Attachment, motivation, positive and negative emotions and support groups as predictors of Romanian students’ career orientation in psychology

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Abstract

Through the current research the predictive value of the support group variable is emphasized among other predictive variables such as intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, negative and positive emotions, the attachment to colleagues, professors and instruments on the dependent variable the career orientation choices. After applying the multiple regression model, the research hypothesis has been confirmed for the independent variables (p<0.05). The support group variable obtained a β coefficient of 0.38 (p<0.01) which highlights the fact that this plays a very important role in students’ career orientation.

1. Introduction

Whether or not, grades may highlight that students will succeed in the future profession of psychologist. Students are often confronted with a variety of new personal and interpersonal challenges including colleagues, professors, exams and projects. In this way Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski (2004) highlighted that challenges include the need to make new relationships with colleagues and professors, and to develop learning abilities for the new academic environment and obviously for the future profession of psychologist(s). Roeser & Eccles (1998) in their longitudinal study showed that students’ perceptions about their teachers have predictive value in the sense of competence and academic values. Hence, when students feel attached to adults in school/universities, they develop a sense of belonging to that place. Therefore an international study developed in 41 countries reported that students’ academic performance is positively associated with the attachment to their school (PISA, OECD, 2003).

Findings reveal that not all students are equally adept at role playing as indicated by the divergence between their ability and standardized test scores. Moreover, students despite exposure to test taking strategies, apparently never learn to feel comfortable taking tests, which lead to poor performance, high anxiety sometimes to changing career development to other domains.

Pei-Hsuan Hsieh (2004), underline in his research that in the last decades, the correlates of success and failure in achievement situations has focused on self-efficacy. Hence, self-efficacy could be a highly effective predictor of

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students’ motivation and learning. Previous studies continued to highlight academic behaviour and attitudes, high school preparation, and valuing education (Stricker, Rock & Burton, 1992); students’ self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs (Hamacheck, 1995; Le, Casillas, Robbins & Langley, 2005) and projects and homework (Viadero, 1998).

Starting from previous studies developed within the Experimental Psychology Laboratory from the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Bucharest (Anitei & Chraif, 2011; Chraif & Anitei, 2011; Anitei & Chraif, 2008 a; Anitei & Chraif, 2008b; Chraif, Anitei & Ionescu, 2008; Chraif, & Anitei, 2008) the current study aims, first of all, at highlighting the role the support group variable plays in predicting career orientation of students in psychology.

2. The research objectives and hypothesis

2.1. The research objectives

- To highlight the correlation between positive academic environment and performances in career development;
- To show that attachment, motivation, positive and negative emotions and support group are predictors of Romanian students’ career orientation in psychology.

2.2. The hypothesis

Students’ attachment to professors, students’ attachment to colleagues, students’ attachment to furniture and equipment, negative emotions, positive emotions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and support group predict satisfaction for career orientation choices.

3. The method

3.1 Participants

The participants were 538 undergraduate and graduate students at from the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Bucharest, aged between 19 and 25 years old (m=22.48; S.D.=2.41), rural and urban areas, male and female.

3.2 Instruments

1) Student’s attachment and motivation scale (Antei & Chraif, 2008) adapted on undergraduate and graduate students; 2) Positive and negative emotions scale (Anitei & Chraif, 2011): 7 positive emotions and 7 negative emotions.

4. Finding and Results

The results emphasized a statistically significant correlation between positive academic environment and high rated performances in career development (p<0.05). Also, the predictive model has been confirmed and the β coefficients for the predictive variables were statistically significant (p<0.05).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Satisfaction for the carrier orientation choices</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students’ attachment to professors</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. The correlation matrix of the variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
<th>6.</th>
<th>7.</th>
<th>8.</th>
<th>9.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Satisfaction for the career orientation choices</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students’ attachment to professors X1</td>
<td>0.37**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students’ attachment to colleagues X2</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students’ attachment to furniture and equipment X3</td>
<td>0.42**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Negative emotions X4</td>
<td>-0.26**</td>
<td>-0.37**</td>
<td>-0.23**</td>
<td>-0.36**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Positive emotions X5</td>
<td>0.35**</td>
<td>0.24**</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>-0.27**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Intrinsic motivation X6</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Extrinsic motivation X7</td>
<td>0.18*</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
<td>0.27**</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
<td>0.19*</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Support group X8</td>
<td>0.31**</td>
<td>0.34**</td>
<td>0.41**</td>
<td>0.38**</td>
<td>-0.28**</td>
<td>0.29**</td>
<td>0.21**</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01

