

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS ACHIEVEMENT AT JORDANIAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Abstract_ *The present study aims to identify the most important factors that affect the academic achievement of the community colleges students, the original study was conducted as a requirement to get a doctorate degree in education from the University of Bucharest - Romania (prepared in English).*

The academic achievement consider one or the most important tasks of the academic institution , community colleges in Jordan as a higher education institutions, which is entrusted with the task of preparing skilled and qualified graduates to an moderate level of skill to be a link graduates academics and workers with limited skills or education, and this attention was always focused on the outputs of these colleges.

But relatively Almidn level of graduates of these colleges raised its educators and Associates as well as the recipients of the service of economic institutions and various social this research is trying to identify some of the factors that affect academic achievement of the graduates of Jordanian community colleges Jordanian the main question of the study was what are the main factors that affecting the academic achievement of students in Jordanian community colleges and sub-questions were are there a relationship between the GBA average obtained by the students enrolled in college on their academic achievement at colleges? Does the environment affect academic achievement of the students?

In order to achieve the objective the researcher designed three questionnaires respectively allocated for students, teachers, deans dealing with the assumed range of factors from the standpoint of the researcher and randomly distributed on a sample of college students, teachers, deans of colleges It was used simple statistics as percentages and x2 to find the results.

The results showed that students, teachers and deans agreed that low GPA for students enrolled in community colleges was one of the important factors affecting the academic achievement as it was showed by the link between the rate of students in high school and their grades in college, and the results also showed that the academic environment and curriculum taught in colleges and qualifications for faculty members have a significant impact on student achievement as the results also showed their responses on their questionnaire.

Researcher recommends raising acceptance rates at community colleges or the work of a special rehabilitation courses for students enrolled with low GPA at school, also stresses the need for a suitable learning environment for students and teaching strategies styles and update the curriculum to be adequate with the requirements of the labor market.

Keywords: *Jordanian Community Colleges, Students achievement, Academic achievement, Educational environment, Teacher's qualification, Teaching strategies, Student motivation, Effective teaching, School environment, Academic performance, Socio*

- economic factors, Multiple regression analysis, Cognitive achievement tests, Grade point average (GPA), Comprehensive exam, Educational background, Curriculum, Students attitude toward teachers'.

I.INTRODUCTION

The importance of the role played by the community colleges is exhibited in that they take over the process of preparing vocation lists or professionals needed by different work sectors in the community.

The number of community colleges in Jordan has increased rapidly during the last decade. Yet, their establishment was not based on a well-prepared and well-organized plan that ensures the full filament of the goals and objectives for which such colleges were primarily established. Therefore, they have been faced with some problems such as the low educational achievement of their graduates as indicated by their scores in the general exam.

The problem of low students' Achievement led to a general feeling of dissatisfaction of both the Jordanian educationalists and society, as well as, among the students themselves. Consequently efforts have been directed to identify the real reason for this problem as a first step toward improving students' achievement and ensures the graduation of a well-trained, highly qualified and efficient technicians capable of fulfilling their roles in developing the society. Therefore, the essential purpose of this study was to identify the main factors that affect the achievement of community college students in Jordan.

The mission, curricula, students, and faculty of community colleges make them ideal laboratories for the study of teaching and learning. To accomplish this goal, colleges faculty members should take on the role of classroom researchers, conducting careful; systematic, and patient studies of their students in the learning process.

This research will provide the teachers with the most effective factors that influence their students' achievement. This knowledge will help the teacher and the responsible of the educational strategy to take the factors in their account. problem of the Study.

The empirical part of research aimed at exploring the most influential factors which affect Jordanian community college students, in order to define the factors, trying to put proposed solutions to avoid their negative effect. We can

express the problem of this study in the following questions:

- 1) Is there a relation between the community college students' achievement, and their educational background as measured by the GPA?
- 2) To what extent the educational environment (curriculum, relation between student and teacher, administration) affect students' achievement?
- 3) To what extent the teacher's qualification, teaching strategies affect students' achievement?

Objectives of the Study.

The objectives of this study (complementary or directly Linked with scope) are:

- 1) To examine The state of The art in the field of factors affecting student achievement; to review and make a synthesis of available research skeptic literature.
- 2) To design and implement an ever mental research project concerning the main factors that affect students' achievement, to analyze and evaluate the factors and establish theoretical and practical inventory.

Hypotheses of the study.

In order to answer the above-mentioned questions, the researcher stated the following hypotheses:

- 1- The student's low educational background has negative effect on his present achievement.
- 2- Some of the educational environment components, namely curriculum, relations between students and teachers, administration, hue positive effects on student's academic achievement.
- 3- The teaching qualifications have positive effect on student's academic achievement.

Definition of Community College.

The educational literature reveals that the most acceptable definition to the term community college is as follows:

Institution of higher education that provides a wide variety of two-year program in different fields of specialization and offer a diploma degree after secondary school education.

The programs provided are comprehensive and flexible in nature so as to suit industrial and community needs as well as the plans of national development. They provide opportunities to a large number of secondary school graduates to get medium university education tating into consideration their capabilities, aptitude and, at the same time they fulfill the needs of the community for skilled man power [1].

