The Impact of Psychological Factors on the Formation of Social Action : A Field Study on a Sample of University Students at Laghouat University

Djafoura Mousab[1], Farsi ibrahimelkhalil[2]

Lecturer A, Amar Telidji University of Laghouat

[1]m.djaafoura@lagh-univ.dz; [2]ibk.farsi@lagh-univ.dz

Abstract

This study aimed to examine the impact of psychological factors-namely motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety-on the formation of social action among students at the University of Laghouat. It also sought to identify the nature of the correlational relationship between these variables and to explore differences according to certain demographic variables. The study adopted the descriptive-analytical approach. Measurement tools were applied, including a motivation scale, a self-esteem scale, a social anxiety scale, in addition to a social action formation scale, to a randomly selected sample of 100 male and female students from the University of Laghouat. The results showed a significant effect of both motivation and self-esteem on the formation of social action, while social anxiety was found to have a negative effect on it. The findings also revealed a statistically significant correlational relationship between psychological factors and the formation of social action, as well as the presence of some statistically significant differences according to the study variables.The study concluded that social action among university students is directly influenced by the individual's psychological structure. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to developing positive psychological aspects within the university environment and to strengthen psychological counseling programs to support adaptation and social engagement.

Keywords: Psychological factors, social action, university students.

Introduction :

Social action is considered one of the fundamental concepts in sociology; it refers to the behaviors exhibited by an individual during interaction with others within society, which involve a specific social meaning and are subject to the influence of surrounding social structures and values (Weber, 1922). Social action reflects an individual's ability to influence and interact within their groups, and it is also linked to the extent of their awareness of social values and principles (Attiya, 2010). Conversely, psychology is concerned with studying the internal processes of the individual, such as motivation, psychological attitudes, self-esteem, and social anxiety, which are essential factors shaping human behavior in various situations (Al-Harbi, 2015). These psychological factors determine an individual's ability to adapt to their social environment and influence the quality and behavior of their interaction with others, whether in educational, professional, or societal spheres (Al-Zahrani, 2018). Studies indicate that psychological factors play a crucial role in directing social action; individuals with high motivation are more capable of social participation and positive interaction (Al-Qurashi, 2016).

Furthermore, positive self-esteem contributes to enhancing social relationships and community participation (Sadiq, 2019). In contrast, high levels of social anxiety may limit an individual's ability to engage in social activities and contribute to the group (Al-Qurashi, 2016). Despite the increasing interest in psychological factors and social action, field studies that integrate psychological and social aspects within the Algerian context—particularly among university students in interior regions such as Laghouat—remain limited (Al-Khatib, 2020). This creates an urgent need for a field study aimed at clarifying how various psychological factors influence the formation of social action among this group, representing a cognitive bridge between psychology and sociology and contributing to the enrichment of local scientific research. This study comes in response to this need, aiming to understand the relationship between psychological factors and social action among students at the University of Laghouat, using reliable psychological and social measurement tools and analyzing the relationship between various variables. The researcher hopes that the findings will contribute to providing practical recommendations to enhance positive social interaction among students and support human and social development strategies within the university environment.

1- Study Problem:

