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Academic motivation, psychological distress and student adjustment in black female first year university students living on campus

Rasoaisi, Lerato

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Abstract

This study was aimed at investigating the relationship between academic motivation, psychological distress, and various aspects of adjustment. The specific aim of this research was to explore the unique contributions of each of the seven types of academic motivation, depression, anxiety and stress in predicting each of four types of student adjustment in the first year of university education. Quantitative data collection methods were used to collect data from a sample of predominantly Black, first-year female students residing within the Wits University campus. The collected data were analysed utilising Pearson's product moment correlations and step-wise multiple regression analyses. Results suggested that psychological distress, particularly depression was a critical factor in academic, personal-emotional and attachment adjustment, whereas anxiety and stress were mostly strongly related to social adjustment. Amotivation and the lack of certain types of intrinsic motivation were also found to be risk factors for poorer adjustment. Implications of this research as well as limitations and directions for future research are discussed.