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Exploring the Students' Wisdom and Knowledge: Evidence from Romanian Students

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Abstract

Character strengths represent adaptive personality dimensions influencing learning, motivation, and interpersonal dynamics, ultimately promoting academic success and psychological well-being. Since positive psychology's emergence in the 1990s, virtues and character strengths have garnered significant scholarly interest, especially concerning student well-being, proactive learning approaches, and happiness cultivation in educational settings. University experience represents a critical developmental period requiring students to navigate numerous transitions and challenges. Wisdom, one of six core virtues, holds particular importance in higher education by fostering deeper understanding and ethical reasoning beyond mere knowledge acquisition. This research explores the five character strengths defining Wisdom as manifested among students at a Romanian public university. Employing quantitative methodology, this study investigated relationships between wisdom-related character strengths among 759 undergraduate students. All five constructs demonstrated significant positive intercorrelations, Perspective having the strongest relationship with Open-mindedness, Creativity with Curiosity and Perspective, while Love of Learning correlates the strongest with Curiosity and Creativity. Specific academic year cohorts revealed differential effects on wisdom-related strengths, Curiosity, Open-mindedness, and Creativity, suggesting these traits may develop or change across undergraduate education. Students' employment status significantly influenced Originality and Perspective, while their age effects were observed for Love of Learning and Perspective. Gender emerged as the most robust predictor of character strength differences. These findings indicate that wisdom-related character strengths in undergraduate students are shaped primarily by academic progression and gender, with employment status and age playing secondary roles. The present research is one of the first scientific studies analyzing students' wisdom and knowledge in Romania.

Keywords: Creativity; Curiosity; Love of Learning; Open-mindedness; Perspective