Table 2 shows the correlation between the independent variables and dependent variable (Satisfaction career orientation choices) as follows: students’ attachment to professors, Students’ attachment to colleagues, students’ attachment to furniture and equipment, Negative emotions, Positive emotions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and support group. A closer look at the data reveals statistically significant positive association between the dependent variable satisfaction for career orientation choices and students’ attachment to professors (r=0.37; p<0.01); the students’ attachment to colleagues (r=0.29; p<0.01); the students’ attachment to furniture and equipment (r=0.42; p<0.01) positive emotions (r=0.35; p<0.01); intrinsic motivation (r=0.23; p<0.01); the extrinsic motivation (r=0.18 p<0.05) and support group (r=0.31; p<0.01). A statistically significant negative association is revealed by table 2 between satisfaction for career orientation choices and negative emotions (r=-0.26; p<0.01); Students’ attachment to professors and negative emotions (r=-0.37; p<0.01); Students’ attachment to colleagues and negative emotions (r=-0.23; p<0.01); Students’ attachment to furniture and equipment and negative emotions (r=-0.36; p<0.01); Positive emotions and negative emotions (r=-0.27; p<0.01); intrinsic motivation and negative emotions (r=-0.21; p<0.01); extrinsic motivation and negative emotions (r=-0.22; p<0.01) and support group and negative emotions (r=-0.28; p<0.01).
Thus a multivariate regression model provides better predictions of the chosen criteria. Such a model can also analyse relationships between variables while controlling for other variables. For each participant, the prediction equation provides a predictive value (calculated by the regression model). The symbol (R Square) reflects that it is the square of the multiple correlations. Using students’ attachment to professors, Students’ attachment to colleagues’ attachment, students’ attachment to furniture and equipment, Negative emotions, Positive emotions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and support group together to predict the career orientation choices provides a 52.4% reduction in the prediction error relative to using only the predictive model. The β coefficients are statistically significant \((p<0.05)\) and the regression model provided by applying the regression model equation could be the following:

\[
Y = 2.15 + 0.18 \times X_1 + 0.26 \times X_2 + 0.19 \times X_3 - 0.28 \times X_4 + 0.34 \times X_5 + 0.21 \times X_6 + 0.17 \times X_7 + 0.37 \times X_8
\]

The higher the value of students’ attachment to professors, Students’ attachment to colleagues, students’ attachment to furniture and equipment, positive emotions, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and support group, the higher percent of satisfaction for career orientation choices. This suggests that subjects who possess greater resources, in the form of cognitive motivation, social motivation and extrinsic motivation are interested in choosing the future working place in order to follow a great career development.

5. Conclusions

The regression model based on the predictive power of the independent variables to predict the career orientation choices at the faculty for students seemed to be relevant for the psychology and young psychologists in Romania. The groups of students who formed the career support groups have done role playing having as themes the selection interview (figure 1 b), human resources training (figure 1 a), applying psychological tests, evaluating results from psychological tests, obtaining psychological profiles, etc.

Therefore, as it was obtained with the help of the multiple linear regression, the \(\beta\) standardized coefficient for this independent variable is \(\beta=0.38\ (p<0.01)\) which highlights the fact that by increasing with one unit the independent variable support group an increase of 0.38 of the dependent variable will be obtained in the average sum of all independent variables. Considering the previous studies (Anitei & Chraif, 2011; Chraif & Anitei, 2011; Aniței & Chraif, 2008 a; Anitei & Chraif, 2008 b; Chraif, Aniței & Ionescu, 2008 a; Chraif, & Aniței, 2008 b) the current research strengthens the conclusion that attachment to colleagues, professors and instruments of work from the academic environment have predictive value both for the career orientation of students and for the increase of academic performances for psychology students.
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