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The Componential Factors as Determinants of Academic Resilience among Undergraduate Students: A Study of University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Rasheed Ibrahim Ojo
Department of Counselling and Human Development Studies[1]
University of Ibadan Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State[2]
Email: rasheedibrahimojo@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigated openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction on academic resilience among undergraduate students. The study make uses of descriptive survey research design, population consisted of all undergraduate students in University of Ibadan. The study sample consisted of five hundred (500) students selected from the University through convenience sampling techniques. Four standardized instrument were used and data was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis. The results revealed that there was positive correlation between each componential factors and academic resilience, also, the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant, moreover, openness to experience was only variable that potent relative contribute to academic resilience followed by self-concept then life satisfaction. It is then recommended that parents, school psychologists and social workers should provide adequate assistance to the undergraduate students in adapting to higher institution environment to aids their learning outcomes.

Keywords: Openness to Experience, Self-Concept, Life Satisfaction, Academic Resilience, Undergraduate Students, University of Ibadan.

Introduction

Higher education is an important for the social, political role, economic status and technological development of any country, it provides the skilled manpower needed to transform the resources in the country into wealth. This is can be achieved when higher education provides the right quality of training and skills required at the right quantity for their students (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu, 2011). Consequently, the number of persons applying to enter universities in Nigeria has been on the increase due to the fact that people want to be educated. However, just a fraction of these applicants are admitted each year while others which could not make it find themselves in other programmes such as part-time programme, distance learning, sandwich among others. University admission in Nigeria is very competitive because of numerous number of applicants for limited vacancy in Nigeria universities. It is thus expected that only the best will be admitted since academic merit is the major criteria used to secure

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admission and those fortunate in the admission not be able to adapt to stress encounter during the programme which result in performing low in their varieties course of studies. Indeed, Universal Tertiary matriculation Examination (UTME) is established to coordinate, evaluate and standardize university admission processes in the country to determine how reliable and competent applicants can adapt to teaching and learning in higher institutions. Therefore, each course was given a cut-off mark which varied from one university to another. The current practice now includes a post-UTME assessment of candidates by the universities after applicants met their criteria in UTME before given provisional admission (Obemeata & Omoregie, 1999).

The influence of resilience is evident by its reach across performance of undergraduate students in Nigeria. Inability of students to adapt to situation surrounding them in their various discipline making their performance in the examination worse than expectation and with this unexpected performance lead to disaster in developing our country. Researchers increasingly view resilience not as a fixed attribute but as an alterable set of processes that can be fostered and cultivated (Masten, 2001; Pardon, Waxman & Huang, 1999). The rate these students fail trace to be inefficient to cope with the situation in the university. With respect to the school setting, scholars often use school achievement or results from state testing as a measure of positive adjustment as learning outcomes (Jew, Green & Kroger, 1999). The essence of resilience in student is described as the ability to bounce back from some form of disruption, stress, or change (Joseph, 1994). According to Richardson (1990) contended that resiliency is the process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event. Increasingly, researchers have arrived at the consensus that resilience is not some remarkable, innate quality but rather a developmental process that incorporates the normative self-righting tendencies of individuals (Masten, 2001). Schools are better situated to foster resilience through the use of cooperative learning strategies and opportunities to participate in school governance, service-learning projects (Brooks, 2006).

Resilience research is especially applicable to schools because they directly signify the achievement gaps that can characterize students who grow up under conditions of poverty or social disadvantage (Condly,

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2006). As identified by Erikson (1963), trusting relationships serve as the base for healthy future development. Specifically within the school setting, Werner and Smith's study (1992) viewed the role teacher played in creating caring learning environments that are critical in fostering resilience among students in the higher institutions. Coburn and Nelson (1989) found the positive role models in the lives of resilient students were favourite educators who took deep interest in them. Students reported that these educators went beyond the traditional roles of teachers by serving as positive role models and individuals whom they could trust and demonstrated deep care (Brooks, 2006). In a subsequent study comparing 133 resilient and 81 non-resilient Mexican American high school students, Gonzalez and Padilla (1997) found that resilient students reported significantly higher perceptions of family and peer support, teacher feedback, positive connections to school, value placed on school, and peer belonging. Highly resilient people have adaptive coping skills and perform better in specific task, such as academic ones (Wilks, 2008). Resilience does not imply a low vulnerability to stress, but rather the ability to effectively recover from negative events (Garmezy, 1981). Most often, trait resilience is considered a personality characteristic that moderates the relation between stress and adaptation or health outcome (Ahern, 2006).