Previous studies

Many studies were conducted in order to define the most influential factors that affect students' achievement. We can mention some of it as examples:

- Student achievement is often associated with the amount of study time they commit to however there are students who don't study much at all and attain high grades and achieve great things. Individuals who don't have a natural ability for education and knowledge need to spend more time with their head in between books than people who are natural learners and take in knowledge instantly. It's important to find the right amount of time to study to meet individual needs. teachers have that skill and it's one that affects student achievement but it's also something that students don't have a choice in. Teacher absences or frequent changes in teachers can have a negative impact on student achievement [2]. Teacher quality will depend on how successful a student is. The better the teacher the better the students in his or her students and transfer the knowledge that they have. Not all
- Bonhm [3] describes a study of 399 students, who attended Texas College in fall 1992 but did not return in spring 1993, examining students, and original goals, reasons for not returning by gender and ethnicity, and feelings about the college. Most respondents considered themselves 'stop outs" setting time/money conflicts as their reason for leaving.
- Coklin [4] describes a five -year follow-up at first-time, full-time community college students in Kansas, detailing academic, personal; and career experiences from first college entry to subsequent transfer/employment, as well as variables affecting progress. Over 758 achieved their objectives; financial problem, lifestyle changes, and change in goals were common reasons for not doing so.
- Differences in teacher effectiveness were found to be the dominant factor affecting student academic gain. The importance of the effects of certain classroom contextual variables (class size and classroom heterogeneity) appears to be minor and should not be viewed as inhibitors to the appropriate use of student outcome data in teacher assessment. These results suggest that teacher evaluation processes should include, as a major component, a reliable and valid measure of a teacher's effect on student academic growth over time. The use of student achievement data from an appropriately drawn standardized testing program administered longitudinally and appropriately analyzed can full these requirements. If the ultimate goal is to improve the academic growth of student populations, one must conclude that improvement of student learning begins with the improvement of relatively ineffective teachers regardless of the student placement strategies deployed within a school [5].
- Reynolds [6] their study investigated learning style characteristics of adult community college students.
- Compared to students with other decision-making styles,

dependent decision makers appeared to have reduced motivation for learning.

- limited persistence, and less acceptance of responsibility for their learning.

- Talbort [7] this report and a motivation seminar were prepared for teachers in the social sciences department of Champlain Regional College to study motivational dispositions of students who either avoided registering for a course in quantitative methods or failed out in important numbers. Teacher's conclusion was that students in general seemed to lack self-regulatory mechanism for academic achievement. A qualitative survey revealed that teaching students how to study and when to study would promote students' self-regulated academic achievement behaviors.

- Feldman [8] their study investigated pre-enrolment variables as predictors of: 1- year retention of 1, 140 first-time students of a community-college. Risk of dropping out was associated with lower high school grade point average, 20-24 year age range, part time attendance, and being a member of an ethnic minority.

- Martin [9] her study was conducted of mid-western community college to determine motivational profile differences between high and low achievers. The study results included the following:

1) Positive motivational sources, such as pleasure with performance, happiness and good prior performance, had no significant impact on academic performance.

2) Low achieving females scored overall positive motivational sources, while low achieving males scored lowest.

3) Females in both high and low achieving groups had significantly higher negative motivation scores than males.

4) Among both male and female low achievers, negative motivation was almost twice that of the high achievers.

5) Overall energy level was significantly higher in low achievers than in high achievers.

6) Anxiety level were significantly higher in low achievers.

7) Frustration level significantly higher in achievers.

- Dwinell [10] research conducted to examine the relationship between affective variables and academic success among high-risk college freshmen. It is conducted on the impact of student goals, learning styles, mathematics and test anxiety, other sources of stress, and level of development on achievement many development studies students. Results are reported showing that:

1) Students who placed a higher priority on academic reasons for attending the institution earned higher grades during their first quarter in the program.

2) The students were like to prefer a hand on learning style

and learning through interaction and visual stimuli rather than through lecture and text.

3) Stress and other variables may account for a greater proportion of variance in first grades than does high school grade point average or scholastic aptitude test scores.

- Powers [11] investigated the relationships of attribution for success and failure with achievement motivation in 110 academically talented high school students. were administered the mathematics attribution scale and measures of self-esteem, anxiety of success and failure in algebra to effort and achievement motivation are correlated. Controlling for anxiety and self-esteem does little to affect that relationship.

- Metha [12] studied the relationship between academic achievements. And personality, intelligence, study habits, adjustment, and academic motivation.

Results indicate that psychological variables in terms of personality, intelligence, study habits, academic motivation, and adjustment are not related and are independent of achievement; there was hardly any regularity of relationships among the independent variables.

- Joshi [13] investigated the usefulness of past academic achievement as a predictor of future achievement. Results show a decrease in performance at the degree level, past achievement was not found to be highly significant predictive tool.

s. Kumwat [14] study results show the following:

a) High achievers had higher intelligence scores.

b) High achievers had better concept-formation ability than low achievers.

c) There were no significant differences between the adjustment scores of high and low achievers.

d) High achievers had better scientific attitudes than low achievers.

e) There were no significant differences between high and low achievers with regard to contact personality factors.

