

Optimism and its Relationship with Academic Achievement among University Students

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Abstract

The current research aims to identify optimism and its relationship to academic achievement among university students. The research was limited to a sample of (200) male and female students at the University of Baghdad, for the academic year (2023-2024). To achieve the research objectives, the researcher adopted the optimism scale of (Abdul Karim and Al-Douri, 2010) consisting of (28) paragraphs with a five-point scale. The researcher extracted the psychometric properties of the scale from validity and reliability, as she used the Cronbach's alpha equation and the reliability coefficient reached (0.85). As for academic achievement, the researcher relied on the general student average for the year (2023-2024). After analyzing the data, the results showed the following.

- 1.The research sample has a good level of optimism
- 2.The research sample has a good level of academic achievement
- 3.There is a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables.

In light of the research results, the researcher recommends a set of recommendations and suggestions.

Keywords: Optimism, academic achievement, university students.

Optimism plays a significant role in a person's life, especially for university students, as it affects their mood and behavior. This influence, in turn, reflects on their actions, relationships with others, and academic performance. When a student is optimistic, this

positively impacts their academic level. However, if they lack belief in optimism, it negatively affects their academic performance. There is a direct positive correlation between optimism and students' academic achievement: the more optimistic students are, the higher their

academic performance, and thus, their academic achievement also rises.

The current era has introduced new variables in a fast-changing world where knowledge and technology encroach on all aspects of life, with rapid and significant developments in all fields. These rapid developments, affecting Arab societies as well as Western ones that have preceded them in terms of advancement, necessitate a focus on learning (Al-Ghariri, 2007: 24). Academic achievement remains the primary factor determining performance and competence in school work, representing the average grades students achieve across their studies. Academic achievement reflects the amount of knowledge or skill gained through training and previous experiences, especially in university education, which is a critical phase in a student's life, making them an active member of society. However, several factors influence students' academic abilities, such as family, social, and school-related factors, which significantly affect university students' academic performance.

Optimism plays a crucial long-term role in university life, affecting a person's mood, behavior, relationships, and future thinking. It is no exaggeration to say that all positive activities in life—whether thinking, emotions, work, or study—are somehow related to optimism. The thoughts we hold and the feelings in our hearts greatly influence our perception of external reality (Asaad, 1986: 32). Optimism reflects a genuine positive outlook on life, whether in the present or the future, and is a key trait of successful individuals. It fosters hope, reassurance, and calmness, making it a path to health, happiness, well-being, and passion (Awad, 2021: 198).

Based on this, it can be said that university students may face new situations in their academic environment that cause them stress, overwhelming their ability to cope. When students generally feel that there is no connection between their efforts and the academic achievement they expect, this may lead to

behaviors indicating despair. As a result, they may lose the desire to continue working towards their studies and strive at university, potentially leading them to drop out. This has been confirmed by many studies (Scheier & Carver, 1985: 667).

Thus, the current research problem is identified as finding the correlation between optimism and academic achievement among university students, which can be summarized in the following question: Is there an interconnective relationship between optimism and academic achievement among university students?

The Importance of the Research:

Optimism in its vision and philosophy, when contributing its part to the educational process, represents a strong and significant addition as it provides the foundations for educational practices, assessment, and planning. It has a great impact on educational psychology compared to other psychological theories and approaches. Instead of psychopathology focusing on problems and disorders, positive psychology, with its focus on optimism, emphasizes perseverance and success. It also enhances protective factors like hope, optimism, and the ability to adapt, instead of focusing on the causes of disorders and problems that psychology has sometimes struggled to address. (Jaber Mohamed, 2013:281). The importance of optimism in positive psychology lies in the positive outlook on life and the belief in the possibility of fulfilling desires in the future, as well as the belief in the likelihood of good or positive outcomes rather than evil or negative ones (Scheier & Carver, 1985:667).

The university can help enhance students' positive feelings by increasing their well-being, their ability to think optimistically, and solve problems, while striving to make their behaviors more resilient and optimistic. The university also plays an important role in this aspect. (Younis, 2018:284).

