Academic Adjustment Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

PSYCMentor Program
- PSYCMentor: program for first semester psychology students
  - Teaching students ins and outs of PBSI
  - Important: forms connections, prepares students for next few years, opportunity for upperclassmen to gain mentorship experience

Academic Adjustment
- Academic Adjustment: modifications in how students participate in classes and activities
  - Important: students entering new phase of education, need guidance in academics, good academic adjustment = good grades

Academic Motivation
- The drive for the student to continue and complete their academic sojourn

Academic Achievement
- Satisfaction with academic progress and performance

Academic Lifestyle
- The fit between the individual and their temporary role as a student

Research Questions:
- RQ 1: Were the mentees’ ratings of Academic Adjustment 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 Adjustment differed significantly between the middle of a semester and the end of the semester?

Participants
- Total: 147 students
  - Race
    - White: 72
    - Black/African American: 7
    - Hispanic/Latino/Of Spanish Origin: 14
    - Asian: 18
    - American Indian/Alaskan Native: 1
    - Middle Eastern/North African: 1
    - Of Two or More Races: 34
  - Gender
    - Men: 12
    - Women: 135
  - Sexual Orientation
    - Heterosexual/Straight: 127
    - Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian: 5
    - Bisexual: 12
    - Choose to Self-Identify/ >1 Selected: 2

Measures
- Academic Motivation
  - I expect to successfully complete my degree in the usual allocated time frame.
  - The reason I am studying is to lead a better lifestyle.
  - I will be disappointed if my studies don’t lead me to the career I want.
- Academic Achievement
  - I am satisfied with the level of my academic performance to date.
  - I think I am as academically capable as any other student.
  - I am satisfied with my ability to learn at university.
- Academic Lifestyle
  - I am enjoying the lifestyle of being a university student.
  - I sometimes feel as though my education is not worth my time away from my work or my family.
  - I sometimes worry I do not have the academic skills I need to enjoy being a student.

Method
- Main Effect of Time: F(1, 148) = 14.82, p < .001, η² = .09 - significant
- Main Effect of Race: F(6, 140) = .53, p = .67, η² = .00 - ns
- Interaction Between Race x Time: F(6, 140) = 1.00, p = .43, η² = .04 - ns
- Main Effect of Gender: F(1, 145) = 4.69, p = .03, η² = .03 - significant
- Interaction Between Gender x Time: F(1, 145) = 1.05, p = .31, η² = .01 - ns
- Main Effect of Sexual Orientation: F(3, 142) = .57, p = .64, η² = .00 - ns
- Interaction Between Sexual Orientation x Time: F(3, 142) = .16, p = .92, η² = .00 - ns
- Main Effect of Parental Education: F(1, 145) = 1.51, p = .22, η² = .01 - ns
- Main Effect of Parental Education: F(4, 142) = .57, p = .60, η² = .02 - ns
- Interaction Between Parental Education x Time: F(4, 142) = .61, p = .66, η² = .01 - ns
- Main Effect of Ability Status: F(1, 141) = 10.37, p = .002, η² = .07 - significant
- Main Effect of Ability Status: F(1, 141) = .10, p = .75, η² = .00 - ns
- Interaction Between Ability Status x Time: F(1, 141) = .40, p = .53, η² = .00 - ns

Discussion
- Academic adjustment increased from the end of the semester vs. the middle of the semester
- Examining first-semester students’ ratings of academic adjustment important because Fall 2020 was the first full semester with COVID
- Academic adjustment impacted by gender, parental education, and ability status
- Future iterations of PSYCMentor will take these demographic differences into account