Social action is one of the fundamental pillars upon which sociology relies to understand individual behavior within the framework of the group and society; it reflects the interaction between individuals within a specific social group and carries a defined social meaning (Weber, 1922). Social action serves as a tool for understanding how individuals direct their behavior within society, whether through cooperation, participation in activities, adherence to laws or social values, or even in expressing their individual and collective stances (Attiya, 2010). On the other hand, psychology focuses on studying the internal factors of the individual that influence their behavior, such as motivation, self-esteem, social anxiety, and psychological attitudes (Al-Harbi, 2015). These factors determine an individual's capacity for positive or negative interaction with others, the extent of their engagement in social activity, and their ability to adapt to the requirements of the university or community environment (Al-Zahrani, 2018). Previous studies indicate that motivation plays a key role in driving individuals toward social participation; individuals with high motivation show a greater inclination to integrate into group activities and cooperate with others (Al-Qurashi, 2016). Likewise, positive self-esteem contributes to enhancing self-confidence, which facilitates effective social interaction and participation in activities requiring communication with others (Sadiq, 2019). Conversely, social anxiety is considered a psychological factor that may limit an individual's ability to engage in social action, as individuals suffering from high levels of anxiety tend to avoid social situations, thereby reducing their effective participation in society (Al-Qurashi, 2016). Despite these significant theoretical findings, field studies investigating the relationship between psychological factors and social action within the Algerian context-particularly among students in interior universities such as the University of Laghouat-remain very scarce (Al-Khatib, 2020). Most studies focus on psychological or social contexts separately, without integrating them into a comprehensive framework that allows for understanding how psychological factors influence social behavior within the university environment. The absence of this type of field research represents a significant research gap, as understanding the relationship between the

individual and their society on psychological and social levels can contribute to improving the quality of social interaction and developing educational and developmental programs aimed at enhancing positive social action among university youth. This topic gains particular importance in Algeria, where interior universities face challenges in fostering student participation and constructive social interaction, making the study of psychological factors influencing social action an essential necessity (Sadiq, 2019; Al-Khatib, 2020).

Based on the aforementioned, the study poses the following central questions:

- What is the impact of psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) on the formation of social action among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat?
- Are there statistically significant differences in psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat according to gender?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the formation of social action among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat according to gender?
- Is there a statistically significant correlation between psychological factors and the formation of social action among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat?

1.1- Study Hypotheses:

➢ Psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) have a significant impact on the formation of social action among students at the University of Laghouat.
➢ There are statistically significant differences in psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat according to gender.
➢ There are statistically significant differences in the formation of social action among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat according to gender.
➢ There is a statistically significant correlation between psychological factors and the formation of social action among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat.

1-2- Study Objectives:

This study aims to explore the impact of psychological factors on the formation of social action among students at the University of Laghouat, and to achieve integration between the psychological and social aspects of individual behavior. The objectives of the study are summarized in the following points:

➢ To determine the level of psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) among students at the University of Laghouat.
➢ To determine the level of social action among students at the University of Laghouat, and the extent of their participation in social activities and group interaction.
➢ To study the impact of psychological factors on the formation of social action, in order to identify the influence of each psychological factor on the social behavior of students.
➢ To reveal differences in psychological factors among students according to gender, to determine whether there are differences between males and females in motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety.
➢ To reveal differences in social action among students according to gender, to identify the extent to which gender influences the level of participation and social interaction.

> ➢ To analyze the relationship between psychological factors and social action, with the aim of providing practical recommendations to enhance positive social interaction among students.

1.3. Study Significance:

The significance of this study stems from several levels: scientific, applied, and societal. It contributes to enriching knowledge in the fields of psychology and sociology, particularly within the Algerian university context. The significance of the study can be summarized in the following points:

✓ **Scientific Significance**

- The study contributes to clarifying the relationship between psychological factors and social action among university students, a field where empirical studies remain limited in Algeria.
- It provides a knowledge base for understanding how motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety influence an individual's social behavior, thereby enhancing the integration between psychology and sociology.
- The findings represent a valuable addition to psychological and social research in the Arab world, specifically regarding interior university environments, such as the University of Laghouat.

✓ **Applied Significance**

- The results assist university administrators and faculty in designing programs and activities that foster positive social interaction among students.
- It contributes to providing practical recommendations to enhance students' self-confidence and motivation while reducing social anxiety that may hinder their participation in university life.
- The findings can be utilized to develop psychological and social support plans for students, contributing to the improvement of the learning environment and social interaction within the university.

