Relationship between Personal Well-Being and Academic Achievement among Pakistani International Students Studying in China

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Abstract: *This study explored the relationship between academic achievement and personal well-being of a sample of 85 students (Male=72), (Female=13) studying at the prestigious universities (Pakistani international students) in China enrolled in the scholarship program. The sample comprised 10 undergraduate language diploma students, 44 Master's, and 10 Post-Graduate students. The students who were not in the People Republic of China during the epidemic was excluded from the survey. Due to the epidemic situation, the data collection was done through an online website as a survey method. The relationship between academic achievement the previous grade and expected grade point was self-administered by the respondents. Personal well-being and the demographic group differences including gender, age, educational level were assessed. In addition, the personal well-being index (PWI-A) for adults was used to analyze the personal-wellbeing of the student population. A positive correlation was identified between academic achievement (expected grade point) with subjective well-being (.913**) Whereas, there was no significant correlation between (previous grade) academic achievement and subjective well-being respectively. Testing Anova for the group differences, there were no significant differences between the demographic groups respectively. Keywords: Personal Well-Being, Academic Achievement, Pakistani International Students.*

1. Introduction

The term "International student" is referred to any students who go abroad in pursuit of learning to a foreign country. The number of students at Chinese universities is increasing every year due to quality of university education, social development and introduction of various types of scholarships that is China government scholarships, university scholarships and MOFCOM scholarship. According to the (Project Atlas Infographics, 2018) China holds the 3rd position among the countries, hosting international students with a number of 489,200 international students, United Kingdom holds 2nd position with 506,480 whereas US has the top position hosting 1,094,792 international students. The major population of international students in China is composed of Asian, African, European as well as American students. Chinese Universities are experiencing more complex and a diverse student population. China plays a leading role in Asia hosting international students. Thus, China attracts more international students by providing them with free and quality education in Chinese universities. The purpose of the study is to evaluate and understand the relationship between personal well-being and academic achievement and in order to integrate the last semester grades and expected semester grades conducting a survey related to the personal well-being and academic achievement of Pakistani students living in China during this epidemic situation. During the epidemic situation globally all academic activities and educational assessment changed to an online platform. Technologically it is a great achievement of science of continuing education process. Although students faced situations academically related to personal well-being. This study aimed to explore the relationship of personal well-being and academic achievement respectively.

Subjective well-being refers to how a person feels or experiences pleasantness in his or her life (Diener et al 1999). Several studies that examined the relationship between academic achievement and subjective well-being consistently supported this theoretical assumption with samples from different countries (Gilman Huebner, 2006 Marks, Shah,Westall 2004 Ng et al 2015 Park Huebner, 2005 Quinn Duckworth,2007). This association was also found with self-reported academic achievement or academic efficacy, when official Grade Point Average (GPA or standardized test scores were unavailable (Salmela Aro Tynkkynen 2010 Suldo Huebner,2006 Yoo Choi, 2016). Some results indicate that higher academic functioning leads to higher SWB and lower levels of psychopathology (Suldo Shaffer, 2008) and that students' great point average GPA) positively predicts changes in life satisfaction (Steinmayr et al 2015) However, in other cases, SWB and academic achievement were not statistically significantly correlated (e.g Huebner, 1991 Huebner Alderman,1993).

The concept of university engagement considers dimensions at individual (i.e., students themselves) and the contextual or institutional level. For example, in a widely-cited definition given by Kuh (2009a), university engagement was regarded as "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (p. 683). Similarly, researchers framed university engagement in terms of external factors (e.g., institutional factors) and internal factors (i.e., students' personal factors; Zhang et al., 2015). A Pakistani study by Bhukari et al. aimed to determine the association between academic performance and subjective well-being (depression, subjective happiness, and life satisfaction) among 300 university students using the Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) and Satisfaction with Life Scale, and (SWLS) found

that academic performance is significantly negatively related to depression, whereas it is significantly positively related to subjective happiness and life satisfaction. In addition, the transition to higher education itself is a great challenge, which may cause physical and psychological distress and negatively affect the quality of university students' academic life (Tobolowsky, 2008; Wynaden et al., 2013). Yet, students who can cope effectively and function adaptively in university would flourish amidst these challenges (Stamp et al., 2015). Whether students can function optimally in challenging circumstances is a result of complex interactions between individual (e.g., personal attributes and biological condition), social, environmental, and cultural factors. Most importantly, protective factors can modify students' response to challenges and buffer them from the negative influences (Bouteyre et al., 2007; Burris et al., 2009). Thus, to help students deal with developmental and transitional difficulties in university, and to promote their gains from higher education, it is very important to explore such protective factors. At a personal level, previous studies have shown that personal well-being such as interpersonal confidence, social and emotional skills, and self-esteem were associated with better adjustment and academic achievement (Eisenberg et al., 2009; Stamp et al., 2015). Hence, focusing on these attributes represents a promising approach to enhance university students' academic gains.

Although educational level and age are highly correlated, they are not the same, particularly not on the university level where student populations tend to be heterogeneous with respect to age. For example, some studies using university samples report a mean age of almost 26 years (e g Grunschel Schwinger, Steinmayr,&Fries 2016) whereas others report a mean age of 18 years (e g Schmitt Oswald, Friede Imus, Merritt, 2008). Fazel (2010) enlighten that the perceptions of students about the learning environment can be a basis for the application of the amendments and, therefore, optimize the educational environment.

