

## Research Article

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## Social Achievement Goals Orientation and Its Relationship with Friendship Quality among the Hashemite University Students

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**Abstract**

**Background/purpose.** This study examines the correlation between social achievement goals orientation and friendship quality among Hashemite University (HU) students. It identifies the significant differences in the social achievement goals, orientation, and friendship quality according to gender and academic level.

**Materials/methods.** The Social Achievement Goal Orientation Scale and Friendship Quality Scale were used to achieve the research purpose. The study sample consists of 380 students at HU.

**Results.** Results show statistically significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable. The mean score of social mastery for female students was higher than that of male students. The mean score for the social performance approach for male students was higher than for female students, and the mean score for social performance avoidance for male students was higher than for female students. The results showed no statistically significant differences in social achievement goal orientation and friendship quality attributed to the gender variable. Results showed statistically significant differences in friendship quality, attributed to the gender variable, with the mean score of friendship quality for female students higher than for male students. Finally, results showed a positive correlation between social mastery and friendship quality and a positive correlation between social performance approach and friendship quality. It also showed no significant relationship between social performance-avoidance and friendship quality.

**Conclusion.** Results show statistically significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable. The results showed no statistically significant differences in social achievement goal orientation and friendship quality attributed to the gender variable. Results showed statistically significant differences in friendship quality, attributed to the gender variable, with the mean score of friendship quality for female students higher than for male students. Finally, results showed a positive correlation between social mastery and friendship quality and a positive correlation between social performance approach and friendship quality.



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## 1. Introduction

The achievement goal theory refers to an individual's goals of attainment or accomplishment which vary from one person to another according to their approach to different situations and expectations and it is particularly seen in academic circumstances. According to Elliot and McGregor (2001), the goals signify clearly defined aims and directions with regard to academic competence and are particular because of their emphasis on developing rather than displaying competence.

Based on the foregoing, many studies were conducted in the Jordanian and Arab educational environment dealing with achievement goal orientation and its relationship to many variables in the academic domain. While there are no Arabic studies dealing with social achievement goal orientations, this study aims to answer the following questions:

Q1: What patterns of social achievement goal orientation are prevalent among Hashemite University (HU) students?

Q2: Are there any significant differences in the patterns of social achievement goal orientation due to gender and academic level variables?

Q3: What are the HU students' perceptions of friendship quality?

Q4: Are there any significant differences in HU students' perceptions of friendship quality due to gender and academic level variables?

Q5: Is there a significant relationship between social achievement goal orientation and friendship quality?

## 2. Literature Review

The achievement goal theory provides reasoned perceptions for outlining societal goals and expresses motivation for students to pursue them when taking part in achievement-related settings (Dweck, 1986; Elliot, 2005). Although there has been considerable research into the achievement goal perspective related to university students, it has been pointed out by (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Covington, 2000; King et al., 2010; Ryan & Shim, 2006) that school students also have goals for both their academic achievements and personal social interactions. In the school student environment, social goals may even take precedence over academic objectives in the classroom. According to Wentzel (1996), the most successful school students are those who, from a multi-goal perspective, have academic and adaptive social objectives.

The achievement goal perspective suggests that it is students' need to feel competent. This feeling motivates them to actively participate in several activities: academic, social, athletic, or sport-oriented. Students are concerned with developing and demonstrating competencies (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Elliot, 2005). They generate tendencies that lead to consequences, affecting students' achievement-related perceptions and reasoning and emotional and behavioural consequences (Barron & Harackiewicz, 2001; Daniels et al., 2009; Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Midgley et al., 2001; Wolters, 2004). Blumenfeld (1992) noted that researchers found that social environment goals are significant for school students.

These theories of similarity between students' social and academic goals have resulted, over previous decades, in multiple conceptualizations of social goals. Urdan and Maehr (1995) saw them as a social resolve for academic achievement, while Wentzel (1994) describes a student goal content as pro-social or socially accountable or as an aspect of approach avoidance (Elliot et al., 2006).