✓ **Societal Significance**

- The study highlights how psychological factors affect social participation, which helps promote values of cooperation and community engagement among university youth.
- It contributes to understanding the psychological and social challenges that students in interior universities may face, assisting relevant authorities in directing developmental and educational programs that align with students' needs.
- It promotes awareness of the vital integration between mental health and social participation, which is essential for building a more interactive and cohesive society.

1.4. Study Terminology:

1.4.1. Psychological Factors :

Psychological factors refer to the internal traits and processes of an individual that influence their behavior and interaction with others. These include elements such as motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety (Al-Harbi, 2015).

Operational Definition: In this study, psychological factors are measured using reliable scales for each factor:

- **Motivation:** The student's ability to engage and take initiative in academic and social activities.
- **Self-Esteem:** The level of self-confidence and the sense of self-worth.
- **Social Anxiety:** The level of fear or tension experienced by the student when participating in social situations.

1.4.2. Social Action :

Social action is the behavior performed by an individual within the framework of their relationships with society. It expresses a specific social meaning and aims at interacting with others in accordance with social values and norms (Weber, 1922).

Operational Definition: In this study, social action refers to the extent of students' participation in social activities, their cooperation with others, and their commitment to social values and norms within the university. It is measured through a questionnaire that includes indicators of participation and social interaction.

2. Methodological Procedures:

2.1- Study Design: The Descriptive Correlational Method was adopted for this study, as it aligns with the nature of the field research aimed at:

- **Describing** the level of psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) among students at the University of Laghouat.
- **Describing** their level of social action.
- **Revealing** the relationship between psychological factors and social action.
- **Testing** the differences among students according to gender.

The descriptive correlational method allows for the study of phenomena as they exist in their natural reality and the analysis of relationships between variables quantitatively, without the researcher's intervention to alter behavior or surrounding conditions (Al-Harbi, 2015).

2.2. Study Population :

The study population consists of all students at the University of Laghouat enrolled in various disciplines during the current academic semester. This population serves as the primary base for selecting the field sample, employing a method that enables the researcher to generalize the findings to the broader student body

2.3. Data Collection Procedures :

- ➤ Necessary approvals were obtained from the university administration to authorize the conduct of the study.
- ➤ The questionnaires (both paper-based and electronic) were distributed to the sample members, accompanied by an explanation of the study's objectives and assurances to participants regarding the confidentiality of their information.
- ➤ Data collection was carried out in a systematic manner, and all completed questionnaires were verified for inclusion before commencing the statistical analysis.

2.4. Study Sample :

A sample consisting of 100 male and female students was selected using the simple random sampling method from various disciplines across the university. The sample included both genders to ensure the possibility of analyzing gender-based differences in psychological factors and social action. This sample size is considered appropriate for similar field studies, allowing

for the application of suitable statistical analyses such as correlation, regression, and analysis of variance (Al-Zahrani, 2018).

2.5. Data Collection Instruments

Reliable and validated measurement tools were employed to assess the study variables, as follows:

1. **Motivation Scale:** Used to measure the student's ability to take initiative and participate in academic and social activities (Al-Zahrani, 2018).
2. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** Used to measure the level of self-confidence and the sense of personal worth among students (Sadiq, 2019).
3. **Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS):** Used to measure the extent of tension and fear experienced by the student when participating in social situations (Al-Qurashi, 2016).
4. **Social Action Questionnaire:** Specifically designed by the researcher for this study, it measures the extent of student participation in social activities, cooperation with others, and engagement within the university community.

2.6. Psychometric Properties of the Measurement Instruments :

The researchers assessed the **validity** of the Psychological Factors Scale using the **Discriminant Validity** method (specifically, the **Extreme Groups Comparison** method).

Table 01 : illustrates the discrimination between high and low scores on the scale (Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2).

