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A PRACTICE-BASED EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF REGULATORY-FOCUS BEHAVIOR IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT, JUSTICE AND STUDENT CREATIVITY

Abstract:

This empirical study investigates the relationships between students' perceptions (instructor support, distributional and interpersonal justice), psychological states (prevention- and promotion-focus) and creativity. The sample draws from a group of students enrolling in a general education course employing an Innovative Teaching and Learning Approach (ITLA). ITLA is set of pedagogic practices, which was developed to enhance course innovativeness, effectiveness and implementation. The empirical findings indicate that (1) perceived instructor support is positively related to student creativity, prevention- and promotion-focus behaviors; (2) perceived distributional justice and interpersonal justice also has an impact on students' prevention- and promotion- focus behaviors; (3) students' prevention-focus behavior mediates the relationships between perceived fairness (distributional and interpersonal justice) and their creative behavior. The preliminary study provides original theoretical and practical insights to educators regarding the importance of students' perceptions and psychological states fostering creativity.

This integrative approach (research and teaching practices) gives educators more concrete practical hints as they can seek to match the research findings to their actual courses and consequently being able to discover the problems and thus making continuous improvement on their teaching and learning approaches. As indicated by Goos and Salomons (2017), while student evaluations of teaching are widely used in tertiary institutions but survey response is typically low and course evaluations are sometimes biased. Being aware of how different pedagogical practices can enhance student creative performance based on a follow-up empirical study, instructors can make more purposeful tactics to adjust their pedagogical practices in order to enhance the overall quality of the course.

There are several limitations in this study but these limitations can also serve as future research ideas. Future research should include other cultures to see the generalization of the conceptual model and to re-test the model with larger sample size to enhance confidence in this tentative conclusion. Despite these limitations, this early-stage preliminary study offers useful practical and theoretical hints to researchers and adds insights to the literature of higher education research and development.

By quoting Bowden and Marton (1998), university is not merely about the reproduction of the collective mind; rather it is about expanding, widening and transforming our students. The university is the most important instrument in the process by which the collective mind is transformed through its diverse ways of grasping the world. Therefore, instructors must meet the challenge of designing more innovative teaching and learning activities (Harding, 2010) to enhance student creativity.

Cited references: to be provided

Keywords:

Student creativity; regulatory-focus theory; perceived instructor support; distributive and interpersonal justice; general education

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