Understanding Student Well-Being in Higher Education: From Study Demands and Resources to Institutional Support

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Abstract

Student well-being is increasingly recognised as an important prerequisite for academic engagement, successful study progression, and a sustainable higher education environment. However, effective institutional support requires a systematic understanding of the demands students face, the resources available to them, and the ways in which these factors are related to their well-being.

This presentation introduces the first wave of the PRO-ERF project (Research and Enhancement of Well-Being in the Academic Community), conducted at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences. The longitudinal project aims to generate evidence-based recommendations and support activities that can contribute to improving the quality of student experience and strengthening well-being within the academic community.

Data collection is currently underway, and approximately 500 undergraduate and graduate students from three study programmes are expected to participate in an anonymous online survey. The survey examines subjective well-being and mental health, resilience, perceived social support, academic engagement and exhaustion, as well as study-related demands and resources. It also explores students' perceived need for additional forms of support and their experiences with support services available at the faculty.

The presentation will report preliminary findings from the first wave, with particular attention to the relationship between students' well-being and their perceived study demands and resources. The implications of the findings for the development of targeted, sustainable, and institutionally embedded forms of student support will be discussed.

Keywords: Student Well-Being; Higher Education; Study Demands and Resources; Academic Engagement; Institutional Support