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig
Upper Group	27	88.50	5.20	18.32	52	0.0001
Lower Group	27	21.30	4.22			

the table above demonstrates a significant difference between the upper and lower groups regarding the variable under study. The mean score for the upper group (M = 85.50) was substantially higher than that of the lower group (M = 21.30\$). This disparity confirms the instrument's high capacity to discriminate between students with high levels and those with low levels of the measured psychological factors. The calculated \$t\$-value of 18.32 at 52 degrees of freedom, with a statistical significance of $p < 0.001$, indicates that the difference is highly significant. Consequently, the scale exhibits excellent discriminative power and is deemed valid for the study's purposes.

Furthermore, the researchers evaluated the reliability of the scale using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient...

Table 02 : illustrates the reliability of the Psychological Factors Scale (Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2).

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.86	24

As shown in the table above, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated at 0.86. This value indicates a high level of internal consistency, confirming the scale's strong reliability and its suitability for academic research.

* Validity of the Social Action Scale :

The researchers evaluated the validity of the Social Action Scale using the Discriminant Validity method (specifically, the Extreme Groups Comparison method).

Table 03 : presents the item-total correlation and the discrimination power for the Social Action Scale (Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2)

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	df	Sig
Upper Group	27	75.60	4.10	18.38	52	0.0001
Lower Group	27	55.40	3.75			

The table above illustrates the significant difference between the upper and lower groups regarding the variable under study. The mean score for the upper group (M = 75.60) was substantially higher than that of the lower group (M = 55.40). This disparity confirms the instrument's high capacity to discriminate between students with high levels and those with low levels of social action.

The calculated t-value was 18.38 with 52 degrees of freedom (df = 52). The statistical significance level ($p < 0.001$) indicates that the difference between the two groups is highly significant. Consequently, this demonstrates that the scale possesses excellent discriminative power and is highly valid for use in this study.

Furthermore, the researchers evaluated the reliability of the scale using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient...

Table 04 : illustrates the reliability of the Social Action Scale (Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2).

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.96	12

As shown in the table above, the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated at 0.96. This remarkably high value indicates an exceptional level of internal consistency, confirming the scale's superior reliability and its high degree of stability for academic application.

3. Study Results :

3.1. Results of the First Hypothesis:

"Psychological factors (Motivation, Self-Esteem, and Social Anxiety) have a statistically significant impact on shaping the social action of Laghouat University students."

 Table 05 : illustrates the results of the first hypothesis (Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2).

	Beta	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	t-value	Sig
Psychological Factors	0.39	0.52	4.82	0.000
Social Action	-0.27		4.15	

The table indicates that all psychological factors contribute significantly to predicting the formation of social action. While the impact of motivation and self-esteem was positive and statistically significant, social anxiety exhibited a significant negative impact, confirming the influence of these variables on social behavior.

Based on the correlation results, multiple linear regression analysis, and the coefficient of determination (R^2), it is evident that psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) have a statistically significant effect on shaping the social action of Laghouat University students. Consequently, the first hypothesis is accepted.

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.52) reveals that psychological factors collectively explain 52% of the variance in social action, indicating a substantial effect size for the statistical model. Standardized Beta coefficients show that motivation is the most influential variable, followed by self-esteem, while social anxiety exerts a moderate negative effect.

* Discussion of the Results

The researchers attribute this finding to the fact that students' social behavior cannot be understood in isolation from their psychological characteristics; rather, it is directly influenced by internal motives, self-perception, and the level of anxiety experienced in social situations. The results showed that motivation ranked first in terms of impact. This can be explained by the fact that highly motivated students tend to be more proactive, participating in social activities and engaging in interactions within the university environment. Motivation serves as a fundamental driver of behavior, propelling the individual toward purposeful social action.