Understanding the attitudes and personal perspectives of university students towards their

future, whether optimistic or pessimistic, is very important due to its significant impact on developing their personalities and future development plans, especially in this critical phase of Iraq's journey and the circumstances it has faced and continues to face. Moreover, knowing the percentage of optimists will help those concerned in developing future plans to address this reality. Specialists in this field point out that any process an individual wishes to accomplish requires a sufficient amount of vital energy, which is considered a raw energy that takes various forms—some physical, some mental, some emotional, some verbal, and some social. What prevents a person from mobilizing this energy is the lack of sufficient optimism to channel it into the required forms. Therefore, one needs motivation, which is optimism (Saad, 1986: 321). Furthermore, a successful person tends to be optimistic, as does a strong person, who also holds tightly to optimism, considering it a key element in shaping their personality. Optimism manifests in focusing on positive aspects when dealing with things, thinking of success rather than failure, progress rather than regression, and leaning towards confidence rather than hesitation and self-doubt, trusting in what they do. Optimism is the source of their energy and strength (Taha and Ali Khan, 1990: 367).

The importance of academic achievement, in general, lies in creating behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and social change in students, commonly referred to as learning. Learning is an internal and unseen process that results from changes in the student's cognitive structure and is recognized through academic achievement. Academic achievement is the outcome of learning and serves as a tangible indicator of its presence. Experts emphasize the importance of academic achievement to the extent that it fulfills behavioral, emotional, and psychomotor goals. The more this achievement influences comprehensive developmental outcomes, the more its effectiveness is positive, with its educational significance being reflected in

students' behavior for the better, helping them interact with their environment. Achievement is a reflection of improvement in the flow and productivity rates of the educational system in society, and a decrease in wastage rates, ensuring better returns from educational expenditures. It is an important indicator of the efficiency of the system and a facilitator in meeting the community's needs for trained human resources. Moreover, high academic achievement among students is the best guarantee for realizing the principle of equal educational opportunities, one of the fundamental principles of modern democracy in education. This principle is not only about ensuring an individual's enrollment in educational institutions but also enabling them to successfully continue and achieve high academic performance in the level they have entered. (Al-Khazraji, 2010: 65). University students represent a human force that reflects the potential of any country's future. Therefore, tremendous efforts are made to create the right environment to ensure their success. The university stage is one of the most important phases in an individual's life. Attending university provides greater employment opportunities and helps in building the future. It also aids in acquiring numerous social, cognitive, and emotional skills and fosters positive thinking and excellence. Enrolling in university is a crucial path for personal growth, development, and progress for the student. However, the university environment is not without challenges and pressures, which can affect the student and interact with their personal circumstances and the demands of the university, including all its educational, academic, and social aspects. University life is one of the primary concerns for students (Bothelji, 2014: 46).

The importance of this research can be summarized in two aspects:

Theoretical Importance:

1. This research is one of the few studies that has addressed and combined the variables of optimism and academic achievement in the Iraqi society.

2. The importance of the research sample, which consists of university students, as they are a significant segment of society.

3. Highlighting two important variables—optimism and academic achievement—that explain many ways in which students think about their future and their success in university education.

Practical Importance:

1. Providing specialists and researchers in the field of positive psychology with the results of the study, helping them design programs and strategies that enable students to acquire positive emotions in an organized manner.

2. Providing a tool to measure optimism among university students, which can be used by researchers in this field.

3. Highlighting the importance of the relationship between optimism and academic achievement and its positive outcomes.

Research Objectives: The current research aims to identify:

1. Optimism among university students.

2. Academic achievement among university students.

3. The strength and direction of the correlation between optimism and academic achievement among students at the University of Baghdad.

Research Scope: The current research is limited to students of the University of Baghdad, from the morning study program, for the academic year 2023-2024.

Definition of Terms:

First: Optimism:

Defined by:

Seligman (1990): A set of skills related to how an individual dialogues with oneself when experiencing frustration or disappointment (Jackson, 2007:8).

Al-Ansari (1998): A hopeful outlook towards the future that makes an individual expect the best, anticipate good things, and aspire for success while disregarding anything less (Al-Ansari, 1998: 15-16).

Theoretical Definition: The researcher adopted Seligman's (1990) definition as she used his theory as a reference framework in her study.

Operational Definition: The total score obtained by the respondent from their answers on the optimism scale used in the current research.