Ryan and Shim (2006, 2008), following the accepted 3-dimensional framework of achievement goal perspective, designed and validated assessment scales to measure students' social achievement goals. Development goals emphasized cultivating and maintaining high-quality friendships and

refining social competence. Demonstration-approach goals denote validating friendship by giving the appearance of popularity and comparing one's social competence with that of others; demonstration avoidance goals mean avoiding being seen as unpopular and friendless and the object of jokes. Ryan and Shim (2006, 2008) used this development terminology to equate the commonly used terms in academia such as mastery, demonstration, and performance for achievement goals. The social achievement orientation goals concerning the development or demonstration of interactive personal relationships reflect broader goals than content-based goals (Ryan & Shim, 2006).

As noted by Jones and Ford (2014), research has proposed the following social achievement goals: social development, social demonstration approach, and social demonstration avoidance. A social development goal is associated with the desire for improved social interactions, like having stronger social bonds with friends, whereas the social demonstration-approach goal focuses on demonstrating social competencies, such as positive inclusion by others and being supportive of popularity and aggressive behaviour (Ryan & Shim, 2008). A social demonstration-avoidance goal implies covering social ineptitude by avoiding situations, exposing negative reactions of others, or linking to negative social relationships. Ryan and Shim's investigation (2006, 2008) into social goals as part of the achievement goal perception has mainly concentrated on the link between students' social goals and interpersonal behaviours, cognitions, emotions, and academic goals. Social development goals are flexible, positively adapting to positive social relationships, self-confidence, and personal development (Ryan & Shim, 2006). They can also adapt to social competence (Shim & Ryan, 2012), sociable behaviour, the quality of close friends (Ryan & Shim, 2008), and positive feelings of inclusiveness and belonging. However, they can be negative in cases of loneliness (Mouratidis & Sideridis, 2009). Positive interrelationships and academic excellence goals (Horst et al., 2007) CAN lighten interpersonal stress and depression (Kuroda & Sakurai, 2011).

Demonstration-oriented social goals, however, are mainly less adaptive, while social demonstration approach goals have a negative link with personal development and autonomy and are positively linked with social anxiety (Ryan & Shim, 2006). They are negatively linked with pro-social activities and positively linked with aggression and apparent popularity (Ryan & Shim, 2008; Shim & Ryan, 2012). These social demonstration approach goals have a positive association with the academic performance approach and performance-avoidance goals. They are also alarmed by the fear of negative evaluation and a negative relationship regarding positive personal relationships (Horst et al., 2007). They are sensitive to disruptive behaviours and social anxieties (Shim et al., 2013) and can predict the negative influence of peer acceptance (Mouratidis & Sideridis, 2009). Social demonstration avoidance goals are positively associated with academic performance-avoidance goals and fear of negative evaluation. They are negatively related to positive interpersonal relations. (Horst et al., 2007), while these goals are positively associated with social worry (Ryan & Shim, 2006; Shim et al., 2013) and negatively related to aggressive behaviour and perceived popularity. They positively correlate with apprehensive solitary behaviour and social anxiety (Ryan & Shim, 2008) but are negatively associated with social competence, popularity, and pro-social behaviour. They are positively associated with anxiety and internalizing behaviour (Shim & Ryan, 2012) and positively predict loneliness (Mouratidis & Sideridis, 2009).

Previous research has established a positive relationship between social development goals and adaptive social outcomes, such as mundane, unimaginative behaviours, very close familiarity, a high degree of trust in friends, and non-aggressive behaviours. This relationship has engendered a higher level of peer relationship satisfaction and emotional comfort and safety. Results of previous studies (Liem, 2016; Shim et al., 2013) showed clear indications regarding the negative effects linked to demonstration avoidance goals, in concurrence with the findings of previous studies consistently showing a link to states including loneliness, anxiety in isolation, social apprehension, nervousness,

fear of negative evaluation, and depression when experiencing interpersonal tension and pressure (Mouratidis & Sideridis, 2009; Shim & Ryan, 2012).