However, less literature and research is being conducted regarding the relationship of personal well-being and academic achievement. The foundation and basic research questions of the study are as follows:

Research Question
RQ1: What is the correlation between PWB and academic achievement (last semester grades and expected semester grades)?
RQ2: What is the differences between the academic (previous and expected) grades, gender, age and educational level?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design and Participants

Quantitative research study design was used to analyze the result. The sample consisted of 85 International Pakistani students studying in China under the CSC- scholarship program taught in English program, (10 Undergraduate language diploma, 44 Master, and 10 post-graduate students (Male= 72, Female=13). Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. All nationalities were excluded from

the study except Pakistani students studying in China. The study was carried out at one normal university located in Jilin province, China. Due to the epidemic situation the data was collected through online website. Whereas, questionnaire was distributed online and one participant can fill the questionnaire from one mobile set.

2.2 Instruments

The dimensions of the questionnaire included socio-demographic information: age, gender, school of study, and educational level of study. The tool also included the cumulative grade point average (CGPA), which is an indicator of academic performance of previous semester and expected grade point (CGPA).

2.3 The Personal Wellbeing Index Adult (PWI-A)

The Personal Wellbeing Index Adult (PWI A) is a seven item, self-administered scale that measures personal well-being. With the following life domains: standard of living, health, life achievement, personal relationships, personal safety, community connectedness, and future security. Each item is rated on a 0-to-10 scale (0 = No satisfaction at all; 10 = Very satisfied). Self-administered last semester and expected semester grade point was asked. Quantitative data was analyzed by using SPSS version 21.0. Students' responses were compared using mean scores, One-way ANOVA and Paired Samples t-test and Pearson Correlation.

2.4 Ethical Consideration

The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were respects and they have complete right to participate and leave the study if they want to.

3. Results

While processing the data, the current academic score and expected academic score of students' and personal well-being were set out separately. The table 1 shows there is no correlation between previous academic grades with the personal well-being whereas there is a significant positive correlation between expected grade point with the personal well-being.

Table 1: Correlation between Grades and PWB

	Previous Semester Grades	Expected Grades	SWB
Previous Semester Grades			
Expected Semester Grades	.913**		
Personal Well-Being	.007	.067	

Table 2: Difference between Gender (Independent Sample Test)

	T	df	P
Previous Semester Grades	-185	83	.854
Expected Semester Grades	-305	83	.761
Personal Well-Being	-.772	83	.442

Table 1and 2 showed there is no gender differences in respect to academic grade (expected and current) with the personal well-being.

Table 3: One Sample T-Test

	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
PWB	46.493	84	.001	71.506

Table 3 showed *p*-value is less than 0.05 merely stating results are statistically significant.

Table 4: One Way -Anova Table

	Df	F	P
Age	32	.408	.666
Education	32	.175	.840

Table 4 showed that there was no significant difference among age group for academic achievement and personal well-being of Pakistani international students studying in China. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare age, and educational levels of students with the subjective well-being and academic performance. Through the surveying of the students contained in the sample size participating in the study results revealed not any significant differences.

4. Discussion

This study explored that male and female international students have no differences as regard to the academic grades and personal well-being. Because of the individual differences and certain different academic understandings and achievement goals individually. It is consistent with the result and study by Malik et al. (2013) explaining an explorative study with 137 students finding there is no relationship between life subjective well-being and academic performance. The results of this research are consistent with existing research. Findings contribute to the growing but limited literature on the relationship between academic achievement and subjective well-being (Huebner et al., 2014; Ng et al., 2015). Moreover, the research showed significant differences of expected grades with the personal well-being. Explaining the phenomena of Academic achievement have a relationship with subjective well-being with regard to the expected grades.Previous academic achievement has been shown to predict current achievement (McKenzie & Schweitzer, 2001) and, in a wide-ranging analysis of factors influencing adjustment and performance, Stoever (2001) found that academic rather than personal adjustment was the strongest predictor of academic performance. Additionally, previous literature and research suggests that relationships between personal and academic achievement may not be linear (Chen, Wang, & Hu, 2007; Fenollar, Roma´n, & Cuestas, 2007).Interpretation of the findings might also have benefited as highlighting the importance of personal well-being and subjectivity of individuals as related to their academic achievements and expected results.Measures taken at midyear and pre-assessment would have contributed more immediate evidence of the relationship between well-being and achievement. The study was a small scale survey and hence the findings cannot be generalized to all international students (Pakistani students) in China. As the population of Pakistani international students is high in percentage so similar study should be carried out in other universities across China (which have Pakistani international students) to establish whether international students hold the same perceptions about the academic learning environment.

5. Conclusions

According to the findings and results of the study, the students held positive perceptions about the learning environment. The students' subjective personal well-being was high as linked to the expected grade point. First, that the current situation of corona epidemic situation and within the last couple of months their spirits were high and they were expecting really good academic scores at the end of their current ongoing semester. Secondly, they expressed their low level of academic grade point of last semester grade point as compared to the ongoing semester grade points. Because of the uncertain situation relating to their academies. Lastly, the group differences as educational level and gender did not have any major differences.

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