Based on the preceding premise, the present study was designed to fill gap on past research in facilitate academic resilience on componential factors (openness to experience, self-concept and academic satisfaction) among undergraduate students. Openness to experience is one of the personality factors that perceived to influence students' academic resilience in higher institution. The exposure of students from primary school to secondary education then to higher education worth to help any challenges that may be facing students in learning from school premises though environmental factors determine students ability to cope and adapt to learning problems in school. Openness to experience is the tendency of the individual to be imaginative, sensitive, original in thinking, attentive to inner feelings, appreciative of art, intellectually curious, and sensitive to beauty (Costa and McCrae, 1992; John and Srivastava, 1999). Such individuals are willing to entertain new ideas and unconventional values. People possessing this particular trait tends to be highly spatial, imaginative and creative (Howard and Howard, 1995) in their intellect. These people are sensitive to their

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inner thoughts, have capability to analyse matters differently (Cattell and Mead, 2008). They are curious to know hidden things and to be deductive from different angles (Mount, 2005). Average people are on average scale on this particular trait (Ostendorf, 1992). People who lack the openness to experience tend to be more conventional (Burch and Anderson, 2008) in their problem solving approach and do not try to be explorative in finding new ways to solve a particular problem (Sucier & Goldberg, 1998).

Another variable of interest in this present study is self-concept. Individual characteristics play a significant role in determine how to adapt or adjust to new situation. Learning in higher institutions need to have good and tangible self-concept in order to be among successful candidate at the end of the programme. Self-concept is a self-perceptions that fundamentally influence behaviour (Rosenberg, 1989; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). It is an important indicator of educational choice and achievement (e.g., it predicts course selection and success in secondary and postsecondary education (Guay, LaRose, & Boivin, 2004). Moreover, academic self-concept predicts academic achievement and performance beyond prior achievement and interest (Bandura, 1997; Marsh, 2005). Academic self-concept is as how a person feels about himself or herself within a school or academic setting, or in relation to a student‘s academic progress (Bracken, 2009). Academic self-concept is hierarchically organized, and multifaceted in nature (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985).

Mores over, life satisfaction is another variable insightful in relation to academic resilience. Satisfaction is a motivation to achieve someone goals in life. According to Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985), life satisfaction is a personal judgment about how satisfied an individual is with his/her current life compared to his/her own standard, a standard not imposed by any external sources. Life satisfaction was negatively related to stress. That is, the higher the stress, the lower the life satisfaction (Barnes & Lightsey, 2005). Generally speaking, everyone is motivated to enhance their levels of life satisfaction. According to Henderson (2000) found that individuals with high levels of stress sought more help and supports than individuals with lower levels of stress. Perhaps, individuals under high levels of stress sought help and supports as one means to decrease their levels of stress in order to increase their levels of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction appears related to positive characteristics. Coutinho and Woolery

(2004) found that college students who were motivated for intellectual activities (high in need for cognition) reported higher levels of life satisfaction than those who did not. Huffstetler (2006) found that sense of identity was related to overall life satisfaction. Diener and Seligman (2002) also found that life satisfaction was associated with happiness. In general, people's levels of life satisfaction were closely related to their overall physical and mental health (Abdel-Khalek & Naceur, 2007).

Specially, main objective of this present study is to use some componential factors (openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction) in determine academic resilience among undergraduate student, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the stated objectives, three research questions were raised and answered

1. What is the relationship between componential factors (openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction) and academic resilience of undergraduate students?
2. To what extent will the composite influence of componential factors (openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction) on academic resilience of undergraduate students?
3. What are the relative contribution of componential factors (openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction) on academic resilience of undergraduate students?

Methods

Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to determine componential factors (openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction) on academic resilience among undergraduate students.

Participants

Respondents were all undergraduate students randomly drawn from University of Ibadan, Ibadan.Out of all undergraduate in University of Ibadan, five hundred students were sampled through convenience sampling techniques. Out of five hundred sampled 260 (52.0%) were males while 240 (48.0%) were females. The age range of the participants were from 18 to 26 years with a mean age of 24.6 years.

