

Academic experiences in higher education students: perception of well-being

Katia Pereira¹, Fabiana Soares¹, Carina Figueiredo¹, Isabel Silva², Gustavo Desouza²

¹Psychology Students of ISEIT/Viseu, Portugal, katiapereira96@hotmail.com

²Psychologist/PhD., Lecture of ISEIT/Viseu, member of RECI, Portugal, isabel.silva@viseu.ipiaget.pt

³PhD., Lecture of ESS Jean Piaget/Viseu, member of RECI, Portugal, gustavo.desouza@viseu.ipiaget.pt

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: The transition to higher education involves challenging and demanding changes that can disrupt the well-being of students^[1]. To the set of situations, changes, expectations and anxieties in higher education, the literature denominates academic experiences^[2]. Studies suggest that more positive academic experiences, greater the satisfaction with life, contributing to more positive level of well-being and mental health^[1] and, consequently, a better adaptation and academic success^[3].

OBJECTIVES: This preliminary analysis integrated in an ongoing exploratory study, seeks to characterized the academic experiences of students of the Psychology, Nursing and Physiotherapy courses of Piaget Institute of Viseu. **METHODS:** A pre-test was applied with the Academic Experience Questionnaire – reduced version (QVA-r) [4], an instrument with 60 items that assesses the degree of adaptation of university students to the academic demands in the personal, interpersonal, career, institutional, study dimensions. This is a Likert response scale from 1 (“totally disagreement”) to 5 (“totally agreement”), where the highest value corresponds to a more positive characterization of the dimensions. A total of 44 students participated (12=Psychology; 16=Nursing; 16=Physiotherapy), attending from the first to the last year of the degree, aged between 18 and 30 years. The means comparison test allowed to analyze the differences in the scores obtained in the questionnaire between the three courses. **RESULTS:** The Nursing course presents the lowest average of the academic experience indicator (3.19), compared to Psychology (3.28) and Physiotherapy (3.25). We observed that the values do not differ much between the courses ($p=0.937$), and that present a score above the average score of the scale (3), suggesting an acceptable level of adaptation to higher education. The interpersonal (3.61), career (3.69), institutional (3.5) and study (3.3) dimensions, presented approximate average results among the three courses, with the exception of the personal dimension (2.26), which includes items essentially associated with self and perception of well-being, which obtained an average value below the average scoring level of the scale. **CONCLUSIONS:** The study requires a broader data collection. Faced with the result of perceived well-being of students below the



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estimated average, it's important to reflect on intervention proposals. Regarding the application of the questionnaire, it's extension proved to be a fragility to its completion by the students.

Keywords: *academic experiences, well-being, higher education students*

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