Lowman [16] presented two-dimensional model for analyzing the educational process and determining the effectiveness of teaching at college level. According to this model, the quality of instruction results from a college teachers skill at creating both intellectual excitement and positive rapport in students, the kinds of emotions and relationships that motivate them to do their best work.

- Perry and Raymond [17] indicate that analysis of college teacher's expressiveness indicates that it influences student's achievement and perception of teacher control in the classroom. Results of research studies regarding active teaching had been contradictory for many years. However, advanced scientific research preceded great support to the

following assumptions:

- a) Teachers have an obvious impact on the quantity of learning;
- b) Certain teaching approach and behaviors are appropriate to certain environment and not for all.
- c) Teachers who have adequate perception of their teaching role spend more time in teaching their students and are more effective than other teachers.
- e) Achievement is higher among students who are taught according to an organized curriculum than students who learn through discovery or self-teaching [17].

- Rmsden [19] indicates that good teaching and good learning are linked through the students' experiences of what we do.

- The basic technique in evaluating teachers included the use of a pre- and post-test that was based on the course syllabus. Student's gains were considered as indicators of teacher's effectiveness [20].

- Many students are now accepting student's evocation as a part in the evaluation of teacher's performance. According to Riggs (1975), 85% out of 200 educational institutions use student evaluations [21].

- Brozenec [22] this study focuses on the major obstacles that community college teachers face, the major obstacle in the community college faculty's progress toward professional status in the tremendous amount of time that is spent in direct student contact.

A second obstacle lies in the bureaucratic structures of the institution itself. A final problem rests in the deficiencies and (imitations of in-service faculty development programs.

- Heng Kreng [23] the purpose of this study is to address achievement gaps among Cambodian students attending an English higher education institution in Cambodia by exploring factors that contribute to their academic achievement. Using a hierarchical multiple regression on second- year students (N=215) and teachers (N=23), this study examined the relative Influence of student engagement behaviors, students' background characteristics, and teacher quality on students' academic achievement. Both general and interaction effects by students' geographical origins were examined. The results suggested a variety of factors that positively predicted student achievement: the importance of students investing more efforts in homework or given tasks and whole-class participation, students' pre-college academic experience, teachers' teaching experience and course workload and difficulty.

Interaction effect existed between students' pre-college academic experience and geographical origins. With these findings, some important implications for closing student

achievement gaps are discussed.

- Easton, et al. [24] this study was conducted to investigate the instructional methods of a sample of exceptional community college teachers interviews conducted with 90 of the outstanding teachers revealed: 1) they had a strong sense of educational goals, 2) they showed respect for and interest in their students which was exemplified in their learning the students' names; 3) they encouraged student participation in the learning process by asking questions in class, arranging for students to work co-operatively with each other, 3) they carefully observed their students' progress and achievement levels and used the information to adapt class instructions and achievement levels and remediation.

- Matein, [25] they examined responses of 120 elementary school; middle school; and community colleges teachers support the notion that nature of the organization in which one works as well as the surrounding community are major influences on the extent to which educator plateauing (feelings of stagnation and sameness) is experienced.

- Easton [26] a study of especially effective community college teachers involving interviews with teachers with outstanding reputational and highly achieving students to determine instructional methods, alterable teaching behaviors, and techniques for improving teaching. Finding that the effective community college teacher must underscore the importance of planned course goals, respect for and interest in students, student participation, monitoring of student progress.

- Guskey [27] a study of the characteristics and behaviors of exceptional; effective urban community college teachers, shows that there are many shared common teaching characteristics and instructional practices, such as:

- 1) Encourage student participation
- 2) Provide students with feed back
- 3) Caring about students

- The Educational Testing Service (ETS) released a report last month detailing more than a dozen factors related to student achievement. "The gaps in student achievement mirror inequalities in those aspects of school, early life and home circumstances that research has linked to achievement," says Paul Barton, author of the study, "Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress." The report explores the factors affecting students in three core categories: early development, school environment and the home. In the early development area, factors affecting future student achievement include weight at birth, exposure to lead poisoning, nutrition and hunger. In the school environment area, the factors include teacher preparation and experience, and the rigor of the school

curriculum. Other factors include the level of technology in the classroom, class size and school safety.

The home environment is as important as what goes on in the school, the report says. Important factors include parental involvement in their children's education, how much parents read to young children, how much TV children are allowed to watch and how often students change schools. "This research shows that the achievement gap is not only about what goes on once kids get into the classroom. It's also about what happens to them before and after school," says Sharon Robinson, president of the ETS Educational Policy Leadership Institute [28].

- Sharmistha Roy the aim of the present study was to determine some of the selected influencing factors like daily routine of the students, tuitions, and content viewed on television, etc. affecting the academic achievement of school going adolescent boys and girls. The focal group of the study consisted of top ten rankers, both boys and girls from class VII, VIII, IX and XI selected from two English medium schools located at Anand and Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat. Data was collected by the questionnaire method. Each respondent was made to fill the questionnaire respectively. Analysis was done by calculating frequency and percentages. Results showed that there is not much difference in the importance of many of the selected factors exhibited by boys and girls, which play an important role in their academic achievement.