Second: Academic Achievement: Defined by:

Abu Allam: "The level of acquisition an individual attains or the degree of success they achieve in academic subjects, measured by the score the individual obtains in the test" (Abu Allam, 2004: 305).

Hamed Zahran: "The acquisition of university knowledge and skills through systematic scientific methods" (Al-Fakhri, 2018:80).

Theoretical Definition: The result of what a student gains from the educational process, in terms of knowledge and experiences, due to their effort, which can be measured by achievement tests at the end of the academic year.

Operational Definition: The student's grade point average (GPA) for the 2023-2024 academic year, calculated from all the subjects studied.

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies:

This section of the research addresses two main aspects:

1. The first aspect includes a theoretical framework on optimism and academic achievement.

2. The second aspect discusses previous studies on both variables.

First Axis / Theoretical Framework:

1. Optimism:

Historical Overview of Optimism: Optimism has long been a variable over which researchers have disagreed regarding its definition and measurement, making it difficult for psychologists, especially those interested in personality, to establish an acceptable theoretical concept for "optimism." Some view it as a personality factor, while others see it as a general trait, a bipolar trait, an attitude, a tendency, or a

value or motive. Others consider it part of personality or a personal disposition, and so on. Regardless of these divisions, psychologists agree on one thing: every individual belongs to a particular category (Al-Ansari, 1998: 19). Hippocrates, the Greek physician, was the first to classify people based on temperament into four categories: phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine, and melancholic. He attributed the differences in temperament to chemical compositions in the body, based on the theory of Empedocles (450 BC) regarding the four elements of the universe (earth, air, fire, and water) (Al-Daoud, 1997: 24).

The Roman physician Galen (130-200 AD), as Al-Issa (1973) notes, categorized temperaments based on glandular secretions, considering them the basis for both temperament and illness (Al-Issa, 1973: 53). In the psychological heritage concerning the study of optimism, William James is credited with highlighting this concept. He viewed it as a criterion for an individual's expectation of consistent success in response to events, situations, or tasks. James also introduced the concept of "Meliorism," which means the belief that the world tends toward improvement and that humans can help enhance it, a belief closely tied to the power of free will. For James, optimism is the belief in always achieving the best possible outcomes (Bird, 1986: P.153).

Theories Explaining Optimism:

1. Abramson's Theory: Abramson et al. introduced the "optimism bias" hypothesis, showing that optimism bias (unrealistic optimism) is more common among people not suffering from hopelessness, as those who are depressed tend to be more accurate than non-depressed individuals. Non-depressed individuals often exhibit an "illusion of control," believing they can control outcomes they actually have no real control over. Depressed individuals are less likely to generate this illusion. Research on optimism bias among the mentally healthy suggests errors in cognitive theories like Beck's cognitive distortion hypothesis. Clinical research, assuming accuracy

as the basis for healthy cognitive functioning, shows that both depressed and non-depressed people reveal biases and illusions, which correspond to previously perceived beliefs or schemas (Abramson et al., 2002, P.272).

2. Behavioral Theory: This theory suggests that optimism and pessimism can spread through imitation and mimicry, explained by the similarity in the symbols and signs of optimism and pessimism across different times and distant places. Behaviorists believe that optimism and pessimism are behaviors that can be learned through classical conditioning. Optimism and pessimism are conditioned responses: repeated association of a stimulus with a negative event can lead to pessimism, while associating a stimulus with something positive can lead to optimism (Muheisen, 2012: 14).

3. Seligman's Theory: Seligman's theory suggests that optimistic individuals have positive, selective language, thinking, and memory. Optimists use a higher proportion of words associated with hope and positivity, whether in writing or speech, and tend to remember positive events before negative ones, whereas the reverse is true for pessimists (Al-Yahofi, 2002:132). This theory also focuses on restructuring the learned helplessness model, emphasizing attribution styles that people use in response to negative life events. Seligman (1991) introduced the attribution style as an internal attribution model, where optimism is viewed as an explanatory style rather than a personality trait. According to this theory, optimistic individuals interpret negative events as temporary and isolated incidents, while pessimists view them as permanent and unchangeable. For example, optimists attribute failing an exam to unexpected or difficult questions, while pessimists attribute it to their own inability and lack of academic qualifications (Dighim, 2008: 100).