In contrast, Horst et al. (2007) and Ryan and Shim (2006, 2008) found that the results demonstrate that approach goals are uncertain as they have a positive association with intensified social effectiveness and peer popularity rating. They also have a positive link to social anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and aggressive behaviours. Ginsberg et al. (1987) concluded that friendship was a significant interpersonal relationship that serves important purposes throughout an individual's lifetime, providing both companionship and confirmation of self-confidence, respect, and esteem. Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2003) describe an individual as having a high quality of friendship when he/she appreciates friendships that are close, compassionate, supportive, and important to him/her. This individual is naturally sociable and simply enjoys the company of other people and personal interaction without any ulterior purpose.

One of the main tenets in the study of social psychology is research into interpersonal relationships. The theory of social exchange is concerned with mutual or reciprocal association. With its roots in economic values, the social exchange theory describes the negotiation process for mutual benefits. DeLamater and Myers (2018) view personal behaviours and relationships as though they were goods and services. The social exchange theory postulates that people form friendships for some form of personal gain or advantage. In other words, the social exchange theory views a friendship relationship as a 'tit-for-tat' arrangement (e.g., you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours).

On the other hand, situational attribution associates specific behaviour with environmental influences rather than the individual's particular personality or character traits. Situational attribution to college friendships can be well explained by the close-quarters environment of college life, in which students have lectures together and share rooms in dorms. Thus, college friendships are culturally and environmentally associated with a campus in which students' personalities are encouraged to become involved in these relationships, and their personalities are inconsequential. An important factor is the cultivation of friendship (DeLamater & Myers, 2018).

There has long been a strong association between friendship and the attribution theory which offers a convincing argument for the important contribution of friendships to college students. In a recent study, Campbell et al. (2000) analyzed attributions and behaviours of friend dyads to determine the extent of the situational or dispositional attribution reported by friends. Previous research (Allan, 1989; Rawlins, 1992) found a scholarly agreement supporting the findings that friendships are a voluntary, informal, and personal form of relationship. Beyond this broad outline of friendship, it can be challenging and problematic. When trying to define or describe a friend, each person will use numerous characterizations, but the best friend is likely to be the companion with whom one spends the most time and shares common interests and outlook on life although the degree of influence of this trait is debated by scholars (Allan, 1989; Hays, 1984, 1985). Since these multiple perceptions of friendship do not essentially amount to a definition, as Ryback and McAndrew (2006) argued, there is effectively no single definition of friendship. It encompasses a multiplicity of terms used by scholars: voluntariness, closeness, intimacy, trust, respect, commitment, support, generosity, non-romantics, loyalty, acceptance, caring, liking, and confiding, although the most consistently used terms to differentiate friendship from other relationships were 'closeness' and 'intimacy'.

Many researchers (Hartup, 2021; Henrich et al., 2000) determined that forming social networks and positive peer groups were significant features contributing to the healthy development of juveniles and young adults. Being included in a voluntary friendship group is an opportunity for the young individual to acquire principles and standards and to strengthen these behaviours in a secure environment and a sense of belonging (Akers, 2017). Berndt (2002) and Warr (2002) introduce a note

of caution that not all friendships have a positive influence, though friendships are a significant and indeed vital part of healthy social development. They demonstrated this caution by bringing up delinquency, where delinquent behaviours by the individual's peers are a key predictor of the individual's own delinquent behaviours. Lau-Barraco and Linden (2014) and Miller et al. (2011) pointed out that delinquent behaviour or abuse may be encouraged by friends rather than only affecting friendships. Fisher and Bauman (1998), Kandel (1978), and Davies (1991) have found that characteristically, the strongest bonds of friendship appear between individuals involved in similar activities and having shared interests and values.

