

Theory of Planned Behavior Predicts Graduation Intentions of College and University Students with and without Learning Disabilities / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Canada and Israel

Authors : Catherine S. Fichten, Tali Heiman, Mary Jorgensen, Mai Nhu Nguyen, Rhonda Amsel, Dorit Olenik-Shemesh

Abstract : The study examined Canadian and Israeli students' perceptions related to their intention to graduate from their program of studies. Canada and Israel are dissimilar in many ways that affect education, including language and alphabet. In addition, the postsecondary education systems differ. For example, in some parts of Canada (e.g., in Quebec, Canada's 2nd largest province), students matriculate after 11 years of high school; in Israel, this typically occurs after 12 years. In addition, Quebec students attend two compulsory years of junior college before enrolling in a three-year university Bachelor program; in Israel students enroll in a three-year Bachelor program directly after matriculation. In addition, Israeli students typically enroll in the army shortly after high school graduation; in Canada, this is not the case. What the two countries do have in common is concern about the success of postsecondary students with disabilities. The present study was based on Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB); the model suggests that behavior is influenced by Intention to carry it out. This, in turn, is predicted by the following correlated variables: Perceived Behavioral Control (i.e., ease or difficulty enacting the behavior - in this case graduation), Subjective Norms (i.e., perceived social/peer pressure from individuals important in the student's life), and Attitude (i.e., positive or negative evaluation of graduation). A questionnaire was developed to test the TPB in previous Canadian studies and administered to 845 Canadian college students (755 nondisabled, 90 with LD/ADHD) who had completed at least one semester of studies) and to 660 Israeli university students enrolled in a Bachelor's program (537 nondisabled, 123 with LD/ADHD). Because Israeli students were older than Canadian students we covaried age in SPSS-based ANOVA comparisons and included it in regression equations. Because females typically have better academic outcomes than males, gender was included in all analyses. ANOVA results indicate only a significant gender effect for Intention to graduate, with females having higher scores. Four stepwise regressions were conducted, with Intention to graduate as the predicted variable, and Gender and the three TPB predictors as independent variables (separate analyses for Israeli and Canadian samples with and without LD/ADHD). Results show that for samples with LD/ADHD, although Gender and Age were not significant predictors, the TPB predictors were, with all three TPB predictors being significant for the Canadian sample (i.e., Perceived Behavioral Control, Subjective Norms, Attitude, $R^2=.595$), and two of the three (i.e., Perceived Behavioral Control, Subjective Norms) for the Israeli sample ($R^2=.528$). For nondisabled students, the results for both countries show that all three TPB predictors were significant along with Gender: $R^2=.443$ for Canada and $R^2=.332$ for Israel; age was not significant. Our findings show that despite vast differences between our Canadian and Israeli samples, Intention to graduate was related to the three TPB predictors. This suggests that our TPB measure is valid for diverse samples and countries that it can be used as a quick, inexpensive way to predict graduation rates, and that strengthening the three predictor variables may result in higher graduation rates.

Keywords : disability, higher education, students, theory of planned behavior

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020