Discussion of Theories Explaining Optimism:

1. Abramson's Theory: This theory emphasizes that social support for people facing

challenging events protects them from hopelessness. Both material and emotional support from others positively affect individuals, and the negative events they experience influence their behavior and thought processes. Abramson also notes that those biased toward optimism are not suffering from hopelessness, as individuals with hopelessness tend to be more accurate than non-depressed individuals. Optimism is widespread among healthy individuals.

2. Behavioral Theory: This theory suggests that optimism can be learned through imitation or classical conditioning. Optimism is a conditioned response acquired by repeated exposure to positive events, while repeated exposure to negative events leads to pessimism.

3. Seligman's Optimism Theory: Seligman's theory proposes that the strategy of optimism involves positive thinking about how to solve problems and satisfy basic life needs. It also involves dealing with emotions positively, such as accepting life, being flexible, having a sense of meaning, contentment, and happiness. This strategy plays a significant role in fostering positive beliefs, alleviating the severity of problems, and helping individuals gain control over themselves and their surrounding circumstances to achieve personal and social balance in the face of environmental and material pressures. The researcher adopted Seligman's (1990) theory on optimism as it aligns with the correct interpretation of optimism by using general resources from positive psychology. It provides an effective approach toward life's continuity, even in stressful events, and enhances mental health against life pressures and challenging conditions faced by students.

Second: Academic Achievement

Concept of Academic Achievement:

Educational thinkers have differed in defining the concept of academic achievement, each according to their perspective, but they agree that it refers to the final outcomes that enable a student to move from one educational stage to another. Gablin defined it as a specific

level of performance and proficiency in schoolwork, assessed by teachers through standardized tests. Ibrahim described it as all the performance a student achieves in different school subjects, which can be measured by test scores, teacher evaluations, or both. Hauz viewed academic achievement as successful or distinguished performance in specific subjects, usually resulting from skill and hard work, often represented in the form of grades, points, or notes. It is the result a student achieves at the end of a study program (Moulai, 2004: 326). Fouad Abu Hatab explained academic achievement as the acquisition of information, skills, ways of thinking, changing attitudes and values, and modifying adjustment methods. This includes both desirable and undesirable outcomes. Al-Jalali defined academic achievement through the actual performance of an individual in the academic field, resulting from the cognitive mental activity of the student, which is measured by written, oral, or practical achievement tests administered at the end of the academic year (Al-Jalali, 2011: 25). Allam described academic achievement as the level of acquisition or success that an individual achieves in a specific subject or educational or training field (Allam, 2000: 305).

Factors Affecting Academic Achievement:

Attention to the student's physical, mental, psychological, and emotional well-being plays a vital role in influencing academic performance, stability, and psychological adaptation. Psychological characteristics, such as anxiety, stability, and physical and mental health, affect the student's academic achievement. Different factors vary in importance and have their specific impact on academic achievement, including:

1. Mental Factors:

Individual mental differences play a significant role in academic performance, as a student's success depends on their intellectual abilities, especially when these abilities align with their interests in the subject they study. Identifying good study habits alone is not enough to explain students' intellectual capabilities, as

some may study hard but perform poorly, while others may excel with less effort. Thus, intelligence significantly influences academic performance.

2. Psychological and Emotional Factors:

Frustrations and unmet motivations can lead some adolescents to depression, sadness, and isolation in class, affecting their attention and thinking ability. Emotional states like introversion, anxiety, tension, and fear can negatively impact academic achievement. Conversely, emotional balance and stability can increase academic performance (Zlouf, 2016: 256).

3. Physical Factors:

The student's overall health plays a role in academic performance, as poor physical health often leads to absenteeism, directly affecting academic achievement. Less physically mature students tend to fail more than their more mature and successful peers.

4. Family Factors:

Family issues, such as lack of harmony or understanding between parents, can affect a student's academic performance. Family environments filled with conflict, such as divorce, can cause emotional disturbances, leading to instability and insecurity, ultimately affecting a student's focus and academic success. On the other hand, students in stable and supportive family environments are more likely to perform well academically (Nasrallah, 2010: 55).