There are differences in the results of previous studies in the variable of social achievement goals. According to (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Kiefer & Ryan, 2008; Mathur & Berndt, 2006; Ojanen et al., 2007; Patrick et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1993), social goals are also associated with individual dynamics such as gender and grade level. Duchesne et al. (2014) illustrated that girls' motivation to succeed was mainly focused on becoming competent rather than focusing on hiding their incompetence and striving to outperform others. Akin (2006) and Tutas (2011) found that female students had higher levels than males when comparing their levels of mastery-avoidance goal orientation. According to the results of their study, Middleton and Midgley (1997), boys showed higher performance-approach orientations than girls did.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Study design

In this study, the descriptive approach was used to determine the patterns of social achievement goal orientation prevalent among HU students and students' perceptions of friendship quality. The correctional approach examined the relationship between social achievement goal orientation and friendship quality.

#### 3.2. Study Sample

The study sample consisted of 380 students at HU in Jordan. The students were enrolled in Introduction to Psychology and Family and Child-rearing courses during the academic year 2020-2021. The ages of the study sample ranged between 18 and 22. The study sample was selected by purposive method. Table 1 shows the distribution of the study sample according to the gender and academic level variables.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study sample

Variable	Level	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	200	52.6%
	Female	180	47.4%
	Total	380	100%
Academic level	First-year	101	26.5%
	Second-year	93	24.5%
	Third-year	96	25.3%
	Fourth-year	90	23.7%
	Total	380	100%

#### 3.3. Study Instrument

Social Achievement Goal Orientation Scale (SAGOS): The SAGOS was developed by Horst et al. (2007). It consists of 22 items, divided into three dimensions: (1) social mastery: 8 items, Cronbach alpha=0.83, (2) social performance-approach: 7 items, Cronbach alpha=0.86, and (3) social performance-avoidance: 7 items, Cronbach alpha=0.83. The answer to the SAGOS items uses a 5-

point Likert scale. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha was 0.79, 0.71, and 0.77, respectively, for social mastery, social performance approach, and social performance-avoidance.

Friendship Quality Scale (FQS): The FQS was developed by Thien et al. (2012). It consists of 21 items, divided into four dimensions: (1) safety: 8 items, Cronbach alpha= 0.88, (2) closeness: 6 items, Cronbach alpha= 0.83, (3) acceptance: 4 items, Cronbach alpha= 0.84, and (4) help: 3 items, Cronbach alpha= 0.81. The answer to the FQS items uses a 5-point Likert scale. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha was 0.70, 0.83, 0.82, and 0.80, respectively, for safety, closeness, acceptance, and help.

### 3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

The Social Achievement Goal Orientation Scale (SAGOS) and Friendship Quality Scale (FQS) were translated from English into Arabic, and the accuracy of the translation was checked and confirmed. The SAGOS and FQS were applied to a pilot sample consisting of 50 students at HU to verify the draft of the Arabic version of the scale items and validate the reliability of the scales. The researcher clarified the aim of the study, answered the sample questions, and assured the participants that their answers would be used for research purposes only; the study sample students then completed the scales in the Arabic version. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer study questions one and three. To answer study questions two and four, the MANOVA analysis scale was used, and to answer the five questions, the Pearson correlation was used.

## 4. Results

**Question one:** What are the patterns of social achievement goal orientations prevalent among Hashemite University(HU) students?

Means and standard deviation were used to answer this question, as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Means and Standard deviation for social achievement goal orientations

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
Social mastery	4.13	0.65	1
Social performance-approach	3.18	0.60	3
Social performance-avoidance	3.46	0.72	2

Table 2 shows social mastery as the most common pattern among Hashemite University students (M=4.13), followed by social performance avoidance (M=3.46), and the last one is the social performance approach (M=3.18).

**Question two:** Are there any significant differences in the patterns of social achievement goal orientations due to gender and academic level variables?

