

Perceptions About the Academic Performance of Autistic Students

Authors : Afaf Alhusayni, Elizabeth Sheppard, Asiyya Jaffrani, Peter Mitchell, Lauren Marsh

Abstract : Introduction: Previous research has found that people make systematic judgments about others based on small glimpses of their behavior. Furthermore, autistic people are consistently judged more negatively than non-autistic people in terms of favourability and approachability. Objectives: This project focuses on a hitherto unstudied type of judgment that is highly relevant within a university context, judgments about academic performance. This is particularly important as autistic university students are less likely to complete their degrees than neurotypical students. Methods: Twenty-five neurotypical perceivers (21 females - 4 males) viewed a series of 4s video clips featuring an individual 'target' displaying natural behavior. Nine of these targets were autistic and nine were neurotypical. Perceivers were asked to rate each target on four aspects related to university life (motivation, success, grades, and happiness). Results: Autistic targets were judged more negatively on all aspects compared to neurotypical targets. Conclusions: This study concludes that neurotypical perceivers negatively judge the academic performance of autistic students. This suggests that autistic university students face unfavorable scrutiny and judgment, which may negatively impact their academic success. Implications: These initial findings provide important evidence that autistic people are negatively stigmatized within education environments. Further work is needed to ascertain the extent to which these negative judgments may feed into attainment gaps for autistic students. This information is useful for the education department, government, and social care organizations, enabling change in the provision of support for autistic students.

Keywords : autistic person perception, academic performance, stigma and judgment, higher education

Conference Title : ICADD 2022 : International Conference on Autism and Developmental Disorders

Conference Location : Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Conference Dates : January 28-29, 2022