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UNDERSTANDING THE KEY FACTORS IMPACTING ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Academic success in higher education is influenced by a myriad of factors that can vary widely among students. Identifying and understanding these key factors is essential for developing strategies to enhance student performance and overall educational outcomes. This study aims to evaluate and understand the critical factors affecting academic success in higher education. The research focuses on both internal factors, such as personal motivation and study habits, and external factors, including institutional support and social environment.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The quantitative component involved a survey administered to [number] students from [university/department], assessing variables such as academic motivation, study strategies, time management, and perceived support. The qualitative component included in-depth interviews with [number] students to gain insights into their personal experiences and challenges. Data were analyzed using statistical techniques and thematic analysis to identify key trends and patterns. The study identified several critical factors impacting academic success. Key internal factors included students' self-motivation, effective study habits, and time management skills. External factors such as access to academic resources, faculty support, and social support networks also played significant roles. Students who reported higher levels of motivation and effective study strategies were more likely to achieve better academic outcomes. Additionally, strong support from faculty and peers was associated with enhanced academic performance.

The findings highlight the multifaceted nature of academic success in higher education. Both internal and external factors significantly influence students' academic performance. To support student success, universities should focus on fostering motivation, providing resources for effective study practices, and enhancing faculty and peer support

systems. Implementing targeted interventions based on these key factors can help improve academic outcomes and overall student achievement.

KEYWORDS

Academic success, higher education, student performance, motivation, study habits, time management, institutional support, faculty support, social support, educational outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

Academic success in higher education is a critical goal for students, educators, and institutions alike. Achieving high academic performance not only impacts students' future career prospects but also reflects the effectiveness of educational systems and support mechanisms. Despite its importance, the factors contributing to academic success are complex and multifaceted, encompassing a range of internal and external influences. Understanding the key factors affecting academic success is essential for developing strategies that can enhance student performance and ensure equitable educational outcomes. While much research has focused on individual factors such as personal motivation and study habits, there is a growing recognition of the role that external factors, including institutional support and social environments, play in shaping academic achievement.

This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the various factors influencing academic success in higher education. By examining both internal factors (e.g., motivation, study strategies) and external factors (e.g., institutional resources, social support), the research seeks to provide a holistic understanding of how these elements interact to affect students'

academic performance. The research will involve a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather data from a diverse sample of students at [University Name]. The quantitative survey will assess students' perceptions of their motivation, study habits, time management, and support systems. The qualitative interviews will explore personal experiences and challenges faced by students, providing deeper insights into the contextual factors impacting their academic success.

By identifying and analyzing the key factors that influence academic success, this study aims to inform the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms. Enhanced understanding of these factors can guide universities in designing more effective programs and resources to support student achievement, ultimately contributing to improved educational outcomes and student satisfaction.

METHOD

This research adopts a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively explore the factors impacting academic success in higher education. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study aims to

capture a broad range of influences on student performance, providing both statistical and in-depth insights into the factors at play. The study will be conducted at [University Name], targeting a diverse population of undergraduate students from various disciplines and year levels. A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure representation across different academic backgrounds and demographics. The target sample size for the quantitative component is [number] students, calculated to provide sufficient statistical power. For the qualitative component, approximately [number] students will be selected based on their responses to the survey and their willingness to participate in follow-up interviews.

An online survey will be designed to assess key factors influencing academic success. The survey will include questions on academic motivation, study habits, time management skills, perceived institutional support, and social support systems. The survey instrument will be developed based on a review of existing literature and validated scales to ensure reliability and validity. Prior to full administration, the survey will undergo a pilot test with a small group of students ($n = [\text{number}]$) to refine questions and address any issues. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of survey respondents who have expressed interest in providing more detailed insights. The interviews will explore students' personal experiences, challenges, and perceptions related to academic success. An interview guide will be developed to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility for in-depth exploration of individual experiences. Interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to identify common themes and patterns.

Survey data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, will provide an overview of students' responses. Inferential statistics, such as multiple regression analysis, will be employed to examine the relationships between different factors (e.g., motivation, study habits) and academic performance. Statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R) will be used for data analysis.

Interview transcripts will be analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to academic success. Coding will be applied to categorize and interpret the qualitative data, with themes being developed inductively based on the content of the interviews. Qualitative data analysis software (e.g., NVivo) may be used to facilitate the organization and analysis of the interview data.

The role of social support emerged as a prominent theme in the qualitative analysis. Students who had strong, supportive relationships with family and friends felt more motivated and resilient. Conversely, those who experienced social isolation or lacked support reported higher levels of stress and lower academic achievement. The results indicate that academic motivation, effective study habits, institutional support, and social support are key factors influencing academic success.

The study will adhere to ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring they are aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. The study will be reviewed and approved

by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) or equivalent ethics committee. Potential limitations of the study include self-report bias, as participants may provide socially desirable responses or overestimate their preparedness and performance.

Additionally, the cross-sectional design captures data at a single point in time, which may not account for changes in academic success over time or the impact of interventions. Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs and incorporating objective measures of academic performance. This methodology provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating the key factors impacting academic success in higher education. By integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the influences on student performance and to inform strategies for enhancing educational outcomes.

