Grit, Coping, and Math Anxiety: Examining the Pathways Through Which Devotion to Long-Term Goals May Promote Student Well-Being

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Master of Arts
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2018

Abstract

This study sought to determine the extent of the relationship between grit and academic coping in upper elementary school children, and whether proactive coping accounts for lower self-reported school-related internalizing symptoms in grittier students. A sample of 56 children and adolescents in Grades 4 through 6 (\(M_{\text{age}} = 10.77\) years, \(SD = 0.85\)) participated in a cross-sectional study, during which they completed self-report questionnaire measures of grit, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning, autonomous academic motivation, academic coping, and math anxiety. In agreement with predictions, students who reported higher levels of grit also reported greater strategizing and commitment in response to academic challenges, strategies classified as proactive independent coping approaches. This relationship between grit and coping was mediated by affiliated increases in self-efficacy for self-regulated learning and autonomous academic motivation. Analyses also showed evidence of a significant negative indirect effect of grit on math anxiety through proactive independent coping, indicating that grittier students reported greater proactive coping which in turn was associated with lower levels of math anxiety. Given its relationship with adaptive coping and reduced academic emotional stress, grit may constitute a factor promoting student resilience.