Measures

Four standardized instruments were used to elicit information from the respondents. For measuring openness to experience, the NEO-Big Five Inventory developed by Costa and McCrae (2000) was adopted.

This inventory consists five subscale of which openness of experience is one of them and has ten item instrument rated on four Likert rating scale ranging from 4= Strongly Agree (SA) to 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). Example of the items in the scale was: *I don't like to waste my time daydreaming; once I find the right way to do something I stick to do*. The internal consistency of this scale was established and found to be .69. The cronbach Alpha reliability was found to be .91 after administering the instruments in a pilot study for two weeks interval. Also, the self-concept scaled was developed by Liu & Wang (2005) was utilized to elicit information from respondents. This scale consists of a twenty item instrument rated on four Likert rating scale ranging from 4= Strongly Agree (SA) to 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). Example of the items in the scale was: *If I work hard I can do more in university to pass*; *I often do my assignment without thinking a lot*. The internal consistency of this scale was established and found to be .76. The test re-test reliability was found to be .87 after administering the instruments in a pilot study for three weeks interval. In measuring life satisfaction, the life satisfaction questionnaire developed by Pavot & Diener (1993) was used. The question consists of a twenty item instrument rated on four Likert rating scale ranging from 4= Strongly Agree (SA) to 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). Example of the items in the scale was: *I am satisfied with my life*; *So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.* The test re-test reliability was found to be .62 after administering the instruments in a pilot study for three weeks interval. The academic resilience scaled developed by Wagnild and Young (1993) was adapted. This scale consists of a sixteen item instrument rated on four Likert rating scale ranging from 4= Strongly Agree (SA) to 1= Strongly Disagree (SD). Example of the items in the scale was: *when I make plans, I follow through with them; I usually manage one way or another.* The test re-test reliability was found to be .88 after administering the instruments in a pilot study for three weeks interval among higher institution students.

Data analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis were the major statistical tools employed in analysis data collected from the respondents.

Procedure

The respondents were informed about the study aims, reasons and its confidentiality towards this study. Respondents responded to the questionnaires in different faculties

and departments, after introduction and the purpose of the research then the questionnaire were filled and returned to the researcher for further analysis.

Results

Table 1.1: Descriptive and Inter-correlation among the variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Academic resilience	47.874	8.563	1.000			
Openness to experience	28.290	7.562	.802**	1.000		
Self-concept	16.089	4.531	.591**	.482**	1.000	
Life satisfaction	24.620	5.328	.491**	.388**	.190**	1.000

As shown in the table, all the dependent variables were positively correlated with openness to experience (.802, p<.05), self-concept (.591, p<.05), life satisfaction (.491, p<.05) and academic resilience. Also, the result indicated that there was inter-correlation between independent variables.

Table 1.2: Multiple Regression Analysis on Componential Factors and Academic Resilience

R= 5.973 R^2= 35.677 R^2 (adjusted)= 32.211 Standard error of estimate = 15.8519					
Analysis of variance					
Source	**Sum of square (SS)**	**Df**	**Mean Square (MS)**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	2989.890	3	996.63	48.172	.990
Residual	10261.765	496	20.689		
Total	13251.655	499			

The table show a coefficient of multiple regression (R) of 5.973 and a multiple R square of 35.677 with adjusted R square of 32.211and standard error estimate of 15.8519. This indicated that 67.7% of the variance in the academic resilience is accounted for by all three determinant variables when merge together. The table show that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded an F-ratio of 48.172

(significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and the other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance of 32.3%.

Table 1.3: Multiple Regression showing relative contribution of Componential Factors on Academic Resilience of undergraduate students

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta		
(constant)	58.736	15.870		3.701	.003
Openness to experience	5.741	2.110	3.470	2.721	.008
Self-concept	5.017	2.012	1.902	2.494	.013
Life satisfaction	3.967	1.130	0.975	3.511	.104

Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables to the explanation of dependent variable, openness to experience (B= 5.741, t=2.721, $p<0.05$) is the most componential factor in the study that potentially contribute to the prediction of academic resilience among undergraduate students, followed by self-concept (B=5.017, t=2.494, $p<0.05$) and then life satisfaction (B=3.967, t=3.511, $p<0.05$).

