On mental health and academic success

Anonym 2

Abstract

Mental health is important while analyzing people's productivity and students and researchers' academic performance is not an exception. It has been analyzed bibliography analyzing the stress sources for three different stages in academia: Undergraduate students, graduate students, and early-career researchers.

After identifying the stress sources it is mentioned what type of interventions the authors have found effective to cope with the issues.

Introduction

Mental health is a relevant factor to take into account while measuring someone's performance at a given productive duty. Furthermore, A (2000) concludes that, for a company, inverting on mental health treatment for their depressed workers ends up being more economically beneficial than dealing with their low productivity and laying off costs.

In an academic scenario, B (2000) has shown that there is a strong correlation between students suffering depression, anxiety and eating disorders with low GPA results, which could be considered somewhat of academic productivity measurement.

Among the following sections, it will be analyzed the different factors that mangled students and academicians well-being and their productivity.

Undergraduate students

As for undergraduate level students, it can be declared as a measure of success their GPA results and persistence on studying their programmes.

B (2000) found that the lower the depression, anxiety and eating disorders markers, the higher the GPAs tend to be. C (2000) found that intrapersonal resilience accounted for variance in GPAs and academic persistence.

D (2000) identifies the stress sources mainly on examination and examination results. The study also suggests that students with external beliefs are more stressed than the ones with internal beliefs[1]. Self-esteem is negatively correlated with both life and academic stress.

Based on the above, academic institutions should offer proper assistantship to their undergraduate students in order to treat depression and anxiety markers and also stress management so the students could perform the best they can.

Graduate students

Graduate students experience the same kind of issues than undergraduate ones in addition to broader non-academic situations due to their young-adults condition. E (2000) describes them as the following:

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[1]Refers to the place where control (over outcomes) resides, either "internal" to the individual (i.e., based on his or her own behavior or enduring characteristics) or "external" to the individual (e.g., due to other people's behavior, fate, luck or chance). Source: https://nursing.vanderbilt.edu/projects/wallstonk/pdf/C14.pdf

Transition

The students who start their masters right after finishing their bachelor may feel intimidated by the older students in the class. Nonetheless, older students can also develop insecurities when their professors are the same age or younger than them.

Financial Issues

Most graduate students support economically by themselves, getting scholarships, loans or even part-time jobs add a huge amount of pressure under their shoulders.

Family Commitments

Some students could have family obligations of different types. Some of them might have a spouse or be involved in a long term relationship that could be affected by the amount of time graduate studies demand. The amount of stress goes higher when there is distance involved and if the partners have children together.

Test anxiety

This is developed differently depending on the age of the student. Younger students tend to be afraid of the experience of the older when there is a competitive ambient, although older tend to stress since they have not been tested in a long time. Authors state that being involved in study groups could help to release this kind of pressure.

Courseload

Many of the students tend to take the maximum of credits allowed in order to finish the programme as soon as it is possible, which sometimes puts great loads of coursework on their tables.

As part of the same work, Pfeiffer points to four intervention types that have shown good results on coping stress for graduate students. Cognitive approaches to managing reactions to the stressors, relaxation therapy especially for test anxiety, supportive counseling "to promote support and problem solving" and social support as family and friends.

Early-career researchers

Early-career researchers (ECR) are understood as recent doctoral graduates and post-doctoral researchers at the beginning of their careers.

F (2000) have surveyed several ECRs in Sweden determining that in this group the main concerns are related to job positions and career paths. The increasing amount of ECRs looking for a job and the lack of permanent positions have pushed many of them to become post-doctoral and funding seekers. This acts in detriment of the coherence of their own research path. Added to the later, this seeking positions environment sometimes push them to move around other countries which could create conflicts with their family.

It is shown that high levels of stress in ECRs are associated with burnout and depression which, as already mentioned, affects the productivity of a person. Moreover, in this particular case, it will affect the quality of the research being done, thus, the quality of publications, which is another source of pressure ECRs have to deal with (G (2000)).

Signoret states that universities backing their researchers and providing clear career paths create a healthy work environment and thus ECRs well-being is improved and so it is their science quality.

Discussion

Companies can invest in their workers' well-being in order to retain them and get their best possible productivity. Same as companies, academic institutions can take actions so their students, academicians, and researchers can succeed in their roles. If the academic institutions are understood as one of the spaces where the Society builds itself and its future members and leaders, then the beneficiaries of this investment will be all the beings that conform it.

Life within academic institutions depends on the role the person is playing and so the concern sources that affect their mental health. For young undergraduate students stress sources tend to reside in the academic field, while for young adult graduate students and early-career researchers these sources comprise a wider spectrum of concerns given their stage of life.

Independent of the category and the stress source, academic institutions are in a position to provide counseling and therapy to its members so they can perform at their maximum capabilities.

Some studies show that some amounts of stress could produce positive outcomes (H (2000)), nonetheless that is out of the scope of this investigation and it needs further research to extend current work.

References

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