Means and standard deviation for social achievement goal orientations according to students' gender and academic level variables were used to answer this question as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Means (M) and standard deviation (SD) for social achievement goals orientation according to students' gender and academic level variables

Variable	Level	Social mastery		Social performance-approach		Social performance-avoidance	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender	Male	4.01	0.76	3.23	0.61	3.55	0.75
	Female	4.25	0.48	3.13	0.58	3.36	0.67
Academic level	1st year	4.13	0.74	3.06	0.59	3.40	0.73
	Second-year	4.21	0.42	3.28	0.58	3.47	0.64
	Third-year	4.07	0.72	3.21	0.63	3.48	0.77
	Fourth-year	4.10	0.68	3.20	0.57	3.47	0.73

MANOVA analysis was used to achieve the significant differences in social achievement goal orientations according to students' gender and academic level variables, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Results of MANOVA analysis

Source	Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Gender	Social mastery	4.338	1	4.338	10.227	0.00
	Social performance-approach	1.148	1	1.148	3.234	0.07
	Social performance-avoidance	3.547	1	3.547	6.846	0.00
Academic level	Social mastery	0.189	3	0.063	0.148	0.93
	Social performance-approach	2.765	3	0.922	2.696	0.05
	Social performance-avoidance	0.531	3	0.177	0.341	0.79
Error	Social mastery	159.079	375	0.424		
	Social performance-approach	133.176	375	0.355		
	Social performance-avoidance	194.294	375	0.518		
Corrected total	Social mastery	164.580	379			
	Social performance-approach	136.874	379			
	Social performance-avoidance	198.233	379			

Table 4 shows that there are statistically significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable (Wilks' Lambda=0.932, F=0.129, P=0.00). The mean score of social mastery for female students (M=4.25) was higher than for male students (M=4.01). The mean score of the social performance approach for male students (M=3.23) was higher than for

female students ( $M=3.13$ ). The table also shows that the mean score of social performance avoidance for male students ( $M=3.55$ ) was higher than for female students ( $M=3.36$ ). As shown above, there are no statistically significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable (Wilks'  $\Lambda=0.976$ ,  $F=1.012$ ,  $P=0.42$ ).

**Question three:** What are the HU students' perceptions of friendship quality?

Means and standard deviation were used to answer this question, as shown in Table 5

**Table 5.** Means and Standard deviation for friendship quality

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Rank
Safety	3.86	0.70	4
Closeness	4.64	0.91	1
Acceptance	4.61	1.03	2
Help	4.40	1.08	3
Friendship quality	4.30	0.76	

Table 5 shows that the mean score of students' perceptions of the friendship quality was ( $M=4.30$ ). Table 5 also shows that closeness was in the first rank ( $M=4.64$ ), followed by acceptance ( $M=4.61$ ), help ( $M=4.40$ ), and safety ranks last ( $M=3.86$ ).

**Question four:** Are there any significant differences in HU students' perceptions of friendship quality due to gender and academic level variables?

Table 6 shows the means and standard deviation for friendship quality according to students' gender and academic level variables, which were used to answer this question.

**Table 6.** Means (M) and standard deviation (SD) for friendship quality according to students' gender and academic level variables

Variable	Level	Safety		Closeness		Acceptance		Help		Friendship quality	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender	Male	3.74	0.76	4.46	1.04	4.45	1.14	4.30	1.16	4.16	0.88
	Female	4.00	0.60	4.83	0.71	4.80	0.86	4.51	0.97	4.46	0.57
Academic level	First-year	3.87	0.75	4.61	1.02	4.71	1.06	4.51	1.19	4.33	0.85
	Second year	3.90	0.58	4.79	0.67	4.56	0.92	4.32	0.86	4.34	0.55
	Third year	3.84	0.75	4.51	0.94	4.53	1.02	4.35	1.11	4.23	0.80
	Fourth-year	3.84	0.71	4.65	0.97	4.64	1.11	4.40	1.12	4.30	0.81

MANOVA analysis was used to achieve the significant differences in friendship quality according to students' gender and academic level variables, as shown in Table 7.