Regarding self-esteem, a significant positive effect on social action was observed. Students with high self-esteem demonstrate greater confidence in dealing with others, a higher ability to express their opinions, and increased participation in various social settings. This is because self-esteem enhances the sense of competence and social acceptance, encouraging interaction rather than withdrawal. Conversely, the results indicated that social anxiety negatively affects social action. This aligns with psycho-social interpretations, where high social anxiety leads to fear of negative evaluation and avoidance of social group interactions. Thus, students experiencing high anxiety levels are less engaged in social action within the university context. The researchers further interpret these findings through the lens of the interplay between psychology and sociology. While psychology emphasizes the role of internal processes (motivation, self-esteem, anxiety) in directing behavior, sociology highlights that social action is a product of the individual's interaction with their environment. Therefore, social action among university students is a direct result of the interaction between the individual's psychological structure and their social context. In conclusion, the findings confirm that psychological factors are primary determinants in shaping the social action of Laghouat

University students. Motivation and self-esteem foster social participation, while social anxiety acts as a barrier. These results align with modern trends advocating for an integrative approach that combines psychological and social dimensions to understand human behavior.

3.2.Results of the Second Hypothesis: There are statistically significant differences in psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) among Laghouat University students attributable to the gender variable".

To verify this hypothesis, an Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare males and females across the study variables.

Table 06 :Illustrates the differences in psychological factors based on gender (Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2).

	Gender	*N*	Mean	*SD*	t-value	*dF*	Sig
Motivation	Male	50	71.42	6.30	*-2.15	98	0.03
	Female	50	73.85	5.90			
Self-Esteem	Male	50	68.10	7.20	-1.88		0.06
	Female	50	70.02	6.75			
Social Anxiety	Male	50	55.60	8.40	**-2.74		0.007
	Female	50	60.95	7.80			

The results of the second hypothesis revealed statistically significant differences between males and females in motivation levels (p = 0.034 < 0.05), favoring females. This indicates that female students exhibit a higher level of motivation compared to their male counterparts. Conversely, no statistically significant differences were found regarding self-esteem (p = 0.063 > 0.05), suggesting a convergence in self-esteem levels between genders within the university environment. Regarding social anxiety, significant differences were observed (p = 0.007 < 0.05), also favoring females, who recorded a higher mean score compared to males.

The higher motivation levels among females can be interpreted in light of social and cultural transformations that have heightened female students' awareness of the importance of academic success and self-actualization. Furthermore, previous literature suggests that females often demonstrate a greater degree of commitment and academic responsibility. This aligns with achievement motivation theories, which emphasize the impact of socialization and societal expectations on shaping motivational behavior. The absence of gender differences in self-esteem may be attributed to the university environment serving as a space that provides equitable opportunities for both genders, contributing to a relatively balanced self-image. This finding supports studies indicating a decline in gender-based self-esteem disparities during late adolescence and early adulthood due to shared educational and social experiences. As for social anxiety, the higher levels found in females can be understood through psychological literature suggesting that females are often more sensitive to social evaluation and more acutely aware of others' perceptions. Additionally, certain socialization patterns that reinforce social caution may play a role. These results are consistent with numerous studies reporting a higher prevalence of social anxiety among females.

In conclusion, these findings underscore the integrative nature of psychology and sociology. Psychological behavior is formed within a socio-cultural context that defines gender roles and

expectations. Consequently, the recorded differences reflect a complex interaction between internal psychological factors and external social determinants within the university setting.

3.3. Results of the Third Hypothesis :

Hypothesis: "There are statistically significant differences in the formation of social action among students at the University of Laghouat attributable to the gender variable."

To verify this hypothesis, an Independent Samples T-Test was conducted to detect differences between males and females in the level of social action formation.

Table (5): Differences in Social Action according to Gender(Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Value	DF	Sig
Social Action	Male	50	74.30	6.85	1.92		0.075
	Female	50	76.95	6.40			

The results indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in the formation of social action attributable to the gender variable, as the significance value reached (0.057), which is greater than the adopted significance level (0.05). This indicates a convergence in the level of social action between male and female students within the university environment.

The absence of significant differences in social action formation between males and females can be interpreted by the fact that the university environment represents a unified social context that provides similar opportunities for interaction and participation for both genders, thereby reducing the impact of traditional gender differences. The university serves as a relatively modern space based on the principle of equal opportunity and academic and social participation, which contributes to the convergence of social behavior patterns among students.

