

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Psychological Quality of Life among University Students with Determination in light of Psychological and Social Support

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Abstract:

This study aimed to highlight the impact of psychological and social support on improving the psychological quality of life of university students with disabilities at Nour El Bachir University Centre (El Bayadh). A qualitative approach was adopted, employing semistructured interviews and observations. The findings indicate that various forms of psychological and social support, emotional, moral, and material, directly contribute to enhancing these students' psychological quality of life. The results also show that the absence of support, or its limited availability, leads to poorer academic and social adjustment, which in turn negatively affects mental health and overall quality of life.

Keywords: psychological quality of life; psychological support; social support; students with disabilities.

1. Introduction:

Psychological quality of life is a contemporary concept that has attracted increasing attention in psychology and education, given its role as a fundamental indicator of mental health and positive adjustment to life stressors. It does not merely denote the absence of disorder or suffering; rather, it encompasses a sense of satisfaction, the capacity for self-actualisation, and positive interaction with the social and academic environment. Within the university context, this issue assumes particular importance for students with disabilities, who face multiple

challenges related to the nature of their disability, the demands of academic achievement, and social relationships.

2. Problem Statement:

University students with disabilities constitute a group that faces complex challenges spanning academic, psychological, and social dimensions. For them, higher education represents an experience that requires heightened adjustment to the demands of the university environment, as well as to the sometimes negative social perceptions of disability. Despite relative progress in inclusion policies within Algerian universities, the level of psychological and social support for these students remains limited, which may affect their psychological well-being and sense of satisfaction and balance within the university milieu. The psychology literature confirms that psychological quality of life constitutes a comprehensive indicator of individual well-being, encompassing self-satisfaction, a sense of personal competence, and the capacity for social adjustment (Diener, 2018). Individuals with disabilities are considered more sensitive to psychological stressors, given the communication difficulties they may experience, their dependence on others, and their limited social support. Abdelghani's (2020) study revealed that students with physical disabilities who receive strong social support from family and peers report higher levels of psychological quality of life than their counterparts who lack such support. Al-

Khatib's (2021) study on blind students also indicated that psychological support from lecturers contributes to increased motivation and academic achievement, whereas Nair and Thomas (2022) reported that peer support within the university environment constitutes a decisive factor in fostering a sense of belonging and university satisfaction. Conversely, Coffman and Gilligan (2019) demonstrated that the absence of psychological accompaniment programmes and individual counselling leads to higher rates of anxiety and isolation among students with disabilities in American universities. Accordingly, psychological and social support may be considered a mediating variable linking the lived reality of disability to quality of life, insofar as it alleviates the impact of academic and social stressors and enhances psychological well-being and adjustment. Hence, the central problem of this study is articulated as follows: To what extent does psychological and social support improve the quality of life among university students with disabilities at Nour El Bachir University Centre (El Bayadh)?

The following subsidiary questions arise from this problem:

- ❖ What are the most prominent psychological and social difficulties faced by students with disabilities within the university environment?
- ❖ What forms of psychological and social support do these students receive from family members, peers, and lecturers?
- ❖ How does the level of this support affect their psychological and social quality of life?
- ❖ Do indicators of quality of life differ according to the type of disability (visual or physical)?

3. Study Hypotheses:

On the basis of the research problem presented, the following hypotheses may be formulated:

General Hypothesis:

- Psychological and social support contributes to improving the psychological and social quality of life of university students with disabilities at Nour El Bachir University Centre (El Bayadh).

Specific Hypotheses:

- There is a positive relationship between the level of psychological support and the level of psychological quality of life among students with disabilities.
- There is a positive relationship between social support and indicators of academic and social adjustment among students with disabilities.
- The effects of psychological and social support on quality of life differ depending on the type of disability (visual or physical).

4. Study objectives:

This study aims to examine the relationships among psychological and social support and quality of life among university students with disabilities, identify the sources and forms of support within the university environment, and highlight differences in quality of life by disability type. In addition, this study seeks to provide scientific and practical recommendations to improve psychological and social support services at Algerian universities and to enrich Algerian psychological research through a field study that addresses the realities of this group in higher education.

5. Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study stems from several aspects.

The theoretical significance lies in expanding the conceptualisation of psychological and social support and quality of life among students with disabilities and in highlighting the relationship between mental health and social support within the context of Algerian University, thereby offering a scientific contribution to the fields of university psychology and psychological counselling.

The practical significance is reflected in supporting decision-makers in developing effective support programmes, enabling specialists to adopt evidence-based strategies to increase the quality of university life, and increasing awareness of the importance of support and solidarity in achieving university inclusion for students with disabilities.