**Table 7.** Results of MANOVA analysis

Source	Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Gender	Safety	6.141	1	6.141	12.678	0.00
	Closeness	10.684	1	10.684	13.095	0.00
	Acceptance	12.592	1	12.592	12.111	0.00
	Help	4.793	1	4.793	4.106	0.04
	Friendship quality	8.217	1	8.217	14.453	0.00
Academic level	Safety	0.104	3	0.035	0.072	0.97
	Closeness	1.706	3	0.569	0.697	0.55
	Acceptance	2.903	3	0.968	0.931	0.42
	Help	2.523	3	0.841	0.720	0.54
	Friendship quality	0.297	3	0.099	0.174	0.91
Error	Safety	181.638	375	0.484		
	Closeness	305.959	375	0.816		
	Acceptance	389.897	375	1.040		
	Help	437.771	375	1.167		
	Friendship quality	213.219	375	0.569		
Corrected total	Safety	188.030	379			
	Closeness	320.660	379			
	Acceptance	404.405	379			
	Help	444.665	379			
	Friendship quality	222.118	379			

Table 7 shows statistically significant differences in the friendship quality attributed to the gender variable (Wilks' Lamda = 0.953, F= 4.589, P= 0.00). The mean score of friendship quality for female students (M= 4.46) was higher than for male students (M=4.16), and statistically significant differences were found in the friendship quality subscales attributed to the variable of gender. Table 7 also shows no statistically significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable (Wilks' Lamda = 0.950, F=1.594, P= 0.08).

**Question five:** Is there any significant relationship between social achievement goal orientations and friendship quality?

The Pearson correlation between social achievement goals orientation and friendship quality was used to answer this question, as shown in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Correlation matrix between social achievement goals orientation and friendship quality

Variable	Social mastery	Social performance-approach	Social performance-avoidance
Safety	0.67*	0.40*	-0.17*
Closeness	0.62*	0.31*	-0.11*
Acceptance	0.54*	0.30*	-0.01
Help	0.59*	0.17*	-0.06
Friendship quality	0.70*	0.35*	-0.03

(\* P= 0.01)

Table 8 shows a positive correlation between social mastery and friendship quality and a positive correlation between social performance approach and friendship quality. It also shows no significant relationship between social performance avoidance and friendship quality. Results also show a negative correlation between social performance avoidance on one side and safety and closeness on the other side.

## 5. Discussion

The results showed that the most common pattern among Hashemite University students was social mastery, followed by social performance-avoidance, and lastly, social performance-approach. Understanding achievement motivation from a social cognitive perspective has generated a large research (Kaplan et al., 2002; Meece et al., 2006; Patrick et al., 2002) investigating the impact of learners' achievement goals, performance (Ames, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Nicholls, 1984), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 1996), on students' motivations to learn. Other studies have chosen a different aspect, looking at social goals since learners may have a strong impact on their learning behavior at school (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Dowson et al., 2006; Patrick et al., 1997; Ryan et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1989). This belief is supported by previous research by Berndt (1999), Brown et al. (1986), and Kinderman (1993), who found that despite the valued learner goals and self-efficacy regarding achievement motivation, they believed that the impact of learners' social environments also requires consideration. Research into peer relations has identified social relationships as a potentially influential source affecting motivation to learn.

