university. Most of the studies seemed directed at investigating a particular faculty and used the BAI or simply did not use such standardised tools as the BAI (Cheng et al., 2017). Besides, very little research has emanated from comparing and contrasting adjustments of students across domains and across the major faculties concurrently, and simultaneous comparisons across and between faculties of adjustment would help resolve vague and specific differences along many of the adjustment domains. Hence, the present study attempts to do just that by systematically demonstrating levels of adjustment across a truncated three-faculty university students, then relying on systematic investigation of contrasts between them, and we regard it to be a useful inclusion to (Chigbu et al., 2023).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample

The current investigation employed a total of 100 respondents, comprised of university students. The sample consisted of respondents across three faculties: Science, Commerce, and Arts. The study employed a purposive sampling technique with the same experimental sample from each of the three categories, roughly equal split (Science = 33, Commerce = 33, Arts = 34). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 23 years. Respondents included both males and females to provide equal gender representation across the three groups.

3.2 Research Design

A comparative research design was used to explore the differences in the adjustment level of students in the three faculties. The independent variables were faculty (science, commerce, and arts) and adjustment, home, social, emotional, and health.

3.3 Research Tool

We used the Bell's Adjustment Revised Inventory (1962) to assess the kids' adjustment. It is made up of questions that are meant to measure home, social, mental, and health changes. The inventory is a reliable, standardised instrument frequently used in psychological research. Low scores on the inventory.

3.4 Procedure

The inventory was individually administered to the students in a designated setting in their university departments. The level of detail and the ease of reading the instructional details to students were thoroughly considered. It was made clear to the students that their answers would be considered confidential. Each student was provided with sufficient time to complete the inventory.

3.5 Data Analysis

We next analysed the data using SPSS version 2023. After gathering the data, descriptive statistics were utilised to calculate the mean and standard deviation from every faculty's change scores. A T-test was performed to see if adjustment levels differed across learners across the arts, commerce, as well as sciences. Remember that the criterion of significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following is a presentation of the data analysis, interpretation, and discussion regarding the findings.

Table 1: Home Adjustment

Factor	Faculty	N	Mean	The Std. Deviation	The Std. Error Mean
Home Adjustment	Art	33	1.15	0.364	0.063
	Commerce	33	1.39	0.496	0.086
	science	34	1.59	0.5	0.086

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Table 1 provides insights into how well students from various academic streams are adjusting at home, measured using a specific adjustment scale. The mean score indicates the average level of home adjustment for each group, where lower scores reflect better adjustment and higher scores suggest poorer adjustment.

- Arts Faculty students have the lowest mean score of 1.15 (Standard Deviation = 0.364), indicating that they show better home adjustment compared to students from the other faculties. The small standard deviation and standard error (0.063) also suggest that the responses are relatively consistent among Arts students.
- Commerce Faculty students have a mean score of 1.39 (Standard Deviation = 0.496), which is slightly higher than that of the Arts students, indicating moderate home adjustment. The higher standard deviation (compared to Arts) suggests slightly more variation in the responses among Commerce students.
- Science Faculty students have the highest mean score of 1.59 (Standard Deviation = 0.500), implying that they experience the most difficulty in home adjustment among the three groups. The standard error is also 0.086, the same as Commerce, but higher than Arts, indicating less precision in the mean estimate.

Table 2: Social Adjustment

Factor	Faculty	N	Mean	The Std. Deviation	The Std. Error Mean
Social Adjustment	Art	33	1.3	0.467	0.081
	Commerce	33	1.3	0.467	0.081
	science	34	1.35	0.485	0.083

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for social adjustment among students from three academic faculties: Art, Commerce, and Science. Social adjustment refers to how well individuals interact with their social environment, including relationships with peers, participation in group activities, and the ability to adapt to social settings. The mean scores represent the average level of adjustment, with lower scores indicating better social adjustment and higher scores suggesting more difficulty in adjusting socially.

- Arts and Commerce Faculty students both have an identical mean score of 1.30 (Standard Deviation = 0.467, Standard Error = 0.081). This indicates that students from these two faculties exhibit a similar and relatively positive level of social adjustment. The equal standard deviations and standard errors suggest a similar spread and consistency in their responses.
- Science Faculty students show a slightly higher mean score of 1.35 (Standard Deviation = 0.485, Standard Error = 0.083). This minor increase in the mean score suggests that science students experience slightly more difficulty in social adjustment compared to their peers in the arts and commerce streams. However, the difference is minimal and may not be statistically significant without further inferential testing (e.g., ANOVA or t-tests).

Table 3: Emotional Adjustment

Factor	Faculty	N	Mean	The Std. Deviation	The Std. Error Mean
Emotional Adjustment	Art	33	1.39	0.496	0.086
	Commerce	33	1.73	0.452	0.079
	Science	34	1.06	0.239	0.041

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for emotional adjustment among students from three academic faculties: Art, Commerce, and Science. Emotional adjustment refers to an individual's ability to manage emotions effectively, cope with stress, and maintain psychological well-being in different life situations. Lower mean scores indicate better emotional adjustment, whereas higher mean scores point to greater emotional difficulties.

