

Students Achievement Collector

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Abstract

This research aimed at testing an explicative model of academic achievement of college students. Positive personality traits were hypothesized as the main predictors. Mental health and academic adjustment were tested as mediator variables. This model intended to reflect the main hypothesis that academic achievement is multi-determined and non-intellectual variables play an important role in explaining it. Sample was composed of 256 college students of different majors. The results obtained highlighted the importance of differentiating subjective and objective academic achievement in terms of academic adjustment (AA) and grade point average (GPA), respectively. The explicative model that included positive traits as background variables confirmed the mediating role of mental health and AA in explaining GPA. Sprightliness was the most important predictor of academic achievement in comparison to the other positive traits studied. It is concluded that positive personality traits play an important role in academic outcomes. Keywords: academic adjustment, academic achievement, personality traits, positive traits.

Introduction

The role in academic performance has been mostly outlined by the analysis of the so-called “normal” personality traits such as those included in the Five Factor Model (Costa & McCrae, 1985). In contrast, the role of positive personality traits is not so clear, especially since these positive traits are known to influence many other variables thought to mediate the relation with academic performance (e.g. well-being, psychological symptoms). The interest in predicting academic achievement is not new and in the last decades, it has shifted from the study of intellectual predictors to the analysis of non-intellectual factors such as social support, personality traits and motivation. Nowadays the world is more educated than ever before (World Economic Forum, 2017). Worldwide, this has been related to very tangible and positive results. When the population is more educated, women tend to be more prepared and consequently, child mortality decreases, citizens earn more money and are more likely to incur in prosocial behaviors, countries have higher chances of having democratic political regimes and economic growth, among others (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina, 2018). However, graduation rates remain a worrying matter (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2018) and investment in public policies and research in education seems to be fundamental for any country. Any decision made in this direction should be well-informed and based on clear research precedents. It is because of this that questions as the following may arise: How is it better to intervene in order to guarantee academic attendance and graduation? Given that college drop outs dropyears.

significant matter to focus on. Which variables better predict academic achievement? For many years, predicting academic achievement has been a matter of interest for scholars in the fields of psychology and education (Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012). Initial approaches focused on identifying intellectual variables such as intelligence and different cognitive abilities. Certainly, evidence indicates that intellectual constructs are related to academic achievement (e.g. Duncan et al., 2007). However, research shows that non-intellectual aspects match and even outdo IQ measures when predicting academic performance (e.g. Duckworth, & Seligman, 2005; Lechner, Danner, & Rammstedt, 2017; Poropat, 2009; Trapmann, Hell, Hirn, & Schuler, 2007). More importantly, when comparing intellectual variables with non-intellectual variables in the long term, the predictive power of the former over success out of school, is weak (Sternberg, Wagner, Williams, & Horvath, 1995). Eventually, the focus of research interest has shifted from intellectual to non-intellectual aspects such as social support (e.g., Domagala-Zysk, 2006), motivation (e.g., Stover, Freiberg Hoffmann, de la Iglesia, & Fernández Liporace, 2014), personality traits (e.g., Poropat, 2009), and many

others. In most studies, academic achievement is measured by grade point averages (GPA), the most widely used measure of achievement (Richardson et al., 2012). Other researchers have focused on academic adjustment (AA), which refers to the degree students feel they fit into the academic environment (Ramsay, Jones, & Barker, 2007; van Rooij, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2018). More specifically, it involves how students conceptualize their academic goals, their motivation to learn, their interplay with the academic environment and how they perceive their academic performance (Anderson, Guan, & Koc, 2016; Baker, & Siryk, 1984). Intrinsically, GPA and AA are of different nature, one is objective and the other one is subjective (Hazan Liran, & Miller, 2019). AA is centered on students' perception of their academic performance, and thus, it does not necessarily represent real achievement. Studies have found that AA is positively related to GPA (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011; Credé & Niehorster, 2012; Perera & DiGiacomo, 2015; Perera, McIlveen, & Oliver, 2015) and AA has been identified as a pivotal variable in predicting GPA (Bailey & Phillips, 2015; Rinties, Beausaert, Grohnert, Niemantsverdriet, & Kommers, 2012; van Rooij et al., 2018). Additionally, some studies have found that AA functions as a mediator between background variables—such as stress and self-esteem—and achievement.

Literature review

. At college, students cannot control due dates of essays or exams and they must keep up with the required academic rhythm of performance. Academic achievement is not just performing well in exams but also performing well at the times demanded by the institution. In the case of Integrity, this replicates previous PPM's evidence where this positive trait negatively predicts positive outcomes such as mental health and job performance or satisfaction (de la Iglesia & Castro Solano, 2018, in press; de la Iglesia, Lupano, & Castro Solano, 2019). It is possible that Integrity is not associated with positive outcomes in the context of the Argentinean population where qualities grouped under Integrity—such as honesty and modesty—are not necessarily valued. Unfortunately, in this country, individuals that behave in honest and modest ways tend to be left behind in competitive contexts. It would be interesting to see if this is only a phenomenon of Argentina or it replicates in other cultures. The structural model represents previous studies (Kamphorst Hofman et al., 2012; Perera & DiGiacomo, 2015; Perera et al., 2015; Petersen et al., 2009) replicating the mediational role of AA between background variables (traits and psychological health in this case) and objective achievement

(GPA). The directions of the effects were also as expected since an increment in AA reflects on an increment in GPA, well-being's path towards AA was, and psychological symptom's path was negative. That is, it may be concluded that core characteristics as personality traits certainly have effects on academic achievement through their impact on mental health and academic adjustment. The predisposition to develop well-being or psychological symptoms given by the presence of positive traits impacts the adjustment.

Conclusion

This System can be used by educational institutions to maintain their student records easily. Achieving this objective is difficult using the manual system as information is scattered, can be redundant, and collecting relevant information may be very time-consuming.

Reference

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