The results statistically show significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable. They show no statistically significant differences in the orientations of social achievement goals attributed to the academic level variable. According to (Anderman & Anderman, 1999; Kiefer & Ryan, 2008; Mathur & Berndt, 2006; Ojanen et al., 2007; Patrick et al., 1997; Wentzel, 1993), social goals are also associated with individual dynamics such as gender, grade level, and academic achievement. Research has clearly illustrated gender differences in approaches to social relationships, whereby females more highly favour goals of intimacy and social responsibility, whereas male goals tend to be more traditional, familial, and masculine, characterized by competitiveness, dominance, and popularity. Friedel et al. (2007) noted that in the field of academic performance, goal orientations rated the male students higher than the females. Consequently, female students were expected to declare higher levels of social development goals as well as greater increases in the longer term. On the other hand, males would report higher initial levels and increase over time in their demonstration-approach goals, thus, males, in their reported social demonstration-avoidance goals, would ultimately be either on a par with or even higher than the females. Another possible predictor of different levels and changes over time in social goals may be the students' grade levels.

There is a dearth of research studies investigating the social goals of high school students. Guan et al. (2013), studying 9th through 12th-grade students, looked specifically at athletics-related social content goals. He reported no differences in grade levels. Archambault et al. (2010) note that development research on social achievement goals in general, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, includes different grade levels. The researchers were specifically interested in investigating differences between three age groups of students: 9th to 10th graders, 10th to 11th graders, and 11th to 12th graders. They expected a more significant variation in social goals for the younger students who were likely to be affected by their transition into high school than for the older students who were established in the high school educational environment. It was also expected that the social goals of the youngest group, the 9th to 10th-grade students, were likely to be strongly related to their teachers, peers, and the school environment as their goals are generally in a state of change.

In achievement studies, one of the most comprehensively studied variables is gender, indicating a similarity between boys' lower-level achievement compared to girls (Entwisle & Alexander, 1999; Lee & Burkham, 2002; Rouse et al., 2005). Although there have been studies focusing on the differences between boys and girls, few have investigated the effect of gender on social achievement goals. Waxman and Huang (1997) found that girls responded better than boys to positive classroom environments, contradicting findings by McGee Bailey (1996) and Sadker and Sadker (1994), in which girls in most elementary, middle, and high school classrooms were disadvantaged.

Duchesne et al. (2014) illustrated that girls' motivation to succeed was mainly focused on becoming competent rather than focusing on hiding their incompetence and striving to outperform others. Akin (2006) and Tutas (2011) found that female students had higher levels than males when comparing their levels of mastery-avoidance goal orientation. According to the results of their study, Middleton and Midgley (1997), boys showed higher performance-approach orientations than girls did. Pajares et al. (2000) found that gender had a significant multivariate effect on increasing the differences between the two sexes regarding achievement goals, and this result was echoed in the covariate, the grade-point average for writing, by which girls showed weaker performance-approach goals but stronger task goals than the boys did. No gender differences were found in performance-avoidance goals.

The results showed that the mean score of students' perceptions of friendship quality was ( $M=4.30$ ). Educational research tends to focus on the impact of friendship on educational achievement (Ho, 2016), individual development, and adjustment (Ladd et al., 1996), whereas psychological research has revealed that individuals, enjoying quality friendships are more competent, more self-esteemed, more positive, higher in sociological stratum, and happier than their counterparts (Buhrmester, 1990; Demir et al., 2007; Keefe & Berndt, 1996; Demir et al., 2007). General adolescent behaviours are widely reported in the friendship literature (Haselager et al., 1998; Kupersmidt et al., 1995; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). However, school-related behaviours are particularly related to friends' actions and characteristics (Cauce, 1986; Epstein, 1983; Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). One's best friend's influence on his/her achievement motivation was measured in three ways: First, students' perception of how highly one's best friend would value their academic success; second, students' perceptions of how profound one's best friend would be influential to make them abide by the school standards and customs; lastly, it focuses on measuring the power of the best friend's influence and relationship. The gender differences observed in friendships may be explained in several ways that may lead to potential perceptions and possible predictions of likely gender differences in friendship.

Wright (2006) found a general similarity in female friendships' approach to communal activities (baby showers or similar) rather than agnatic contributory activities such as tiling a roof. Wright (2006) commented on another aspect of female friendships, which were more likely to be encompassing and holistic rather than restricted to friends at the workplace or specific sports or hobbies.