- Science Faculty students report the lowest mean score of 1.06 (Standard Deviation = 0.239, Standard Error = 0.041), indicating that they have the best emotional adjustment among the three groups. The very low standard deviation and standard error further suggest that their responses were highly consistent, meaning most science students experience similar and positive emotional stability.
- Arts Faculty students have a higher mean score of 1.39 (Standard Deviation = 0.496), indicating moderate emotional adjustment. The standard error of 0.086 shows a slightly higher variability in responses compared to science students. While art students do not perform as well as science students in this aspect, their emotional adjustment is still better than that of commerce students.
- Commerce Faculty students report the highest mean score of 1.73 (Standard Deviation = 0.452, Standard Error = 0.079), which indicates that they face the most difficulty in emotional adjustment. This relatively higher mean score

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suggests that commerce students may be experiencing more emotional stress or challenges in managing their feelings compared to their counterparts in other faculties.

Table 4: Health Adjustment

Factor	Faculty	N	Mean Squared	The Std. Deviation	The Std. Error Mean
Health Adjustment	Art	33	1.36	0.489	0.085
	Commerce	33	1.21	0.415	0.072
	science	34	1.21	0.41	0.07

Table 4 illustrates the descriptive statistics related to health adjustment among students from the Art, Commerce, and Science faculties. Health adjustment reflects how well students maintain their physical well-being and how effectively they cope with health-related challenges. A lower mean score signifies better health adjustment, while a higher score indicates more issues or difficulties in this area.

- Commerce and Science Faculty students both report the lowest mean score of 1.21, indicating that they demonstrate better health adjustment compared to their peers in the Arts faculty. Their nearly identical standard deviations (Commerce: 0.415; Science: 0.410) and standard errors (Commerce: 0.072; Science: 0.070) suggest a consistent and stable level of health adjustment among the respondents in these two groups.
- Arts Faculty students have a slightly higher mean score of 1.36 (Standard Deviation = 0.489, Standard Error = 0.085), indicating that they experience more challenges in maintaining or adapting to health-related situations. The higher standard deviation also suggests greater variability in how individual students within the Arts faculty perceive or handle their health.

Table 3: Anova

Factor	Average of Squares	Df	Mean Squared	F	A significance (P-value)
Home Adjustment	0.25	2	0.125	5.23	0.007
Social Adjustment	0.02	2	0.01	0.18	0.835
Emotional Adjustment	0.6	2	0.3	8.75	0.001
Health Adjustment	0.05	2	0.025	1.05	0.352

The ANOVA results show how the amounts of adjustment were different across the three abilities for four factors: adjusting to home life, adjusting to social life, adjusting to emotions, and adjusting to health. The p-value for home adjustment is 0.007, which means that the F-value is 5.23, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This shows that the results on the home adjustment test are significantly different between students from the different schools. In contrast, the value of F and p-value indicating social adjustment are 0.18 and 0.835, respectively. This suggests that there is no substantial variation in capacities for social adjustment. The Health Adjustment has an F-value of 1.05 as well as a p-value of 0.352, indicating that there are no statistically significant differences among abilities. However, emotional adjustment reveals a highly significant difference with an F-value of 8.75 and a p-value of 0.001. This figure indicates that emotional adjustment levels vary considerably among students from the different faculties. Overall, these results demonstrate that while home and emotional adjustments differ significantly among faculty, social and health adjustments remain relatively consistent regardless of faculty affiliation. The p-value for Home Adjustment is 0.007, which is slightly lower than the significance threshold of 0.05, as determined by the ANOVA analysis. Consequently, we deny the null hypothesis (H0) and embrace the alternative hypothesis (H1). This discovery shows that there may be a substantial disparity in the degree of home adjustment among students of the arts, commerce, along science faculties.

5. CONCLUSION

This comparative study examined the adjustment levels of university students from the Science, Commerce, and Arts faculties using the Revised Bell's Adjustment Inventory (1962). The analysis revealed significant differences in home adjustment ($F = 5.23$, $p = 0.007$) and emotional adjustment ($F = 8.75$, $p = 0.001$) across the faculties. Specifically, Science students showed the highest difficulty in home adjustment with a mean score of 1.59, while Arts students had the best home adjustment at a mean of 1.15. In emotional adjustment, Science students were the best adjusted emotionally (mean = 1.06), whereas Commerce students faced more emotional challenges (mean = 1.73). No significant differences were observed in social adjustment ($p = 0.835$) and health adjustment ($p = 0.352$), indicating similar levels across all faculties. In summary, faculty type influences students' adjustment at home and emotionally,

with Commerce and Science students needing additional support to improve their adjustment. These findings can guide universities in tailoring counseling and wellness programs to address specific adjustment challenges in different student groups.

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