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Academic stress, psychological adaptation, and sociocultural adaptation of undergraduate international students in the University of Santo Tomas

Carla Maries I Ricafort, Jescel Mari C Rivera and Beryl P Battad
University of Santo Tomas, Philippines

Introduction: International students (IS) are vulnerable individuals that often experience challenges in adaptation, which leads them to experience anxiety and depression. The Philippines has become a popular choice for international study, but there is a lack of knowledge about adaptation status of international students in the country. This study aims to fill the gap of knowledge regarding the adaptation status of international students in the Philippines by determining the level of academic stress (AS), psychological adaptation (PA) and sociocultural adaptation (SCA) experienced by international students enrolled in a metropolitan university in Manila, Philippines and to find a significant correlation among the 3 variables.

Method: Using a descriptive-correlational design, the researchers combined 2 survey tools to determine the level of AS, PA and SCA. Pearson correlation was used to determine if there is a significant difference between the 3 variables. Convenience sampling was used to gather the participants. A total of 59 undergraduate international students participated in the study. The rights of the participants were upheld throughout the entire study.

Results: Results show that the participants experience moderate levels of academic stress (mean=3.83, SD=1.49), moderate levels of psychological adaptation (mean=3.43, SD=1.49), and high levels of sociocultural adaptation (mean=4.42, SD=1.38). The results also show that AS is significantly correlated to PA, PA is significantly correlated to SCA, and AS is not significantly correlated to SCA.

Discussion: Undergraduate IS experience moderate stress in school, adapt moderately using various coping patterns, and adapt highly to other people and their surroundings. IS became more psychologically adapted as they experienced more stress, while they became less stressed when they built relationships and explored their surroundings. Interventions for specific concerns should be addressed individually.

carla_ricafort@yahoo.com

Neuroticism and common mental disorders: Meaning and utility of a complex relationship

James Ormel
University of Groningen, Netherlands

Neuroticism's prospective association with common mental disorders (CMDs) has fueled the assumption that neuroticism is an independent etiologically informative risk factor. This vulnerability model postulates that neuroticism sets in motion processes that lead to CMDs. However, four other models seek to explain the association, including the spectrum model (manifestations of the same process), common cause model (shared determinants) state and scar models (CMD episode adds temporary/permanent neuroticism). To examine their validity, we reviewed literature on confounding, operational overlap, stability and change, determinants and treatment effects. None of the model is able to account for (virtually) all findings. The state and scar model cannot explain the prospective association. The spectrum model has some relevance, especially for internalizing disorders. Common causes are most important but the vulnerability model cannot be excluded although confounding of the prospective association by baseline symptoms and psychiatric history is substantial. In fact, some of the findings, such as interactions with stress and the small decay of neuroticism's effect over time, are consistent with the vulnerability model. We describe research designs that discriminate the remaining models and plea for deconstruction of neuroticism. Neuroticism is etiologically not informative yet but useful as an efficient marker of non-specified general risk.

j.ormel@umcg.nl