The academic performance of the student depends on a number of socio-economic factors, only 8 (eight) of which have been identified by us. This can explain at least 52% of our proposed model. There may be other factors which may have direct effect on the performance of the students. This requires an elaborate study of the performance of the student with multiple socio-economic factors by the application of multiple regression analysis as suggested by [29]. As a part of overall suggestion of the study, student must be urged to be regular in their attendance and appointing authority or the department may reconsider its policy of appointing trained teacher for qualitative performance of the student [30].

- Riana [31] indicated that creative teachers adopt a teaching approach that emphasized creativity and utilize a humanistic approach in controlling and interacting with student.

- L.A study conducted by Obaidat [32] dealt with the effects of teacher educational development on the teachers performance, the results of the study indicated that teachers who have attended the development program were more effective than those who did not.

- Wilson [33] his research investigated the effect of utilizing teaching strategies of the traditional lecture presentation

compared to self-directed learning on academic performance, attitude toward the teaching strategy, and anxiety with students studying principle and techniques basic to nursing practice. Analyses of the data revealed that students using self-directed learning experience scored significantly higher on academic performance, had significantly less anxiety before their final practical values and less dullness than the traditional lecture presentation group.

- Bryant [34] the objectives of the study were:

(1) To test the effectiveness of collaborative teaching approach in term of student performance on validated cognitive achievement tests.

(2) to observe any changes in the role of the teacher during the three years duration of the study and

(3) Monitor levels of self-directedness within both adult experimental and control groups. In addition,

- To test the performance of the older adult learner when they have the opportunity to be involved in collaborative processes that determine the teaching strategies and methodologies.

The problem investigated concerns the opportunities for teachers of part-time business studies students to utilize the adult learning credos of self-directedness, need for collaboration and the rich store of life knowledge in order to achieve higher levels of performance and a more effective learning experience.

Major conclusions: the highly significant results obtained from the study indicate that adult learners attending part-time business studies' courses will achieve significantly better results on cognitive end-of subject achievement tests when they participate in the choice of teaching strategy and methodology.

- Eaton [35] study suggests that general education programs should recognize the demographics and goals of community college students, rather than strict targeting degree-seeking students. 'Underscores the need to move away from the mere learning of information toward the development of analytical and synthetic reasoning skills.

- Randolph [36] the problem of this study was to determine the effects of modified student teams-achievement divisions from of a modified student teams-achievement divisions from of co-operative learning on academic achievement. Statistical analysis of the pre-test to post-test comparison showed no significant difference in achievement between students in co-operative learning and lecture with discussion classes.

- Snyder, et al. [37] this study, designed to examine instructional clarity focuses on two questions from the

literature: Is it necessary for a lesson to contain keys, links, framing statements, focusing moves, and examples in order for students to achieve and to be motivated and what is the specific purpose of links and focusing moves in instruction?

Results indicate: the instructional clarity variables were influential in changing students' motivations, conceptual achievement, and perception of clarity, focusing and link are necessary; links and focusing moves seem to be more important than links in increasing student motivations.

Russell Edgerton [38] warned that many of the standardized tests that faculty were attempting to use to assess program outcomes had actually been designed to measure individual attainment: that is, how one student performs relative to others taking the test, rather than what groups of students learn in college.

Anrigia [39] said that testing alone cannot evaluate institutions, he emphasized that higher education is concerned with far more than the minimum competencies that national examinations might measure with some degree of accuracy.

Jacobsen [40] with reference to Somers' study says that the students tend to interact with others as follows:

1. Casual interaction: When the students are sitting face to face.
2. Competitive interaction: When they are sitting angle to end.
3. Co-operative interaction: When they are sitting side to side.

Jewelle L. Harmon [41] The current study looked at the relationships among teacher absence, teacher job satisfaction, work-family conflict, family/work conflict, teachers' attitudes towards achievement measures, and their correlation with Virginia's standardized measure of student achievement; the Standards of Learning (SOLs). District differences in student achievement were also examined. Three school districts in southeastern Virginia accepted the invitation to participate. Responses from teachers who were employed by any of the three school districts and teaching third or fifth grade during the 2004-2005 school year were analyzed and included in the study. Survey data obtained from 197 third and fifth grade teachers from southeastern Virginia public elementary schools were used to assess teacher factors. The Standards of Learning were used to assess student achievement. Significant relationships were found between several teacher factor variables. Teacher absence variables were significantly correlated to Family/Work Conflict. As family's interference with work increased, illness absence increased also. TJSQ scores were significantly correlated to SOLTAS score and Work/Family Conflict. As job satisfaction increased negative attitudes

towards the SOLs and Work/Family Conflict increased as well. There were also significant positive relationships between Age, SOL TAS scores, and Work/Family Conflict. As teachers' ages increased, negative attitudes towards the SOLs and work's interference with family increased as well. School Districts differed significantly on TJSQ scores, Family/Work Conflict, and in all three subject areas of Student Achievement.