5. School Factors:

Many school-related factors can impact academic achievement, including:

Teaching Methods:

The method used by teachers to deliver content can significantly affect academic achievement. Choosing an appropriate method that suits students' intellectual abilities is essential for good academic performance.

Educational Tools:

Instructional aids, such as visual aids, make lessons more engaging and memorable, helping

students grasp the material more easily and enhancing their learning experience.

Social Atmosphere in School:

The relationships between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, play a significant role. Positive relationships, acceptance, and opportunities for success build students' confidence, encouraging better academic performance.

Curriculum: Academic performance is greatly influenced by the educational curriculum. If the curriculum is well-designed to cater to students' psychological and intellectual development, it helps them think critically and follow lessons effectively. Otherwise, an unsuitable curriculum can hinder academic progress (Al-Saray, 2020: 205-206).

Second Axis / Previous Studies:

1. Studies related to optimism

Study by Al-Dabbabi and Abdurrahman (2019):

The study aimed to reveal optimism in light of the Life Orientation Model and its relationship to self-efficacy and happiness among students of Jordan University of Science and Technology. The study sample consisted of 358 participants selected through convenience sampling. The results showed a statistically significant correlation between optimism and self-efficacy on one hand, and optimism and happiness on the other. Regarding gender differences in optimism, the results indicated no statistically significant differences attributable to gender. However, the study found gender-based differences in self-efficacy, favoring males, and differences in happiness based on gender and specialization, favoring females and students from scientific faculties (basic sciences).

2. Studies related to academic achievement

Study by Isa (2006):

The aim of the study was to explore the degree of the relationship between dimensions of self-concept and academic achievement among ninth, tenth, and eleventh-grade students in Jordan. The study also investigated the effects of gender, academic level, and achievement level

on self-concept. The sample consisted of 720 students (350 females and 370 males) from schools in Irbid, Jordan. The results indicated good academic achievement among students, and the correlation coefficients between self-concept dimensions and achievement were statistically significant across different study groups. There were statistically significant gender differences in two dimensions of self-concept: personality and morality. Differences in achievement level were significant in five dimensions: family relationships, social relationships, personality, academic dimension, and anxiety, as well as the overall score achieved on the scale.

Research Methodology and Procedures:

This part of the research presents the procedures followed by the researchers to achieve the objectives of the current research, including defining the research population, selecting the sample, preparing the research tool, verifying the psychometric properties, and determining the statistical methods.

- Research Methodology: The researchers adopted the descriptive correlational method, which goes beyond merely collecting and organizing data to interpreting the data and its significance, ultimately leading to a description of the phenomenon (Allam, 2009:23).

- Research Population: The research population consisted of students from Baghdad University, enrolled in the morning study for the academic year 2023-2024, totaling 45,281 students, of whom 16,920 were male and 28,361 were female.

- Research Sample: The research sample included 200 students, comprising 100 male and 100 female students, divided equally between scientific (100) and humanities specializations (100) for the academic year 2023-2024, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Sample Distribution by College and Gender.

| Major | Male | Female | Total |
|--------------------------------|------|--------|-------|
| Education Ibn Rushd (Averroes) | 25 | 25 | 50 |
| Arts | 25 | 25 | 50 |
| Engineering | 25 | 25 | 50 |
| Pharmacy | 25 | 25 | 50 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 200 |

Research Apparatuses:

Since the aim of the research is to identify optimism and its relationship to academic achievement, two tools were required:

First/ Optimism Scale: After reviewing studies on optimism, it was found that there were few studies in this area. An agreement was reached to adopt the (Abdul Karim and Al-Douri, 2010) scale to measure optimism. The scale consists of 28 items formulated in declarative statements, with a five-point scale (always applies to me, often applies to me, sometimes applies to me, rarely applies to me, never applies to me). The items are scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The maximum total score that can be obtained is 140, while the minimum total score is 28, with a hypothetical mean of 84.

Validity of Optimism Scale Items: The scale was presented in its preliminary form to a group of 10 specialists in educational and psychological sciences to evaluate the validity and clarity of the items, as well as their suitability for the scale. Based on expert responses, all items that were agreed upon by 100% of the experts were accepted.

