

THE ACADEMIC RESILIENCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

The main research aim is to explore academic resilience (the ability to adapt positively to adversity) among undergraduate public administration students. The ARS-30 questionnaire was applied to first, second and third year undergraduate students from a top tier Romanian university program in order to observe the effect of gender, age, environment, previous academic performance and year of study on academic resilience. According to the ARS-30 design, the respondents were exposed to an adverse situation case vignette describing either personal or vicarious academic adversity in order to obtain more accurate measurements of their academic resilience and more robust overall results.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was applied to students from both the main campus (located in Cluj-Napoca) and an academic extension (located 120 kilometers from the main campus), thus the results are also explored in a comparative perspective. The results showed that gender, the year in which the respondents were enrolled, their background environment, previous or current professional experience, the baccalaureate grade (which is used as the main admission criteria) and programme location, do not have a statistically significant influence on the academic resilience of students. On the other hand, the vignette used and the self-perceived ranking of the respondents (used as a proxy for academic success) showed a statistically significant effect in multiple regression models.

The paper also proposes potential measures which could be adopted by national, university and even faculty level decision makers in order to increase academic resilience among students, ensure better educational outcomes and reduce the number of undergraduates who abandon their studies.

Points for practitioners

The findings can be useful for university decision makers to design general policies and specific programs and measures which can increase the academic resilience of students and reduce dropout rates.

Keywords: academic resilience, undergraduate students, ARS-30, public administration studies, Romania.

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