The authors of this study used the structural equation model (SEM) approach to test a model that hypothesized the influence of student learning strategies, internet and campus technology, quality of instruction and overall college experience, and student-faculty interaction on student academic achievement. Further a SEM model was developed to link all the study variables with A discussion provided to explain their interrelationship. The study used Data collected from 537 college seniors that represented

a mixture of Traditional undergraduate curricula. The results show that, internet and Campus technology, quality of instruction and overall college experience, And student-faculty interaction significantly predicts academic achievement. From a more practical perspective and considered collectively, the measures Used in this study provide much more information about the teaching and Learning environments in higher education settings than those that have been Traditionally used. The information from the multiple measures used in the Study can foster the development of more enriched learning environments Than the traditional practice of providing faculty with simple feedback from Traditionally used teaching or course characteristics student rating forms. The Core findings of the study have a variety of implications for higher education And practice, measurement and theory development, and future research.

Dr. John k. Rugut [42] said In his study that the factors influence students achievement consist of internal factors (physiological, intelligence, talent, interests, motivation, aspects), external factors (family, parents education, economic condition), school (teachers, learning media, infrastructure, curriculum).

Population of The Study:

1 -The report of the Ministry of Higher Education indicated that the total number of students enrolled in all community colleges in Jordan for the academic year 25292 students of whom 15536 (61.42%) were female. The percentages of students enrolled in the private and public colleges were 1 3,045 and 9,498 respectively (see label 1). The remaining number of the students enrolled in other community colleges for UNRWA and military colleges [43].

The report also indicated that 8453 students were enrolled in the education branch, 5542 students the commercial branch, 5128 students in the engineering branch, 3857

students in the paramedical branch, 297 students in the social sciences branch and, 230 students in the agricultural branch.

Table 1
Distribution of the population according to year, sex and, community college

Type of college	Year and sex				General total
	First year		Second year		
	male	Females	male	female	
public	1134	3281	1710	3373	9498
private	2317	3220	3208	4300	13045
total	3451	6501	4918	7633	22543

2- The same report of the Ministry of Higher Education indicates that the total number of teachers working at the different community colleges during the academic year 1993/1994 was 1365 teachers of whom 1151 were full-timer

and 214 part-timers.

The total number of female teachers was 395 (28.93%) 47.83% of the total number of teachers of both sexes were working in the private sector.

Table 2
Distribution of teachers according to sector, basis for appointment and sex

Sector	Sex and basis for appointment						Total	Total
	Full – time		Total	Part – times		Total		
	Male	Females		Male	Females			
Public	489	178	667	35	10	45	712	
private	330	154	484	116	53	169	653	
total	819	332	1151	151	63	214	1365	

3- The total number of deans of the community colleges during the academic year 1992/1993 was 56 of whom only

two (3.07%) were females, 14 (25%) were deans in the private sector (see Table 3).

Table 3
Distribution of the population According to the year, sex and, community college

Sex Sector	males	Females	Total
Public	40	2	42
Private	14	0	14
Total	54	2	56

Sample of the Study:

The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the study samples as following:

1- A sample of nine (16.07%) community colleges was randomly selected from the list of colleges certified by Ministry of Higher Education (every 6 the college was selected).

2- Similar percentages (15%) of the students of each college were randomly selected of whom 61% were females. The sample size was 610 (2.4% of the population) the X2 test was used to compare the selected sample with the population regarding sex and type of college (private or public). The results indicated that the sample was representative as the value of X2 was statistically not significant ($\alpha = 0.05$). see table 4.

Table 4
Distribution of the student sample according to type of college and sex

Type of college	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
Private	131	204	335
Public	108	167	275
Total	239	371	610

3. A sample of 150 college teachers was randomly selected from the teachers working at the selected colleges as Table 5

Show:

Table 5
The distribution of the teachers according to sex

Type of colleges	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
Private	22	11	33
public	92	25	117
total	36	114	150

Table 6
The Distribution of the teacher sample according to sex and specialization

Sex	Specialization			Total
	academic	Commercial	paramedical	
Male	57	37	20	114
Female	19	07	10	36
total	76	44	30	150

4- the deans of the selected colleges were all included in the study (N=9).as shown in table 7.

Table 7
Distribution of the deans according to type college and sex

Type of colleges	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
Private	6	0	6
Public	2	1	3
Total	8	1	9

II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher depended on the review of related literature and developed three questionnaires as follows:

A- Students questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed to identify the factors that affect students' academic achievement as perceived by the students themselves.

B- Teachers questionnaire: This questionnaire aimed at determine the teachers' perception regarding the factors that lead to low academic achievement of community colleges students.

C- Deans questionnaire: This questionnaire was constructed to determine the reasons for students' academic achievement as receded by the deans of community.

The Jury: The three questionnaires, 'were submitted to a jury of four professors working at the faculty of educational sciences \ university of Jordan.

Three members of the jury were asked to assess the validity of each tool Modifications were done according to the views of the jury.

Data Collection:

The data collection process proceeded as follows:

1- The deans' questionnaires were administered to each dean on an individual basis.

2- The teachers' questionnaires were administered to each teacher in the different colleges on an individual basis.

3- The student's questionnaires were administered to the selected sample of students in each college in groups of 4-6 students.

1- The X2 test was used to test sample of the target population where.

2- $X^2 = (\sum p_i a_i - PA - PA) pa$.