Statistical Analysis of Optimism Scale Items: To conduct the statistical analysis of the optimism scale items, the scale, consisting of 28 items, was applied to a sample of 200 students. The statistical analysis was carried out as follows:

1. Discriminatory Power of the Items: After administering the scale to the sample and correcting the response forms, the discriminatory power of the items was determined. The scores were ranked from the highest to the lowest, and the two extreme groups, representing 27% of the

total sample, were identified (54 students in the high group and 54 students in the low group). The t-test for two independent samples was used to calculate the significance of the differences between the means of the two groups for each item. It was found that all items were statistically significant since their calculated t-values were higher than the tabulated t-value of 1.98 at a significance level of 0.05 and with a degree of freedom of 106.

2. Item-Total Score Correlation: Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to calculate the correlation between each item and the total score. All correlation coefficients were statistically significant at the 0.05 level, as their values were greater than the tabulated value of 0.139 with a degree of freedom of 198.

Psychometric Properties of the Scale: The scale's validity and reliability must be ensured for it to be usable. The researcher verified these properties as follows:

1. Validity: Two indicators of validity were extracted: face validity through expert opinions and construct validity, which was extracted through the indicators of discriminatory power and item-total score correlation.

2. Reliability: Cronbach's alpha method was used to calculate reliability. This method is based on the consistency of individuals' responses across test items. The alpha coefficient for the basic sample of 200 response forms was 0.85, indicating good reliability.

Final Description of the Scale: The optimism scale in its final form consists of 28 items, each with a five-point scale (always applies to me, often applies to me, sometimes applies to me, rarely applies to me, never applies to me). The items are scored 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The maximum total score is 140, the minimum total score is 28, and the hypothetical mean is 84.

Second/ Academic Achievement: The researchers measured the academic achievement

of the sample based on their final averages for the academic year 2023-2024, which is out of 100, with a hypothetical mean of 50.

Statistical Methods: The researchers used statistical methods calculated through the SPSS program, including:

The t-test for one sample: to identify the level of variables in the sample.

The t-test for two independent samples: to calculate the discriminatory power of the optimism scale items.

Pearson correlation coefficient: to calculate the correlations between item scores and the total score of the optimism scale, as well as to identify the correlation between the research variables (optimism, academic achievement).

Cronbach's alpha equation: used to calculate internal consistency reliability for the optimism scale.

Presentation, Interpretation, and Discussion of Results:

This section of the research will present the results and interpret them based on the set objectives:

First Objective: Identifying optimism among university students. To achieve this objective, the optimism tool, consisting of 28 items, was applied to the sample of 200 university students. The mean score of the sample on this tool was 102.345, with a standard deviation of 15.123. To confirm the difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean of 84, the t-test for one sample was used, which indicated a significant difference at the 0.05 level. The calculated t-value was 16.606, higher than the tabulated t-value of 1.96 with a degree of freedom of 199, indicating that the sample possesses a good level of optimism. Table (2) illustrates this.

Table (2) The t-test for one sample, showing the difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean of the optimism scale.

| Variable | Sample Size | Arithmetic Mean | Standard Deviation | Hypothetical Mean | Value of T | | Significance (0,05) |
|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | |
| Optimism | 200 | 102,345 | 15,123 | 84 | 17,161 | 1,96 | Function |

The result of this objective can be interpreted in light of Seligman's theory, which postulates that the formation of an optimistic outlook in university students plays an important and positive role in their psychological, social, educational, and academic lives, as well as in all their future behaviors and interactions with themselves and others. This optimism also influences the plans they draw for the future, which are all linked, in one way or another, to the optimism they possess. Furthermore, optimism involves interpretive strategies for the events an individual experiences, creating a type of positive thinking that reflects on the individual's emotions, as the individual is a unified whole.

The findings of this study are consistent with the results of the study by Abdul Karim and Al-Douri (2010) and the study by Al-Dabbabi and Abdul Rahman (2019). The researcher interprets this result by suggesting that optimistic expectations regarding events will help

individuals achieve their goals instead of losing hope in achieving them. This result reflects the students' desire for their studies and their ambitions, and it also indicates their capability.

Objective Two: Identifying academic achievement among university students.