6. Operational Definitions of Key Concepts

6.1 Psychological and Social Support:

A network of relationships and material and moral assistance received by the student from the university and social environment helps foster acceptance, encouragement, overcoming difficulties, and positive integration into university life.

6.2 Quality of Life:

In this study, quality of life refers to the degree of a student's satisfaction with university life across its psychological, social, and academic dimensions, as measured by indicators of adjustment, emotional balance, and overall satisfaction.

6.3 Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities are those who experience permanent or temporary physical, sensory, or intellectual impairments that affect their academic or social performance while retaining the potential to achieve success and excellence when appropriate support is provided.

7. Study Boundaries

7.1 Human Boundaries

7.2 Spatial Scope: This study was conducted at Nour El Bachir University Centre (El Bayadh).

7.3 Temporal Scope: This research was carried out in April 2025.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Study Sample

| Case No. | Gender | Type of Disability | Academic Discipline | Level of Study | Age | Family Situation | Available Support | Main Difficulties |
|----------|--------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Male | Visual disability (total blindness) | Psychology | Third-year bachelor's | 22 | Lives with family | Partial psychological, family, and academic support | Lack of adapted resources; relative social isolation |
| 2 | Female | Physical disability (wheelchair user) | Law | Second-year bachelor's | 21 | Lives with parents and sister | Strong family and social support | Mobility difficulties; limited accessibility provisions |

8. Research Method

The clinical method was adopted, as it aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the case in its psychological and social dimensions and to analyse its interactions within the university and social environment.

9. Study Population and Sample

The study population comprised students with disabilities at Nour El Bachir University Centre (El Bayadh). Two cases were purposively selected to represent two distinct disability profiles:

The first case involved a male student who was completely blind and enrolled in the third year of a bachelor's degree in psychology. High cognitive ability characterises him; however, he experiences difficulties in social adjustment due to limited peer support and a lack of adapted educational resources.

The second case involved a female student with a physical disability studying in the Department of Law. She uses a wheelchair and experiences difficulties accessing lecture theatres and university facilities; however, she benefits from strong family support and a good social network.

10. Analysis of Table 1: Characteristics of the Study Sample

Table 1 shows that the sample comprises two cases representing two different disability profiles: a student who is totally blind and studying psychology and a student with a physical disability pursuing her studies in law. Both participants are enrolled at the bachelor's level and are aged 21–22 years, that is, in early university adulthood, a period marked by strong psychological and social needs for acceptance and integration. Family support is a shared

feature across both cases; however, differences emerge, such as the presence of university-based support. The blind student faces pedagogical and educational barriers (the absence of adapted resources), whereas the student with a physical disability encounters material and organisational barriers (mobility and access to university facilities). This variation in the types of difficulties reflects differences in support needs by disability type. This finding indicates that quality of life is more closely associated with the extent to which the university environment is adapted to meet students' needs than with the severity of disability.

11. Research instruments

Table 2: *Research instruments used in the study*

| Instrument | Purpose of Use | Administration Procedure | Approach to Analysing Results |
|--|---|---|--|
| Semistructured interview | To gather information on psychological, social, and academic status | Direct individual interviews | Content analysis of interviews and identification of key themes |
| University Quality of Life Scale (WHOQOL-BREF) | To assess the level of satisfaction with psychological and social aspects | Administration of the scale following the explanation | Analysis of scores according to quality-of-life domains |
| Direct observation | To document adaptive behaviours and social interactions | Field observation during activities | Comparative descriptive analysis between the two cases |
| Brief family questionnaire | To collect data on family and social support | Completed by the family | Qualitative analysis of the family's role in enhancing quality of life |

Analysis of Table 2: Research instruments used

Table 2 indicates that the researcher employed adapted qualitative and quantitative instruments consistent with the clinical approach, including

semistructured interviews, which enabled the collection of rich data on students' subjective experiences; the University Quality of Life Scale (WHOQOL-BREF), which was used to estimate overall satisfaction; direct observation, which

was used to document adaptive behaviour and social interactions; and a brief family questionnaire, which was used to assess the nature of family and social support. The selection of these instruments reflects the researchers' commitment to integrating a qualitative clinical perspective with descriptive quantitative analysis, thereby strengthening the study's scientific credibility and methodological coherence. Moreover, diversifying the data sources (students, families, and field observations) enhanced the trustworthiness and stability of the findings.

12. Presentation and Analysis of the Two Cases

12.1 Case 1 (Blind Student):

The interviews and observations revealed that the students experienced psychological pressures associated with feelings of isolation and a lack of acceptance from some peers. Nevertheless, he demonstrated strong

motivation to succeed, drawing on psychological support from his family and lecturers. The analysis further revealed that insufficient pedagogical accommodations and the absence of university support programmes negatively affect the psychological and social quality of life of these individuals.