3- simple percentages and frequency distribution were used in presenting the results of data collected.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at identifying the factors that affect the achievement of community college students in Jordan from the perspective of students, teachers and Deans, Accordingly, the results will be presented under three main headings: students' responses, teachers' responses and deans' responses. Under each main heading, several subheadings will be included.

1. Students ' Responses:

Table 8 shows that the majority of students (70%) in both the public and the private colleges achieved grade point average (GPA) that ranged between 60%-70% acceptable grade. On the other hand only 5.57% of the students in the public and private colleges achieved averages between 91 and 100.

Table 8
Distribution of the Students Sample according to the Type of College and Grade point Average

Type of college	Grade point Average				Total
	60-70	71-80	81-90	91-100	
Public n	179	52	33	21	285
P	62.80	18.24	11.57	7.34	100
Private n	248	47	17	13	325
P	76.3	14.46	5.23	4.1	100
Total n	427	99	50	34	610
P	70	16.24	8.19	5.57	100

This means that there is a kind of achievement problem needing more investigation so as to reveal the real reasons behind students' low achievement.

Table 8 also shows that the general averages of the public community colleges students are better than those of the

private community colleges students. this superiority can be attributed to the following characteristics:

Whereas one of the main term for students' admission at the public community colleges is that a student's general point average should be at least 60% the least general point

average while is accepted for admission at the private community colleges 50%,

The priority for students' admission at the public community colleges is for those who got the highest general point average among the applicants, the priority for that at the private community college is for those who register and pay fees.

Table 9 indicates that the students enrolled in the public community colleges have better educational background than

those enrolled in the private colleges as shown by the median of grades obtained by both in the high school comprehensive exam (76.3 and 68.2 respective). Consequently, the grade point averages of students in public colleges were higher than the averages of students grades in private colleges (75.7 and 68.3 respectively). The results also indicated That there was a positive relationship between student grades in high school and their grades in the colleges.

Table 9

Distribution of the students, sample according to grade point average in the, secondary school Exam

Number of students	High school GPA				Total
	59 or <	60 – 65	66 – 70	> 70	
No.	207	133	60	210	610
%	33.93	21.80	9.84	34.43	100

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point averages of students in public colleges were higher than the averages of students grades in private colleges (75.7 and 68.3 respectively). The results also indicated That there was a positive relationship between student grades in high school and their grades in the colleges.

Table 10

The Relationship between High School Median and for Students in the private and public Colleges

Type of collie	Median of high school grand's	Median of college grads
Public	76.3	75.7
Private	68.2	68.3

It can be also noticed that the students who go comparatively high point averages in the community colleges were those who got high point averages in high school and those students getting the low point averages in such colleges were the same students getting similar low point averages in the high school. which means that the students' educational background influenced their achievement in the community colleges. It is the same result for both private and public community college students.

This supports the same results of some studies such as a study conducted by Omar Al-Sheikh [44] and a study conducted by Studies Department in the Ministry of Higher Education in Jordan [45]. Also this result supports what Norton [46] had side about the positive correlation between high prior- academic achievement and present success.

Briefly one interesting outcome is the tendency of conservation of the median of high school grades at the level of community college. That means that high school medians could be a good predictor of academic achievement of community colleges.

With reference to the statistical results shown in Tables 9 and 10, we can say that Low GPA at high school is among the reasons affecting student achievement. The present study shows that 73% of The students achieved school GPA below

65 which is The minimum acceptable to apply to a public university and 33.907 had achieved GPAs below 60% which is The minimum acceptable grade for applying to a private university, considering that application does not ensure enrollment.

Table 11 was constructed for the purpose of investigating the effect of curriculum subject on community college students' achievement measured by the percentage of their answers on the five relevant items. The table included the opinions of two groups of students.

The first was the high achievers who got 70 GPA or more. The second group was the low achievers who got less than 70 G'PA.

It is noticed that that 85.5% of the students agreed that the curriculum taught to them helped in developing and improving their behavior.

It is noticed also that only 31% of all the achievers agreed that the subject taught gave information needed for success in future jobs. This result showed that despite that the subjects were considered interesting by 71% of all achievers, such subjects did not give information needed for success in future jobs. This was supported by 78% of all the achievers who agreed that there was a lack of relation between subjects and future jobs' requirements.

Table 11
Students Opinions regarding curriculum

Item	High achievers GPA>70		Low achievers GPA <70		Total N=610	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
1. STUDENTS ARE Interesting	80%	20%	62%	38%	71%	29%
2. lack of relation between subject studies and future job requirements	75%	25%	81%	19%	78%	22%
3. subjects taught give information needed for success in future jobs	30%	70%	32%	68%	31%	6%
4. subjects taught help in improving and developing students positive behavior	89%	11%	82%	18%	85.5%	14.5%
5. there is a boring repetition of subject	72%	28%	70%	3%	71%	29%

For investigating the differences between the high achievers opinions and the low achievers' opinions regarding the five item about the curriculum, the following table was made:

Table 12
Differences between High and Low Achievers' Options Regarding Curriculum

Rank	High achiever's	Low achiever's
Rank 1	4	4
Rank 2	1	2
Rank 3	2	5
Rank 4	5	1
Rank 5	3	3

It can be noticed that the rank of item for both high achievers and low achievers are either the same or a little different except for item number one which is "Subjects are interesting". The difference may be attributed to the fact that when students understand subjects for any reasons they find them more interesting than those who do not understand such subjects.