Discussion

The findings show that openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction were positively correlated to academic resilience among undergraduate students. Therefore, the present study showed that openness to experience is significantly correlated with academic resilience. The openness to experience of undergraduate students from the primary to higher education determine how some of the students adapt or cope to the situation in university environment. Their exposure to different challenges in academic line make them adapt to new school stress and able to adjust to teaching and learning in higher institution so that at the end of the programme, students will be able to perform better and have a good grade. This is in line with other research e.g. Grace Fayombo (2010) found that there was significant positive relationship existed between the psychological traits (conscientiousness, agreeableness,

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extraversion, openness to experience) and psychological resilience. Another finding support that there was significant positive correlation between openness to experience and academic resilience (Makaya, Oshio & Kaneko 2006). Also, self-concept of students show an impact in determine academic resilience and from the finding student characteristics, fact and ability determine how to adapt to school environment, situations and academic resilience. The interest of students in schooling determine how to face any challenges that might occur in school since higher education is a very crucial level of education in Nigeria to secure a lucrative job and otherwise to associate with other people around the world. Otherwise, there was positive relationship between self-concept and academic resilience among undergraduate student. This shows that self-concept of students determine their ability to cope with problems in schooling. This present finding is in support of other findings e.g. (Craven & Yeung, 2008) found that academic self-concept was positively correlated with academic resilience. Also, life satisfaction was positively correlated with academic resilience among undergraduate students. The perception of life to be satisfied is the major factor of human being. Life satisfaction denotes an overall evaluation of life. So the appraisal that life is exciting does not necessarily mean that it is satisfying. Previous studies on the relationships between resilience and life satisfaction show that change in resilience over time predicted change in life satisfaction (Cohn, 2009). Resilience acts not only as a predictor, but also mediates the relationship between positive emotions and life satisfaction. Also, in a longitudinal study on Norwegian medical students, (Kjeldstadli, 2006) was found that not only resilience but also perceived stress differentiate those with high levels of life satisfaction from students with low or fluctuating levels of life satisfaction.

The finding also indicated that openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction when pulled together jointly accounted for 67.7% (R Square = 32.211) of the variance being explained in academic resilience and this was found to be significant ($F(3, 496) = 48.172$, $p < .05$), which is an evidence that the model that emerged is fit and it has the ability to predict academic resilience among undergraduate students. This is in support with other research e.g. (Brunner, Lüdtke, & Trautwein, 2008; Brunner, 2010; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002; Wilks, 2008) found out there was significant

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jointly contribution of openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction on academic resilience.

Of special interest is the present finding that openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction relatively predicted academic resilience. This finding is amazing that openness to experience shows a most potential significant in prediction of academic resilience among undergraduate. This is in line with research of (Hettema, Neale, Myers, Prescott, & Kendler, 2006) found out that openness to experience is a risk factor that predict academic resilience. Kendler, 2006 further claimed that personality trait of student determine ability of students to cope with situation in their various environment. A probable explanation for this may be due to the fact that openness to experience has traits that contribute to their self-concept and motivate their life satisfaction to adapt to academic resilience. It was found out that students focus on the external world around them and are likely to be less concerned with internal, inherent capability that will engender academic resilience which also calls for endurance on the part of the individual. Therefore, each variables used in this research have a good relative impact in determine academic resilience among undergraduate students.

Conclusion

This study had indicated that openness to experience, self-concept and life satisfaction are important factors in determining academic resilience among undergraduate students. The variables that emerged from the study also provided insight into the ways that healthy personalities can promote students' wellbeing in their academic welfare.

Recommendations

The findings of this study are useful for students to know the consequence of learning in the higher institution and some challenges that they may be encountered in the university situation and way to cope and adjourn to the system, parents will be able to give adequate and moral support for their children when learning in the higher institution so that good grade can be achieved at the end of the programme, counselling psychologists also will be able to explore resilience problem among students and to provide appropriate solution in adjusting to the problem and social workers will aid students in understanding their learning environment, behaviours towards learning outcomes and helping them achieve more academically.

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