12.2 Case 2 (Student with a physical disability):

The data indicate that she experiences material and organisational barriers on the university campus; however, she displays an adaptive and optimistic disposition and benefits from strong psychological and social support from her peers and family. The quality-of-life indicators suggest an acceptable level of satisfaction despite environmental challenges.

Table 3: Comparison of the Two Cases in the Dimensions of Psychological and Social Support and Quality of Life

| Dimension | Case 1 | Case 2 | Comparative Analysis |
|--|--|---|---|
| Psychological support | Receives moral support from family and lecturers, but sometimes feels isolated | Receives strong psychological support from family and friends | Family support is stable, whereas university support varies |
| Social support | Limited to the university environment | Broad and derived from multiple sources | The female student has a wider social network |
| Academic support | Experiences a lack of adapted resources | Received partial accommodations | The blind student requires greater institutional academic support |
| Satisfaction with university life | Moderate, with a desire for improvement | Relatively high despite difficulties | Satisfaction is associated with the level of social support |
| Psychological and social quality of life | Moderate and affected by isolation | Good due to social acceptance | Differences are attributable more to disability type than to severity |

Analysis of Table 3: Comparison of the Results of the Two Cases

This table shows the variation in the level of psychological, social, and academic support between the two cases. The blind student relies

more on family and lecturer support and has limited social relationships at the university. In contrast, a student with a physical disability benefits from wide-ranging social support within the university campus, particularly from her peers, which positively influences her psychological quality of life. The findings further show that the psychological and social quality of life is moderate for blind students because of their sense of isolation. In contrast, it is relatively high for students with a physical disability.

13. Study Findings

- A positive relationship exists between the level of psychological and social support and the level of quality of life among students with disabilities.
- The disability type influences the nature of the support needed: a blind student requires greater academic support, whereas a student with a physical disability requires environmental and organisational support.
- Family members and lecturers constitute the most important sources of psychological support, whereas peers represent a fluctuating source depending on circumstances.
- The absence of specialised centres for psychological and social support within universities reduces opportunities for adjustment and integration.

The comparative analysis indicates that disability type affects the form of support needed: visual disability necessitates greater academic and technical support, whereas physical disability requires material and organisational accommodations within the university environment. Accordingly, psychological and social support are decisive variables in enhancing university quality of life, and their absence leads to reduced levels of adjustment and satisfaction.

Overall Analytical Summary

Taken together, the tables indicate the following:

1. Family support constitutes the principal foundation in the lives of students with disabilities.
2. University-based support (academic and social) remains insufficiently institutionalised within the university.
3. Quality of life increases as psychological and social support becomes more integrated and comprehensive.

Results Analysis and Discussion

The study findings, which were based on two cases of university students with disabilities (a blind male student and a female student with a physical disability), revealed several important psychological and social indicators regarding the reality of psychological and social support and its relationship with university quality of life.

First: Level of Psychological and Social Support

The findings show that both cases benefit from substantial family support, as evidenced by ongoing accompaniment and encouragement to continue their studies despite difficulties. However, the nature of this support differs. The blind student receives intensive emotional and psychological support from his family to compensate for vision loss. In contrast, students with a physical disability rely more heavily on social and psychological support from the university environment and peers. The interviews also confirmed that the absence of organised university support (such as material accommodations, academic support, and adapted transport) limits students' sense of integration and belonging within the university community. This finding is consistent with the findings of Houcine (2021), who reported that social support is among the most influential

factors affecting university quality of life among students with disabilities and mitigates feelings of isolation and marginalisation.

Second: Psychological and Social Quality of Life

On the basis of the quality-of-life scale and interview findings, the student with a physical disability demonstrated a relatively high level of psychological and social satisfaction, attributable to a diverse support network (family, peers, and lecturers) and her sense of acceptance within the university environment. In contrast, the blind student's quality of life was moderate, as he expressed feelings of loneliness and anxiety and reported difficulties engaging in university activities due to the lack of adapted resources. These findings confirm that quality of life is not determined by the severity of disability but rather by the quality of support and the integration of services provided. This finding is consistent with the findings of Abdelkader (2020), who showed that psychological and social support constitute a mediating variable that mitigates the impact of disability on mental health and quality of life.

Third: Academic and Social Adjustment

The findings also revealed differences in university adjustment patterns. The blind student relies on internal mechanisms such as perseverance, religiosity, and self-acceptance as defensive coping strategies. In contrast, a student with a physical disability relies on social interaction and collective support in confronting challenges. This highlights the value of the clinical approach, which enables an understanding of each case's subjective experience without recourse to statistical generalisation. This is further supported by Makki (2022), who emphasised that including persons with disabilities in university settings can be achieved only through a comprehensive

psychological approach that accounts for individual differences in coping mechanisms.