Table 13 shows us that the most important four items related to students' opinion regarding teachers' behavior and teaching were the same for both high achievers and low achievers. These items were the following:

* Teachers' qualification is important for quality of teaching (Item no. 14).

* Improving college teaching improves performance (1 tem no. 10).

* Teachers show interest in teaching (Item no. 9).

* most teachers are able to explain the subject (Item no. 3).

But whereas the percentages of such item for the high achievers were respectively 98%, 96%, 93% and 93%, they were for the low achievers as follows: 97%, 97%, 88% and 84%.

For the purpose of showing the differences between the high achievers' opinions and the low achievers' opinion regarding teachers' behavior and teaching strategies Table 14 was made. This table can show the ranks of items according to their importance as measured by percentage for each group of achievers.

Table 13
Students' Opinion Regarding Teachers' Behavior and Teaching Strategies

Item	High achievers GPA>70		Low achievers GPA <70		Total N=610	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
1. teachers are interested in students understanding	82%	18%	63%	37%	72.5%	27.5%
2. teachers assist in explaining weakness and help to improve learning	83%	17%	65%	35%	74%	26%
3. most teachers are able to explain the subject	93%	7%	84%	16%	88.5%	11.5%
4. teachers encourage students participation and interaction	89%	11%	72%	28%	80.5%	19.5%
5. teachers use education strategies that make learning more interesting	90%	10%	60%	40%	75%	25%
6. teachers help students even during their rest periods	89%	11%	70%	30%	79.5%	20.5%
7. teachers treat students with respect	83%	17%	80%	20%	81.5%	18.5%
8. teachers do not maintain organization during the teaching session	25%	75%	32%	68	28.5%	71.5%
9. teacher show interest in teaching	93%	7%	88%	12	90.5%	9.5%
10. improving collage teaching improves performance	96%	4%	97%	3%	96.5%	3.5%
11. teachers exert effort to make subjects interesting	91%	9%	64%	36.5%	77.5%	22.5%
12. teachers use teaching aids	88%	12%	63%	37.5%	75.5%	24.5%
13. teachers seem to have good mastery of the subject they teach	93%	7%	70%	30%	81.5%	18.5%
14. teachers qualification is important for quality of teaching	98%	2%	97%	3%	97.5%	2.5%

This same relation was emphasized by many researchers [43,10], and by the results of the present study as well, where 96.5% of the students indicated that improving college teaching will improve performance. Fortunately, relatively high percentages of students (75%) indicated that their teachers use educational strategies that make teaching more interesting and 68% indicated that their teachers maintain organization during teaching. However, differences in responses of high achieving and low achieving students was not significant although the responses of high achievers were better.

Students indicated a general better attitude toward their teachers' qualification and enthusiasm and their role and participation in their learning. This is indicated by high percentages of students who positively responded to the different statements. The majority of the students (98% of the high achievers and 97% of the low achievers) agreed that teachers' qualifications are important for quality of teaching and 81.5% of the total sample indicated that their teachers seem to have good mastery of the subjects they teach and 88.5% indicated that their teachers are able to explain the subject content. Moreover, 89% of high achievers and 72% of low achievers indicated that their teachers encourage participation and interaction, also the majority indicated that they are treated with respect and are

helped by their teachers whenever the need arises. Easton and associates [57] related these practices to the qualities of good teachers in teaching. Bernard H. [58] however, claimed that the qualities of good teachers are not absolute, they are, instead, interacting traits that vary in the merits, depending upon many other factors in the educational process and environment including course level and relevance of content. Snyder and others [37] added that college teaching should be meaningful and related to future roles after graduation. A relatively low percentage agreed that the subjects they take give them information necessary for future jobs, whereas the majority revealed the presence of boring repetition of subjects

2. Teachers' Responses.

Table 14 indicates that 74.66% of the teachers consider that low students' achievement in the college is mainly related to their GPA obtained in high school.

The most important cause was the lack of students motivation to study at community colleges (80.66%), also 67.33% of the teachers consider the inappropriateness of the curricula to the level of the students an important factor affecting their achievement. Low percentages of teachers (16.66% / 13.33%) indicated reason such as the students socio-economic status, presence of assigned text -book which could reduce students' motivation.

Table 14
Teachers Responses Regarding factors That Affect Students' Achievement

	Factors affecting low achievement	Teachers responses	
		Per – YES	Per - NO
1.	Low students GPA at high school	74.66	2534
2.	Low student motivation to study at community colleges	80.66	1934
3.	Negative attitudes of community towards the graduates of colleges	30.00	70.00
4.	Students socio-economic status (low family income)	33.33	66.67
5.	Difficulty for finding a job after graduation	48.00	52.00
6.	Presence of assigned text book	16.66	83.34
7.	The goals of students being to a certificate not to learn	13.33	86.67
8.	Inappropriateness of curricula to the level of the students	67.33	36.67

Comparison between the percentages of teachers' responses as shown in Table 15 and the percentages of the students' responses as shown in Tables 8, 9, 11 and 12, we can find that both teachers and students provided us with similar results showing that most of the community college students were those who got low general point averages (GPA) in the general secondary exams. It was obvious that 64.57% of the community college students were of low GPA in the general secondary exams. This same result was concluded by 74.66% of the teachers. Moreover Table 11 showed statistically that such students' low GPA could be considered an indication of their low achievement in the community college.