To achieve this objective, the researcher relied on the overall average for the academic year (2023-2024) of the research sample consisting of 200 university students. The mean overall average of the research sample was calculated to be 74.588, along with a standard deviation of 11.675. To confirm the difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean of 50, the t-test for one sample was used, which indicated a significant difference at the 0.05 level, as the calculated t-value was 23.703, which is higher than the tabulated t-value of 1.96 with a degree of freedom of 199. This indicates that the sample possesses a good level of cognitive self-regulation, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3) The t-test for one sample showing the difference between the sample mean and the hypothetical mean of academic achievement.

| Variable | Sample Size | Arithmetic Mean | Standard Deviation | Hypothetical Mean | Value of T | | Significance (0,05) |
|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| | | | | | Calculated | Tabulated | |
| Optimism | 200 | 74,588 | 11,675 | 50 | 23,703 | 1,96 | Function |

The result of this objective can be interpreted as follows: individual differences in cognitive abilities play a significant role in academic performance, where a student's success depends on their mental capacities, especially if these abilities align with their interests and desires regarding the subject they are studying. Recognizing various good study habits among students is not sufficient to explain their cognitive abilities; some may exert effort without achieving good academic results, while others may be lazy yet capable of obtaining high academic scores. This suggests that the variable

of intelligence clearly contributes to influencing academic performance.

Moreover, students who live in a stable and secure family environment with understanding support are encouraged to study and prepare for learning, enhancing their ability to grasp and understand the academic subjects, thus leading to good academic achievement. The findings of this study align with the results of the study by Qatami (2000) and the study by Eissa (2006).

The researcher attributes this result to the prevailing social academic environment, referring to the relationships among members of

the academic community, including the relationship between teachers and learners and among the learners themselves. If these relationships are positive, characterized by acceptance and opportunities for fulfilling their needs and instilling a sense of achievement and success, this enhances their self-confidence and awakens their senses and hope, thereby contributing to good academic performance. Conversely, if the environment is negative, it adversely affects students' academic achievement.

Objective Three: Identifying the correlational relationship between optimism and academic achievement among university students.

To verify this objective, the researcher took the responses of the research sample on the optimism scale and their final grades. The researcher then employed Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the results are presented in Table (4).

Table (4) The relationship between optimism and academic achievement.

| Level of significance | Correlation value between optimism and academic achievement | Value of T | | Quantity |
|-----------------------|---|------------|-----------|----------|
| | | Calculated | Tabulated | |
| Function | 0,655 | 11,909 | 1,96 | 200 |

It is evident from the above table that the value of the correlation coefficient between optimism and academic achievement has reached (0.655). To determine the significance of the relationship, the researcher used the t-test for the significance of the correlation coefficient, and the calculated t-value was (11.909), which is greater than the tabulated value of (1.96) at a significance level of (0.05) and with degrees of freedom (198). This relationship is significantly positive, meaning that an increase in a person's optimism corresponds to an increase in their academic achievement. This can be explained by the fact that an optimistic person is always smiling, has a positive mindset, views difficulties as mere learning experiences, sees the bright side of life, and faces pressures positively, making them less susceptible to stress. Optimism is associated with both emotions and cognitive aspects as well as self-esteem, and it affects an individual's performance, leading to positive events that motivate the individual and help them to empower themselves, persevere, prepare, and effectively confront challenges in the long term, while also expecting high success.

Conclusions:

- The research sample demonstrates a good level of optimism based on their responses to the research tool.
- The research sample shows a good level of academic achievement based on the results obtained.
- There is a positive correlation between optimism and academic achievement, meaning that as optimism increases, academic achievement also rises.

Recommendations:

1. Develop university curricula to include materials that help reinforce the development of optimism in students.
2. It is necessary for the teaching staff in the Ministry of Higher Education to employ methods and strategies that contribute to increasing students' academic achievement and encourage them to exert the necessary effort to achieve success.
3. The Ministry of Higher Education should organize courses and workshops aimed at enhancing the experiences of the teaching staff, which would benefit the educational process.

Suggestions:

1. Conduct a study on optimism and its relationship with certain variables such as goal orientation and decision-making ability.

2. Conduct a study on academic achievement and its relationship with certain variables such as psychological well-being and thinking styles.

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