



**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VALUE CONFLICT AND
ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT AMONG STUDENTS AT THE HIGHER
INSTITUTE OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (KSAR SAÏD)
UNIVERSITY OF MANOUBA, TUNISIA**

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Abstract:

This study aimed to identify the impact of value conflict a negative social process that involves exposure to two opposing, contradictory concepts and requires violation of at least one of the values on the academic adjustment of students at the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” of “University of Manouba”. Two questionnaires were designed to measure: 1) the extent to which students experience value conflict and 2) students’ levels of academic adjustment in terms of curriculum, goals, time management and personal relationships. The questionnaire was administered to a random sample of 739 students. Participant responses to these questionnaires indicate average levels of value conflict and academic adjustment. Results reveal a moderate level of value conflict among the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” students with the highest level found in the economic domain, followed by the social domain and cultural domain in third among. In terms of academic adjustment, students reported a moderate level, indicating some difficulties in adjusting to the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” life. Academic adjustment levels were highest in relation to students’ goals, followed by personal relationships, which are closely related areas.

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1. Introduction

Values contribute to the dynamic systems of social work; as carriers of psychological energy, they represent cultural investment and operate in a majority of life aspects (Rokeach, 2008). Values inform the principles of both individuals and collectives, and adherence to or defiance of those principles may yield psychological impacts, either positive, as seen in self-satisfaction, or negative, manifested in feelings of guilt and remorse. Hence, positive or negative energy and corresponding atmospheres emerge from one’s value-guided perceptions of what constitutes right versus wrong. Moreover, values affect human relationships, as they shape attitudes, motives, and aspirations, and may manifest as laws and programs of social organization (Zulfaqar, M., & Saadipour, I., 2009) that ultimately inform societal customs, habits, and traditions. Consequently, values play a significant role in shaping social structure as well as creating and maintaining culture (Rokeach, 2008). Societal strengths and weaknesses are determined not only by material objectives, but also by moral and ethical standards that prevent social systems from collapsing (Vickers, 1968). Thus, values are regarded among the most important and influential drivers of social behavior (Parsons, 1968).

Philosophers and scholars have long debated the origins and sources of values, with views varying greatly according to individual beliefs and schools of thought. Those who align with the idealist tradition attribute values to divine sources; while others believe values derive from the outcomes of human experience (Dewey, 1937) or from society itself (Durkheim, 1961). Such contradictory and diverse views may not be discussed at length, particularly among younger generations, in the interest of respecting varied ideas and beliefs and avoiding judgment. However, negotiating value disparities is more complicated in the context of higher education, as students in the midst of transformative years of their early adulthood face life-altering choices that may shape their academic careers; consequently, value conflicts emerge.

Value conflict is a negative social process that occurs when an individual is exposed to two opposing, contradictory concepts that dictate different behaviors, thereby requiring that at least one of the values be violated. When conflicting values cannot be reconciled, tensions rise, resulting in unstable behavior and anxiety (Kemmelmier, 2001). Durkheim (1961) coined the term *anomie* to describe a situation in which society struggles to provide moral guidance to its members (Macion & Gerber, 2010). Merton’s strain theory extends Durkheim’s *anomie* concept by suggesting that dysfunctional social structures may actually compel citizens to violate laws (Adler & Laufer, 1999). Though crime is not the primary focus of this study, it is critical to note that there are consequences associated with failure to fully comprehend societal structures or resolve internal conflicts, both in and out of a university setting.

Universities play a significant role in shaping students' ideologies, goals, and consciences, as well as fostering a sense of belonging. The university is a microcosm of society that reflects the qualities and dynamics of interactions both in and out of the classroom. Values and attitudes form the foundation of university life (Hershman, D., 2001). Universities act as important and effective drivers of societal change by teaching students how to critically reflect on philosophy, values, and culture, and to embrace change. To do so, universities must seek to address economic and social issues that directly influence students' values and avoid conflicts between the values espoused and those promoted by other sources (Kantek, F., & Gezer, N., 2009), including family, home and regional communities, religious institutions, and the media. Students' social identities, which may be rooted in sectarianism, fanaticism, or other ideas that do not reflect the progressivism of a university setting have been shaped over the students' lifetimes, and thus cannot be modified overnight (Kantek, F., & Gezer, N., 2009).