According to Bank and Hansford (2000), reluctance to overt emotions, masculine (macho) individuality, and homophobia are aspects that show the predominance of agnatic friendships in males. The final factor, according to Wright (2006), is the male tendency to have bonded friendships, which involves a linking of roles within an organization. The fused friendship, therefore, precludes the possibility of a communal bond or relationship since it is contextual and formed within a structured role and environment. It demands having a successful balance between carrying out the role and sustaining friendship.

The results showed a positive correlation between social mastery and friendship quality and a positive correlation between social performance approach and friendship quality. They also showed

no significant relationship between social performance-avoidance and friendship quality. There may also be an association between social goals and students' prior academic achievement. In this regard, Horst et al. (2007) found a positive correlation between college students' social and academic goals, making a possible correspondence with academic achievement.

Wentzel (1993), in his study, found a positive relationship between middle school students' grades and their social responsibility content goals. Therefore, we may accept the existence of a positive relationship between academic achievement and social development if academic achievement is a predictor of social achievement goals. So, students who are achieving academically may feel more at ease when at school, leading to more positive social interaction with their fellow students. On the other hand, students who are innately high achievers may underplay their academic excellence in an attempt to maintain their social status to appear popular or, at least, not to appear unpopular. Conversely, low academic achievers may try to bolster their confidence and self-esteem in the social as opposed to the academic domain, thereby, shifting their priority towards achieving and demonstrating their popularity. In any case, low academic achievement may predict higher demonstration approaches and demonstration-avoidance social goals.

Previous research by (Davies & Kandal, 1981; Epstein, 1983; Hallinan & Williams, 1990; Ide et al., 1981) found correlations between individuals' academic aspirations and those of their friends and likewise, correlations with academic achievement (Cauce, 1986; Epstein, 1983; Ide et al., 1981; Mounts & Steinberg, 1995). In addition, Urdan (1997) illustrated a positive association between mastery goals and perceptions of close friends with positive orientations toward school. Whereas performance-approach goals were related to both positive and negative orientations toward school.

Berndt and Keefe (1995) found a strong correlation between individuals who displayed disruptive classroom behaviours and the disruptive behaviours of their friends. Epstein (1983) discovered that best friends might well socialize in an 'after-school' environment that is not governed by 'in-school' beliefs and behaviours. Buhrmester (1990), Parker and Asher (1993) suggested that best friends can provide interactive personal and social support in addition to being a source of beliefs and values. They assert that a strong link between improved social and emotional adjustment and enjoying the benefit of a close, trusting, compassionate relationship with a best friend (Keefe & Berndt, 1996; Mannarino, 1980).

Individuals in high-quality relationships are more likely than those in lower-quality relationships because they hold similar values and beliefs (Berndt et al., 1999; Berndt et al., 1990; Hallinan, 1983; Hallinan & Williams, 1990). On the other hand, Agnew (1991) found that rates of friends' adolescent delinquent behaviours, increasing with time, only occurred in high-quality friendships. This correlation was supported by findings by Berndt et al. (1999), whose research illustrated an increase in behavioural problems during the school year when students were in a higher-quality-best-friend relationship with someone exhibiting behavioural problems.

## 6. Conclusion

Results show statistically significant differences in the social achievement goal orientations attributed to the gender variable. The results showed no statistically significant differences in social achievement goal orientation and friendship quality attributed to the gender variable. Results showed statistically significant differences in friendship quality, attributed to the gender variable, with the mean score of friendship quality for female students higher than for male students. Finally, results showed a positive correlation between social mastery and friendship quality and a positive correlation between social performance approach and friendship quality.

## 7. Suggestion

The current study was limited by the sample, being drawn solely from undergraduate students at HU. Future studies could include samples of high school students and use a different scale to measure social achievement goal orientations. They could also examine the relationship between social achievement goal orientations and self-regulation.

## Declarations

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**Conflicts of Interest.** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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