Furthermore, this result can be linked to the fact that social action at the university stage is more closely related to shared experiences, student activities, and the requirements of academic life than it is to gender itself. This finding is consistent with studies indicating a decline in gender differences in social behavior during youth, resulting from the convergence of social roles and increased opportunities for mutual interaction within educational institutions. Accordingly, social action among students at the University of Laghouat appears to be influenced by psychological and personality factors more than by the gender variable, which supports the results of the first hypothesis that highlighted the pivotal role of psychological factors in shaping this action.

3.4. Results of the Fourth Hypothesis :

Hypothesis: "There is a statistically significant correlation between psychological factors and the formation of social action among a sample of students at the University of Laghouat."

To verify this hypothesis, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the nature of the relationship between psychological factors (motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety) and the formation of social action.

Table (6): Correlation Coefficients between Psychological Factors and Social Action(Prepared by the researchers, 2026: 2)

Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level	Type of Relationship

Psychological Factors	0.61	0.000	Positive
Social Anxiety	-0.46	0.000	Negative

The results indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between psychological factors-specifically motivation and self-esteem-and the formation of social action. This suggests that as levels of motivation and self-esteem increase, the level of social action among students also rises.

Furthermore, the results revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between social anxiety and the formation of social action, meaning that high levels of social anxiety lead to a decrease in the level of social interaction and participation. Since all significance values (Sig.) are less than (0.05), the relationship between psychological factors and the formation of social action is statistically significant.These findings confirm that the formation of social action among students at the University of Laghouat is closely linked to the individual's psychological structure. Motivation and self-esteem act as supportive factors for social engagement, while social anxiety serves as a barrier to such involvement. This can be interpreted by the fact that highly motivated students actively seek interaction and initiative, and positive self-esteem enhances self-confidence and communication skills, reflecting positively on social behavior. Conversely, social anxiety leads to the avoidance of social situations and the fear of negative evaluation, which weakens active participation. This result aligns with theoretical perspectives that view social behavior as a product of the interaction between internal psychological factors and the social context. It is also consistent with numerous studies that have confirmed a correlation between psychological traits and the level of social interaction among university youth.:

4. General Conclusion :

In light of the findings, it can be concluded that psychological factors-represented by motivation, self-esteem, and social anxiety-play a fundamental role in shaping social action among students at the University of Laghouat. The results demonstrated a significant impact of both motivation and self-esteem in enhancing social action, while social anxiety was found to negatively affect the level of engagement and social participation.

Furthermore, the study revealed statistically significant correlations between psychological factors and the formation of social action, confirming that a university student's social behavior is not determined solely by external factors but is directly influenced by the individual's internal psychological structure. These results emphasize that the university is not merely an academic space, but a psycho-social environment where personality traits interact with the social context to produce various patterns of social action. Consequently, improving the level of students' social action necessitates focusing on developing supportive psychological aspects and promoting mental health within the university environment.

Recommendations :

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:
- Organizing guidance programs to develop both academic and social motivation among students.

- Conducting training workshops aimed at enhancing self-esteem and building self-confidence.
- Providing psychological counseling services to address cases of social anxiety within the university.
- Integrating interactive group activities (scientific, cultural, and volunteer clubs) to foster positive social action.
- Activating the role of listening and psychological counseling units on campus.
- Implementing early detection for students suffering from high levels of social anxiety.
- Training faculty members to observe psychological indicators that affect classroom interaction.
- Conducting similar studies on larger samples and across different universities for comparative purposes.
- Investigating other psychological variables, such as psychological resilience or emotional intelligence.
- Utilizing qualitative approaches (interviews, case studies) to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between psychological factors and social action.
- Conducting experimental studies to measure the effectiveness of psychological intervention programs in improving social action.

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