The university experience may function as a double-edged sword, acting both as a critical driver of social change and a mirror reflecting value conflicts that may hinder a student's ability to adjust to university life. Social adjustment involves conforming one's behaviors to align with others', particularly by following traditions and fulfilling social obligations (Nasser, 2004). More generally, social adjustment necessitates achieving a state of balance with the environment by alleviating tensions while also avoiding value conflict (Hughes, J. N., & Cao, Q., 2018).

Such value conflicts may influence university students' academic adjustment and their ability to adapt to the university environment and engage with new ideas. This psychological imbalance may also affect students' persistence toward degree completion. Hence, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent do students at the "Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)" of "University of Manouba" experience value conflict?
- 2) What is their level of academic adjustment?

2. Materials and Methods

To address these research questions, survey data was analyzed according to descriptive correlational methods with the aim to detect the existence and strength of relationships between the variables of interest. Given the nature and purpose of the study, this quantitative approach was deemed appropriate.

2.1. Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of full-time "Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)" students enrolled in undergraduate programs in the faculties of education, arts and science during the second semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. The sample consisted of 739 male and female students selected via random stratified sampling, providing each member of the study population an equal opportunity for

selection. Table 1 illustrates the categorical breakdown of participants according to gender, area of study, and family income.

Table 1: Study sample

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	271	36.7%
Female	468	63.3%
Family income		
Less than 800	105	14.2%
800 – 1200	341	46.1%
More than 1200	293	39.7%
Total	739	100%

2.2. Survey Instrument

The survey instrument comprised two questionnaires. Items on the first questionnaire were developed to measure the extent to which university students experienced value conflict with 31 items covering four domains in which individuals are likely to experience value conflict: social (11 items), cultural (9 items) and economic (11 items). Items on the second questionnaire were developed to measure students' levels of academic adjustment with 25 items assessing academic adjustment in six domains: curriculum (7 items), goals (6 items), time management (6 items), and personal relationships (6 items). Internal consistency was measured through Tau-equivalent reliability, commonly known as Cronbach's alpha, and found to be 0.804 for the first questionnaire and 0.800 for the second. Because both of these values are relatively high, the survey instrument was deemed suitable for data collection for the study. Participants responded to the items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2.3. Data Analysis

SPSS was used to calculate response frequencies, means, and standard deviations for individual items and the overall instrument. Multiple regression analysis was employed to identify the statistically significant effect of value conflict on students' levels of academic adjustment.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Research Question 1

Responses to the first questionnaire were used to identify the extent to which students at the "Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)" experienced value conflict. Descriptive statistics in Table 2 show that students experienced moderate levels of value conflict.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the extent to which students experienced value conflict

SD	M	Domain
.554	2.94	Social
.598	2.74	Cultural
.619	3.45	Economic
.286	1.90	Overall

3.1.1 Economic Domain

The economic domain ranked first among the sources of value conflict, which is logical considering that class differences among students, as determined by parental wealth, are evident at the university. Students who receive university stipends likely have fewer economic concerns. Students felt pressure to keep up with technological development and spend money on items such as mobile phones and international brands to fit in with other students, even if doing so required borrowing money. As a result, students sought opportunities for quick financial gains by doing small projects and continued to focus on obtaining high income jobs after graduation, even when this goal diverged from their true academic interests.

3.1.2 Social Domain

The social domain ranks second among sources of conflicting values. Students of the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” may face cynicism or mockery due to their various affiliations and connections or opinions. This is due to the contradictory intellectual and behavioral patterns of the students which reinforce intellectual and cultural conflicts and consequently create social conflicts. In other words, modern values have replaced those of previous generations, thus changing the composition of value systems.

Family disintegration was identified as another source of value conflict for students in this study. This finding marks a significant departure from ‘Alamdari, B.’ (2014) description of the Tunisian family structure just over a decade ago as being strong and stable, with established parental authority; at that time, most Tunisian children complied with rules and conformed to family values for fear of violating their parents’ authority. However, young people today are exercising more personal agency. This shift may be due in part to recent technological advances that allow for greater exposure to outside cultures via the internet and social media.

In addition, some students reported challenges associated with expanded social circles that include members of the opposite sex. In this sense, non mix education in the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” can act as a source of value conflict with potentially negative impacts for some students.

