

Exploring the Influence of Motivation on the Educational Success of Black College Students

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Introduction

Abstract

Academic success is imperative for personal development, social mobility, and overall individual knowledge (Sivrikaya, 2019). As a result of societal discrimination, many young Black college students often lack the motivation needed to succeed academically. Furthermore, Black students are at the greatest risk for academic failure in comparison to their non-Black peers which affects them as they progress to professional careers and higher education (Stanard et al., 2010). There is a significant amount of research on this topic, however there is a gap in the literature concerning Black college students. This study intended to contribute to this gap and explore common motivators utilized by Black students to achieve educational success. Factors such as organization, goal orientation, and time management were common themes expressed by participants of this study.

Aims of the Research

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between motivation and academic success for Black college students. This study investigated the common trends relative to motivation and academic success and contrast them to the experiences of Black college students. This study explored the motivators that Black college students use to attain academic success.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study were:

1. What factors contribute to Black college students' academic motivation?
2. What is the relationship between academic motivation and academic success for Black college students?
3. How do Black college students perceive academic motivation?

Method

Research Design

In this qualitative study, I conducted a focus group with a total of seven Black undergraduate students that currently attend FAMU. Participants of this study were enrolled in an Introduction to Psychology course during FAMU's Summer 2024 B term. Students received an email that contained a flyer that described the requirements and purpose of the study. All participants were compensated with a 25-dollar VISA gift card following the completion of the interviews.

Participants

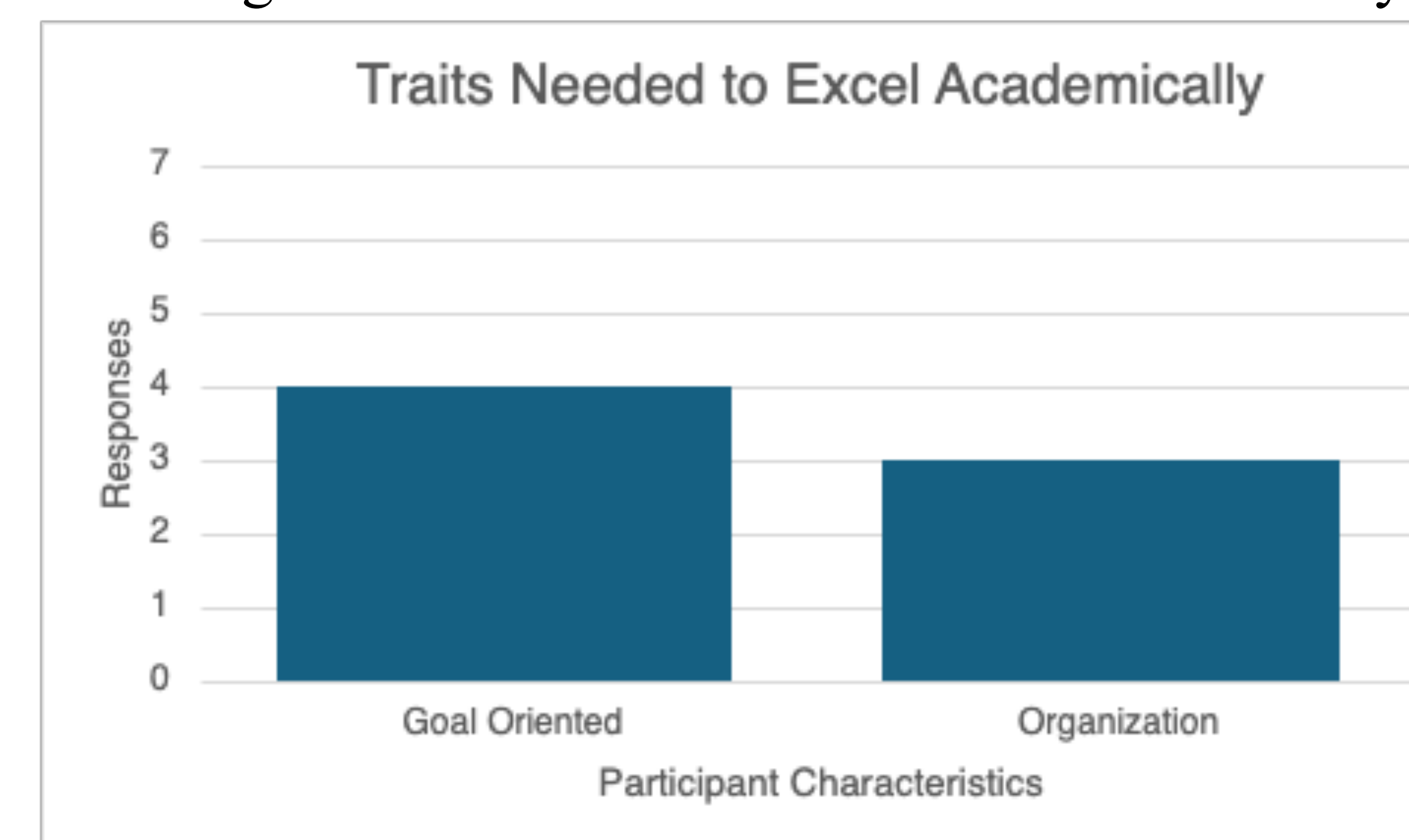
The participants of this study were seven Black students at least 18 years of age receiving their respective undergraduate degrees at FAMU in Tallahassee, Florida.

Data Collection and Analysis

A focus group was held via Zoom on July 31, 2024. Participants were asked to answer various predetermined interview questions about their educational motivation and academic success. A recording and transcription of the interview were made through Zoom, which was used by the researcher for further analysis. Data was transcribed by the researcher throughout August 2024. Codes were created to analyze the data including common themes that were presented throughout the interview.

Results

Through this interview, the influence of motivation and academic success in Black college students was confirmed through the answers of the participants. Participant's answers revealed the many factors such as race, support systems, and mental health that influence Black students' motivation and academic success. Considering that all the respondents are high achieving students at Florida A&M, they provided insight on the traits needed to excel academically.



Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are prevalent when it relates to student's academic motivation, and students are more inclined to be internally motivated because incentive to do well academically comes from within. This study has solidified the many ways in which motivation influences academic success in Black students and provided useful information for future research on the topic.

Discussion

A significant strength of this study is the population. Focusing on Black undergraduate college students, a vastly underrepresented group within research, provided a unique perspective on how race influences many aspects within academic motivation and success. A weakness of my study is that there was a lack of operational definitions for repeated terms, such as for the word 'success'. During the interview, participants commented on how questions pertaining to success were difficult to answer, because they believed that the term "success is subjective." A clear definition would have allowed participants to properly answer the given questions pertaining to success. Another weakness concerning the study is that though it was stated that participants were not required to answer every question, the lack of responses presented complications in generalizing the data. Future studies should require that all participants respond to every question to ensure proper generalization and analysis.

Conclusion

The influence of motivation on the academic success of Black college students is imperative to understanding the perspective of Black college students as it relates to their academics. Mental health, race, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were all described by participants as factors that contributed to their academic motivation. This study has presented the many ways in which motivation influences academic success in Black students and provided useful information for future research on the topic. Future studies to augment the literature on this topic should look at younger populations to successfully prepare them for their future collegiate experiences. The responses provided by the participants of this study greatly contributes to the knowledge surrounding Black college students and their relationship with their motivation and academics.

Key References

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