



Academic Motivation in Times of Uncertainty: An Examination of First-Semester Psychology Students

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Introduction

PSYCMentor Program

- Established in the Fall 2020 semester by the Department of Psychological Brain Sciences (PBSI) to enhance first semester student's experiences within Texas A&M University by promoting academic excellence.
- Promote academic excellence by having upper-level students advocate to first-semester students' by weekly meetings

Academic Motivation

- The behaviors that correspond to the success of their work
- Studied because it can be related to how one can regulate work
- Surveys were given in order to gauge Academic Motivation: "I expect to successfully complete my degree in the usual allocated time frame."

Research Questions:

- RQ 1: Were the mentees' ratings of Academic Motivation statistically significantly different between the middle of the semester and the end of the semester?
- RQ 2: Do the mentees' a) race, b) gender, c) sexual orientation, d) parental education, or e) ability status impact whether a mentees' ratings of Academic Motivation differed significantly between the middle of a semester and the end of the semester?

Method

Participants

Race

White (72)
Black or African American (7)
Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish Origin (14)
Asian (18)
American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
Middle Eastern or North African (1)
Of two or more races (34)

Gender

Men (12)
Woman (135)

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual/straight (127)
Homosexual/gay/lesbian (5)
Bisexual (12)
Asexual (0)
Choose to self-identify or more than 1 selected (5)

Parental Education

Less than a high school diploma (7)
High school diploma/GED (12)
Some college, or trade school/Associate's degree (20)
Bachelor's degree (51)
Master's degree or higher (57)

Ability Status

No disability (102)
Has a disability (41)

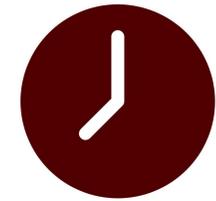
Measures

- Surveys were sent to students in PSYC 105
- Likert Scale (1-7) 1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree
- "I expect to successfully complete my degree in the usual allocated time frame"
- "The reason I am studying is to lead to a better life style"
- "I will be disappointed if my studies don't lead me to the career I want"



Results

- **Time**
- $F(148,1) = 0.074, p = .786, \eta^2 = .01, NS$
- **Race**
- Main effect of time $F(1,140) = 0.076, p = .784, \eta^2 = .01, NS$
- Main effect of race $F(6,140) = 1.631, p = .143, \eta^2 = .065, NS$
- Interaction between time*race $F(6,140) = 0.775, p = .022, \eta^2 = .099, NS$
- **Gender**
- Main effect of time $F(1,145) = 1.025, p = .313, \eta^2 = .007, NS$
- Main effect of gender $F(1,145) = 3.761, p = .054, \eta^2 = .025, NS$
- Interaction of time*gender $F(1,145) = 1.111, p = .294, \eta^2 = .007, NS$
- **Sexual Orientation**
- Main effect on time $F(1,142) = .169, p = .681, \eta^2 = .001, NS$
- Main effect of sexual orientation $F(3,142) = .308, p = .819, \eta^2 = .006, NS$
- Interaction between time*sexual orientation $F(3,142) = .607, p = .612, \eta^2 = .013, NS$
- **Parental Education**
- Main effect on time $F(1,142) = .941, p = .334, \eta^2 = .007, NS$
- Main effect on parental education $F(4,142) = .102, p = .982, \eta^2 = .003, NS$
- Interaction between time*parental education $F(4,142) = 1.998, p = .098, \eta^2 = .053, NS$
- **Disability**
- Main effect on time $F(1,141) = .622, p = .432, \eta^2 = .004, NS$
- Main effect on disability $F(1,141) = .065, p = .800, \eta^2 = .000, NS$
- Interaction between time*disability $F(1,141) = .557, p = .457, \eta^2 = .004, NS$



Discussion

- The results were all considered to be "not significant"
- The mentees ratings of academic motivation did not significantly change during the middle or end of the semester
- Demographics had no effect on the students academic motivation
- It is interesting to conclude that students are trying their best throughout the semester
- It is interesting that students of all demographics reported similar levels of motivation, this could relate to the idea of having peers that help keep motivation levels up during their first semester