3.1.3 Cultural Domain

The cultural domain ranked third among sources of value conflict. The expansion of social media in particular has facilitated cultural changes that directly conflict with

teachings. Exposure to other cultures has led to an increased emphasis on materialism, and many young people have embraced Western norms of behavior and consumerism. Some even choose to imitate Western celebrities and live freely without traditional cultural restrictions. In addition, many prefer to speak English rather than Arabic, and some students are ashamed to speak their own local dialects for fear of ridicule. Therefore, it is logical to anticipate that a notably diverse student body will attend courses at the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)”.

3.2 Research Question 2

Responses to the second questionnaire were used to identify the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education” students’ level of academic adjustment. Descriptive statistics in Table 3 display a moderate level of academic adjustment.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for students’ level of academic adjustment

SD	Mean	Domain
.659	2.07	Curriculum
.585	2.28	Goals
.614	2.11	Time management
.593	2.13	Personal relationships
.403	2.16	Overall

3.2.1 Goals

As indicated in the table above, the highest mean academic adjustment level was found in the goals domain. This is a logical finding, as many students consistently think about and plan for their future careers post-graduation. As career opportunities in the government sector have decreased, students are intentionally specializing in other areas where job opportunities exist in the labor market. Students also focus on pursuing personal goals; many focus on acquiring scientific thinking skills necessary to pursue a graduate degree (Yoo, S. H., Matsumoto, D., & LeRoux, J. A., 2006).

3.2.1 Personal Relationships

Personal relationships ranked second among the domains of academic adjustment. Students noted that issues in their relationships with faculty members affected their academic adjustment and achievement. Students cited arrogance of teaching faculty, unfair grading practices, and gender bias as major challenges in their relationships with faculty members (Chemers, M., Hu, L., & Garcia, B., 2001)

Respondents also indicated some positive aspects of their relationships with professors, including respect for their ideas. They claim that found that university faculty are fully aware of how their relationships with students affects academic adjustment and the educational process. However, because most students establish relationships with their professors based on self-interest, such relationships tend to be weak.

3.2.3 Time Management

Time management skills also influenced academic adjustment. Most respondents reported difficulty allocating appropriate amounts of time to assignments, exam preparation, and external reading as well as effectively utilizing free time between lectures to study. While students require additional support and need to make considerable improvements in this skill area. Indeed, several respondents assert that the university can organize workshops to promote time management skills and guide students to achieve their full academic potential (Tangney, J. P., Baumeister, R. F., & Boone, A. L., 2004).

3.2.4 Curriculum

The curriculum domain ranked fourth in terms of academic adjustment. In addition, they expressed frustration over the learning content through lectures. In the other hand, they explained that university teaching and assessment methods tend to be rigid and inflexible with priority placed on relaying concepts rather than helping students acquire skills and develop new attitudes (Vanno, V., Kaemkate, W., et Wongwanich, S., 2014) and ways of thinking within the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)”.

4. Conclusion

Results reveal a moderate level of value conflict among the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” students with the highest level found in the economic domain, followed by the social domain and cultural domain in third among. These results are logical considering the interconnectedness of economic and social factors, since Tunisia has been going through an acute economic and social crisis for 10 years (according to all economic experts).

In terms of academic adjustment, students reported a moderate level, indicating some difficulties in adjusting to the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” life. Academic adjustment levels were highest in relation to students’ goals, followed by personal relationships, which are closely related areas. The third ranking domain was time management, as a majority of students reported difficulties allocating time for all of their academic obligations. The curriculum domain ranked fourth for students’ levels of academic adjustment, as students described intense academic assignments and difficulty grasping curriculum contents.

Given the results of this study, we have proposed a number of viable recommendations for the university to more effectively address students’ experiences of value conflict in relation to levels of academic adjustment.

5. Recommendations

In light of these results, this study informs several recommendations aimed at reducing value conflict and improving academic adjustment among students at the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)”:

1. The “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” should offer lectures, debates, and workshops to valorize the university life for students.
2. Plans, curricula and teaching methods should be developed and updated in line with scientific and pedagogical developments. In addition, course concepts should be practical and applicable outside of the classroom rather than purely theoretical.
3. Given the strong impact of faculty-student relationships on students’ academic adjustment, the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” should provide faculty members with interpersonal skills training to improve these relations.
4. The students should receive training of in the labor market by specialists throughout their initial training at the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)”.
5. Create 'Psychological Counseling' services at the “Higher Institute of Sport and Physical Education (Ksar saïd)” to monitor levels of value conflict and help students cope with social conflicts that may arise.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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