It can be also noticed that 67.33% of the teachers consider the inappropriateness of curriculum was one of the important reasons for students low achievement. With

reference to Table 15, this was supported by 78.50% of the students who considered the curriculum was inappropriate and irrelevant to their future job demands.

3. Deans' Responses

Table 15 shows that the majority of deans (88.9%) indicated that low students achievement is mainly related to their low GPA in high school. Also 77.77% of them mentioned that the lack of motivation to study at community colleges consider as an important factor affecting student's achievement.

44.4% of deans indicated that low student achievement is related to difficulty to find a job after graduation. A minority of deans (11.1%) indicated that students' interest in getting a certificate and not in learning. Also 66.6% of the deans indicated that the courses which the colleges teach are not suitable to students' potential learning, and the

courses are unrelated with job demands, that means both factors have an influence on students' achievement.

Table 15
Deans' Responses Regarding the factors Affecting Student Achievement

Item	Deans Responses	
	Per – YES	Per – NO
1. Low students GPA at high school	88.90	11.10
2. Low student motivation to study at community colleges	77.77	22.23
3. Negative image of students by the society	42.20	57.80
4. Low students socio-economic status	22.20	77.80
5. Difficulty for finding a job after graduation	44.40	55.60
6. Students interest in getting a certificate rather than learning	11.10	88.90
7. Inability of the graduates to enroll in universities	88.80	11.20
8. The courses which the collage teach are not suitable to students potential learning	66.60	33.40
9. The courses taught are related with job demands	66.60	33.40

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Community colleges constitute a significant part of the educational system. They allow for higher education of lower cost, earlier graduation, specialized and vocational education, course transferability and corporate job connection. yet, students achievement at community colleges was considered as being low. These students constitute a large sector of the community, therefore, the study of their problems becomes obviously important. Consequently this descriptive study aimed at answering the question:

"What are the main factors that affect the achievement of the community colleges students in Jordan?"

The results of the study were presented under three main headings: students responses, teachers responses and deans' responses. Several subheadings were included under each main heading.

The results indicated that the majority of the students (70%) achieved GPAs between 60-70% where 60 is the minimum acceptable grade for success at community colleges.

A positive relationship was revealed between students' grades in high schools and their GPAs in the college.

The GPAs of students in public colleges were higher than the GPA s of those enrolled in private colleges (75.7% and 68.3% respectively). This was related to higher entry scores of students of public colleges.

Students revealed a general positive attitude towards the teachers ,teaching strategies as well as the administration. The majority of them (over 80%) indicated that their teachers were well-qualified and had good mastery of the subject they taught. St5udents also indicated that teaching strategies and teaching aids were effectively utilized. 89.9% of students indicated that the main concern of the college administration was their success. Yet, relatively high percentages indicated lack of relation between the curriculum/subjects they learned and their future jobs.

Teachers and deans indicated that the reasons for low student achievement was mainly low GPAs at high school, lack of student motivation to study in community colleges (74.66% and 80.66% of teachers and 88.9% and 77.7% of deans respectively).

In conclusion, the present study had answered its main question and sub questions as follows:

1) There is a positive relationship between students educational background as indicated by the grade point average at high school and students' achievement at the college.

2) There is no proved positive relationship between some of the educational environment and students' academic achievement. The reason is that the facilities in all colleges is considered to be the same and is in accord with the standards of the Ministry of Higher Education.

3) There is no relationship between teachers' qualifications, teaching strategies, and the academic achievement of students who positively evaluated them. in this study, it seems that teacher qualifications and teaching strategies do not affect low achievements. These factors are not responsible for low academic achievement. They are of acceptable quality. Some other factors have stronger negative influences that diminish the power of good teaching.

4) There is a negative attitude toward the curriculum regarding relevance with job demand, most of the students see that the current curriculum do not reflect very clearly the job demand and this may for some extent affect negatively students achievement.

2. Recommendations:

In light of the result of this study the following recommendations and suggestions are considered important:

- Establishing or choosing special remedial courses relevant to the students specialization for overcoming community college students' low achievement.

- Accepting secondary school graduates, should be based on specific achievement tests held by the community college instead of being based on general secondary point average.
- Revising and modifying the community college curriculum to be more suitable for satisfying the needs of both community and individual. Such curriculum should be related to the requirements of future jobs.
- Modernizing community college curriculum to cope with recent scientific developments.
- Modifying such curriculum in a way solving the problem of overlapping and repetition in the subject material.
- Qualifying community college teachers through specialized courses or giving them a chance to continue their higher education.
- providing community college teachers with appropriate methods and techniques of teaching through university courses emphasizing the academic and psychological characteristics of students.
- Further studies should be conducted to study each of the factors pinpointed find scientific means to implement.

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