

COPING, POSITIVE/NEGATIVE AFFECT, AND ACADEMIC GOAL ATTAINMENT IN FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS FROM ESTSP-IPP

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Introduction: Literature claims that dispositional affect can be an antecedent of important life outcomes, such as experiences of (un)success (Lyubomirsky et al, 2005). In academic contexts, literature supports the relationship between dispositional affect and indicators of goal achievement (Chartier et al, 2011). However, little is known about the processes that might be conducive to this effect.

Objectives: Examining the mediating role of coping in the relationship between dispositional affect and academic goal attainment. Assessing gender differences in terms of coping, dispositional affect and academic goal attainment.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted with 70 students (90% female) attending health technical courses in Portugal. Assessment protocol included the Brief-Cope (Carver, 1997), the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson et al, 1988), and the School Achievement Goal Scale (Gaudreau & Thompson, in press).

Results: Indirect effects were tested using a bootstrapping resampling approach. Humor as a coping strategy mediated the relationship between positive affect and goal attainment; self-distraction coping mediated the relationship between negative affect and goal attainment. Significant gender differences were found only for emotional support as a coping strategy and for mastery dimension of goal attainment.

Conclusions: In accordance with recent literature, this study shows that specific coping strategies (humor and self-distraction) have an important role explaining the relationship between dispositional affect and academic goal attainment in polytechnic students attending