RESULTS

The study surveyed [number] undergraduate students from [University Name], achieving a response rate of [percentage]. The sample included a balanced representation of students across various academic disciplines and year levels, with [percentage] male and [percentage] female participants. The average age of respondents was [average age] years, with [percentage] in their first year, [percentage] in their second year, [percentage] in their third year, and [percentage] in their final year. The survey revealed that academic motivation was a significant predictor of academic success. Students who reported high levels of intrinsic motivation, such as personal interest and academic goals, had higher grade point averages (GPAs) compared to those with lower motivation

levels. Specifically, students with high intrinsic motivation had GPAs that were [mean GPA] points higher on average than those with lower motivation.

Effective study habits were strongly associated with academic performance. Students who engaged in regular study routines, employed active learning strategies, and managed their time effectively reported better academic outcomes. On average, students who utilized structured study plans and time management techniques had GPAs that were [mean GPA] points higher than those who did not. Perceived institutional support, including access to academic resources such as tutoring and advising, was positively correlated with academic success. Students who rated their access to support services as high had significantly higher GPAs. For instance, students with high ratings of institutional support had GPAs that were [mean GPA] points higher than those who rated support services as inadequate.

Social support from peers and family also played a crucial role in academic success. Students who felt supported by their peers and family members reported higher levels of academic engagement and had better academic performance. Specifically, students with strong social support networks had GPAs that were [mean GPA] points higher than those with less support. Interviews with students revealed that personal experiences and challenges, such as balancing academic responsibilities with work and personal life, had a significant impact on their academic success. Many students cited difficulty in managing time and stress as major obstacles, which affected their performance. Strategies for coping with these challenges varied, with some students finding success through structured routines and support networks.

Qualitative data highlighted the importance of institutional resources. Students who actively utilized academic advising, tutoring services, and study groups reported feeling more prepared and confident in their academic pursuits. Additionally, students who perceived a lack of adequate support from their institution expressed frustration and a sense of being underserved, which negatively impacted their performance. High levels of intrinsic motivation and structured study habits correlate strongly with better academic performance. Institutional support and social support also play significant roles in enhancing student success.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify and understand the key factors impacting academic success among undergraduate students at [University Name]. The findings reveal that academic motivation, effective study habits, institutional support, and social support are significant determinants of student performance. These results align with existing literature and highlight the multifaceted nature of academic achievement. The study's findings emphasize the critical role of academic motivation in driving student success. Students with high levels of intrinsic motivation, including personal interest in their studies and clear academic goals, demonstrated better academic performance.

This supports previous research that suggests intrinsic motivation is a powerful predictor of academic success, as motivated students are more likely to engage deeply with their coursework and persist through challenges. Universities should consider strategies to enhance student motivation, such as

fostering a passion for the subject matter and setting clear, achievable goals.

Effective study habits emerged as another crucial factor influencing academic success. Students who employed structured study routines, utilized active learning techniques, and managed their time efficiently reported higher GPAs. This finding reinforces the importance of teaching and encouraging effective study practices. Institutions could benefit from incorporating study skills workshops, time management seminars, and academic support resources into their programs to help students develop these essential skills.

The positive correlation between perceived institutional support and academic performance highlights the importance of accessible academic resources. Students who felt supported by their institution—through tutoring, academic advising, and other services—had higher GPAs. This finding suggests that universities should continuously evaluate and improve their support services to ensure they meet students' needs. Enhanced access to academic resources and personalized advising could play a significant role in helping students achieve their academic goals.

The role of social support from peers and family in academic success is a key finding of this study. Students with strong social support networks experienced greater academic engagement and success, while those with limited support faced additional challenges. This underscores the need for universities to create environments that facilitate peer interaction and community building. Programs that promote student engagement, such as study groups, peer mentoring, and family involvement initiatives,

could contribute to a supportive academic environment.

Qualitative data revealed that personal challenges, such as balancing academic responsibilities with work and personal life, significantly impact academic success. Students who struggled with time management and stress often reported lower academic performance. Institutions could address these challenges by providing resources that help students manage their time and stress, such as counseling services and flexible academic scheduling. While the study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The cross-sectional design captures data at a single point in time and may not account for changes in academic success over time. Additionally, self-report measures could introduce bias, as students may overestimate their motivation or study habits. Future research could address these limitations by using longitudinal designs and incorporating objective measures of academic performance.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing academic success among undergraduate students at [University Name]. By examining both internal and external determinants, the research underscores the multifaceted nature of academic achievement in higher education. The study highlights that academic motivation, effective study habits, institutional support, and social support are pivotal factors contributing to student success. High levels of intrinsic motivation and well-established study habits are strongly correlated with better academic performance, affirming their importance in the educational process. Additionally, perceived

institutional support, including access to academic resources and personalized advising, plays a crucial role in enhancing student outcomes. Social support from peers and family also significantly impacts academic engagement and achievement.

The findings suggest that universities should adopt a holistic approach to support student success. Strategies should include fostering intrinsic motivation through engaging curricula and clear goal-setting, providing resources to develop effective study practices, and ensuring robust support systems within institutions. Enhancing social support networks and creating opportunities for peer interaction and community building can further bolster academic performance.

While this study provides valuable insights, further research is needed to explore these factors over time and in different educational contexts. Longitudinal studies could offer deeper understanding of how these factors evolve and impact academic success throughout students' educational journeys. Additionally, incorporating objective measures of academic performance could provide a more comprehensive view of the factors influencing student achievement. Understanding and addressing the key factors that impact academic success can lead to more effective educational strategies and improved student outcomes. By focusing on motivation, study habits, institutional and social support, universities can create a supportive and enriching environment that fosters academic excellence and student satisfaction.

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