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Discussion about “Examining the Effects of Student Involvement of African American College Student Development”

In the article “Examining the Effects of Student Involvement of African American College Student Development”, the author Lamont A. Flowers thoroughly discussed about using Simple Linear Regression model for investigating the extent to which student involvement experiences impacted educational outcomes for African Americans students in college, and got the results indicating that in-class and out-of-class experiences positively influenced student development.

As for me, the author’s use of linear regression model in the research study’s context is appropriate and clever. He wants to extend the research in how student involvement experiences can benefit students’ developmental gains in college by analyzing the effects of in-class and out-of-class experiences on academic and social gains in college on a representative sample of African American college students. In order to do that, his research methodological framework in the study was constructed from the idea that educational results were a function of pre-enrollment traits and background influences, institutional characteristics, and academic and non-academic experiences. Therefore, this research study is a perfect application of the Linear Regression model, as the author can easily determine appropriate dependent, independent variables and control variables with dummy variables and interval scale to deal with different types of values. In this study, the author chose the dependent variables to be the educational results, which were operationally defined as five CSEQ scales that yielded self-reported gains. Independent variables were the student involvement experiences value measured using many different CSEQ scales. The author also developed four sets of control variables based on the mentioned methodological framework.

The author also mentioned that the assumptions of the linear regression model are met as in the end of the study, he came to the conclusion that in-class and out-of class experiences positively influence student development of African-American college students. Moreover, while analyzing the data and model, he discovered that the magnitude of the positive effects of student involvement on academic and social development was more significant for some student involvement experience than it was for other experiences. For instance, the magnitudes of the beneficial outcome of library experiences or course learning experiences were more conspicuous than that of the experiences in student union or with athletic. Furthermore, the author also provided eight different regression summaries for all student involvement experiences to clarify their impacts on African American students’ academic and social development. By this way, he presented the relationship between different experiences in each category with five main

dependent variables in the model (CSEQ scales). For this reason, assumptions of the linear regression model are met in this study.

In my opinion, this sample dataset can be a representative for the larger population that student involvement experiences could be trivial to their development gains, especially African American college students, such as using computer or participating in some music activity. However, these specific experiences cannot apply to all racial groups of students. It only shows that further investigation is required to see which factors are negative to students' development gains in general. In addition, the data also comes from the Revised 3rd Edition of the CSEQ, which contained self-reported information of students' demographic characteristics, students' involvement experiences, and students' intellectual and social gains, and had an extensive of history of use in American colleges in universities, so it is deemed as an scholar and appropriate sample data set for the current research. The sample consisted of 7,923 African American students (5,150 females and 2,773 males) from 192 postsecondary institutions who participated in the CSEQ data collection between 1990 and 2000, so it is a relatively huge and complete sample that can be definitely serve as a representative for a larger population about which the author makes conclusions.

*The author also performed statistical inference as he used data analysis from the sample dataset to deduce the extent to which student involvement experiences influenced properties and educational development gains of African American college students.*

Consequently, being backed up with a detailed sample dataset and reasonable methodological framework, the author's conclusions are valid for the tests that he performed in which he mainly concentrated on how college experiences affects African American college students' group. He firstly deliberately and thoroughly analyzes many different aspects of student involvement experiences that can influence the students' educational development gains in colleges, uses Linear Regression model to interpret them through nine different tables, investigates those table to obtain his final conclusions for the study.

Even though the study is scientifically and logically constructed and carried out, there are still four limitations that the study can improve in the future that the author mentioned: the sample may not apply to all institutions; it does not include all African American students attending colleges and universities despite containing nearly 8,000 students, the data used in the study derived from student self-reported information, and statistical controls for the effects of pre-enrollment measures were not employed leading to over- or underestimate the effects of student involvement experiences. Another limitation I can think of is that the sample data set was gathered between 1990 and 2000, about twenty years ago, which may decrease the accuracy of the conclusions as the society rapidly change and develop, leading to the fact that students of the current time may fairly differs those of twenty years ago. I think these are all the most important issues related to this study.