Fourth, the Relationship between Psychological Support and Quality of Life

A comparison of the two cases revealed a clear positive association between the level of psychological and social support and university quality of life. The greater the availability of psychological support (from family members, peers, and lecturers) is, the greater the levels of satisfaction, integration, and academic adjustment. The second case illustrates that social openness and peer acceptance strengthen self-esteem and a sense of belonging, supporting Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs, which posits that belongingness and esteem constitute essential foundations for an individual's psychological balance.

Fifth: Required Dimensions of Support

The findings indicate that students with disabilities require integrated support, which includes psychological support (university-based support and counselling sessions); social support (establishing university clubs to promote inclusion and integration); academic support (providing adapted educational resources, such as braille, speech-enabled applications, and examination accommodations); and administrative support (facilitating mobility and access to university facilities).

Conclusion

The findings of this field study, which examined psychological and social support and its relationship with quality of life among university students with disabilities within the university environment (through two cases, a blind male student and a female student with a physical disability at Nour El Bachir University Centre, El Bayadh), indicate that these students' lived reality continues to oscillate between, on

the one hand, individual efforts to adapt and strong family support and, on the other hand, the absence of an organised institutional system of university-based psychological and social support. Through the application of the clinical approach and semistructured interviews, it became evident that students with disabilities demonstrate a high capacity for self-adjustment despite limited resources and derive their psychological strength from their families and immediate social milieu; however, university-related challenges (such as nonadapted infrastructure, the absence of adapted educational resources, and limited social interaction) adversely affect their sense of satisfaction and belonging. The comparison between the two cases shows that disability type plays a secondary role relative to the quality of available support. The student with a physical disability reported a greater psychological and social quality of life than the blind student did, despite her disability being more visibly physical, which reflects the effects of social support and university inclusion in strengthening psychological balance. The blind student, despite his intelligence and academic diligence, reported feelings of isolation and limited communication within the university setting, reinforcing the view that social integration constitutes a fundamental condition for achieving academic and psychological quality of life.

The results further indicate that psychological and social support represents an integrative core in the lives of university students with disabilities, insofar as it contributes to the development of a positive self-concept, reduces academic anxiety, and enhances self-esteem and personal efficacy. This finding is consistent with those of previous studies, such as Abdelkader (2020) and Houcine (2021), which emphasised that quality of life among individuals with special needs is more closely associated with the level of psychological and social support than with the degree of disability itself. Accordingly,

enhancing psychological and social quality of life in the university context for students with special needs requires a comprehensive strategy that combines physical and psychological adaptation of the university environment to facilitate mobility and interaction; the activation of counselling and university support units with specialised competence in disability-related provisions; and the training of lecturers and students in principles of inclusion and psychological support. Moreover, university policies require the incorporation of psychological and social support into the core system of essential student services.

Suggestions and recommendations

On the basis of the study findings and case analyses, a set of practical measures may be proposed to strengthen psychological and social support and improve the quality of life among university students with disabilities, as follows:

First: At the University Level

1. Permanent psychological and social support units should be established within universities, supervised by qualified staff in psychology and educational counselling dedicated to monitoring and supporting students with special needs.
2. University infrastructure can be adapted to facilitate mobility for students with disabilities (e.g., dedicated pathways, lifts, and accessible classrooms).
3. Disability-specific adapted pedagogical resources, such as audiobooks, braille printing, and assistive digital programs, should be provided.
4. Organise training workshops for lecturers and administrative staff on psychological and educational skills for working with students with disabilities.
5. Activate inclusive student clubs that promote social interaction among

students and reduce psychological and social isolation.

Second, at the level of psychological and social guidance,

1. University psychological and social counselling services should be expanded through individual and group sessions tailored to students with special needs.
2. A preventive clinical approach should be adopted to enable early identification of academic and social adjustment difficulties.
3. Collaboration among psychologists, physicians, and faculty members should be promoted to deliver integrated interventions.
4. Conducting periodic research to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented support programs and to propose improvements in line with students' needs.

Third, at the University Policies Level,

1. The "psychological and social support" agenda should be incorporated into the national plan to improve university quality of life.
2. Clear regulations concerning the rights of students with disabilities should be enacted, ensuring equal opportunities in academic assessment and university activities.
3. Encourage partnerships between universities and specialised disability associations to exchange expertise and pedagogical resources.

Fourth: Future Research Directions

Field studies examining the psychological and social factors influencing university quality of life are needed.

Investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic adjustment among students with disabilities.

Develop therapeutic guidance programmes grounded in a positive approach to enhance self-acceptance and perceived competence.

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