Self-discipline and Motivation at the University of California, Davis' Bayanihan Student-Run Clinic

Introduction

Undergraduate students worldwide desire to pursue a career in healthcare. While excelling in school is just one factor that must be intently met, applicants must also have experiences to build a strong understanding of the basics of patient care. The University of California, Davis (UCD) is special for pre-health students because it provides undergraduates and medical students the opportunity to volunteer at student-run clinics (SRCs) under the supervision of at least one physician. There are several SRCs at UCD that each "[provide] free health care to uninsured, low-income, and other underserved populations. Operating on weekends, these clinics serve several distinct groups of patients, providing them with culturally sensitive health care in a respectful and comfortable environment. The clinics offer thousands of people what is often their only access to health care" (UC Davis Health, School of Medicine).

Research Question

How does the natural utilization of self-discipline methods affect pre-health undergraduate students' educational and career goals in the UC Davis student-run Bayanihan Clinic?

Literature Review

To obtain a basis for self-discipline and motivation methods for my survey question, I found two peer-reviewed articles that I dissected extensively. One of the techniques I decided to further explore was the combination of Mental Contrasting and Implementation Intentions (MCII). Mental contrasting is a self-regulation strategy that is beneficial for strong goal

commitment. MC is essentially comparing your current life with your desired goal, and oftentimes your current state is an obstacle. It is somewhat like incentivizing yourself to complete something that works towards your goal. Implementation Intentions are if-then plans that thoroughly describe how to fulfill a person's goal. For students, II is often used as a time management skill without us knowing. It helps students prioritize tasks and make decisions, instead of stressing over many difficult tasks at once. A research study combined both Mental Contrasting and Implementation Intentions (MCII) and tested whether this will convert positive thoughts about a desired future into self-regulated behavior change *(Duckworth, Kirby, Gollwitzer, Oettingen)*. My prediction is that the students who show signs of using MCII will have strong time management skills and confidence in achieving their goals.

The second peer-reviewed source covered the rest of the methods I will be using for my research article. The study outlines the terms: intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, satisfaction with current major, and adjustment to college (*van Rooij, Jansen, van de Grift*). Intrinsic motivation is doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. I predict that intrinsic motivation will be positively correlated with adjustment from high school to college, therefore, if a student claims their adjustment to college was relatively easy, they will be more intrinsically motivated in their academic goals. I believe that if a student has a relatively easy transition period, they will succeed in their classes more than students who do not have an easy transition period because these students will have fewer distractions and more academic-productive thoughts. Next, self-efficacy states that people with high efficacy refers to the student's beliefs and attitudes toward their capabilities to achieve academic success, as well as their belief in their ability to fulfill academic tasks and the successful learning of the materials. I predict that

students with high self-efficacy will be more satisfied with their current major(s)/minor(s). I believe that if a student enjoys the topic they are studying, even if it is very difficult, they will persist through the challenge to earn their desired results.

For my primary research, I decided to specialize my findings by focusing on UCD students. UCD is an excellent institution for students, especially in STEM. For those interested in Healthcare, UCD provides opportunities for students to explore niche interests, including clinical and laboratory research, health-related internships at nearby hospitals and clinics, and student-run clinics (SRCs). SRCs "[offer] one of the most concrete and comprehensive examples of experiential learning in which students operate more autonomously in directing their own learning than in other more traditional venues. As such, it offers the constructs of a novel educational paradigm that deserves to be examined with respect to its potentially influential and wide-ranging effects on medical student [and undergraduate] education" (*Meah, Smith, Thomas, 248*). SRCs provide students with hands-on experience and the fundamental basics of clinical settings. In the United States, most SRCs apply to graduate schools, like Medical, Physician Assistant, or Dental schools.

UCD has a plethora of population-specific established and partner SRCs, like Imani Clinic (African-American community), Shifa Clinic (South Asian and Muslim communities), RIVER Clinic (Pediatrics), and Bayanihan Clinic (Filipino immigrants and veterans). Most SRCs at UCD have specialty services within their general clinics, providing patients with treatment in more specific areas of healthcare. While each clinic is different, I am most aware of Bayanihan Clinic as I was a Summer Volunteer (SV) this past Summer. As a second-year at UCD, I often feel torn between extracurricular activities and struggle with which ones to commit to. During the summer before my first year, I became aware of the student-run clinics (SRCs) and felt

overwhelmingly fascinated when I realized there was an SRC for Filipino immigrants and veterans, Bayanihan Clinic (BC). Homesick and away from all my family in San Diego, I envisioned the community of Bayanihan Clinic to be my new "home away from home.". From then on, I knew this was an opportunity that I wanted to pursue.

Bayanihan Clinic (BC) serves, but is not limited to, Filipino Immigrants and Veterans in the greater Sacramento area. A special aspect of Bayanihan Clinic is its emphasis on community engagement and interacting with patients outside of the clinic setting. This provides opportunities for clinic members to better solidify the perspective of our patients and their vital checks. The community-building goals of BC also creates time for the patients to bond with us volunteers. Bayanihan Clinic provides patients with a variety of specialty services including the Diabetes Empowerment Program (DEP), Ophthalmology, Women's Health, and Wellness Services (Mental Health and Psychiatry). However, if a BC patient needs another service that is not offered, referrals are possible to other clinics with those services.

In Bayanihan Clinic, undergraduates who are initially recruited are probationary Summer Volunteers, who volunteer as receptionists, medical assistants, and assist in electronic medical records (EMR). After this probationary period, SVs are tested and interviewed again. If accepted, the SV becomes a permanent Clinic Intern. Established Interns have more responsibilities in the clinic compared to SVs, and can even become board members, who are in charge of all big-picture decisions and "behind the scenes" planning for the clinic. This includes recruiting medical students for every clinic Saturday, determining which clinic Saturday will be in person or telehealth, and training new SVs (personal account). For Bayanihan Clinic, undergraduate clinic members are the foundation of the clinic, and UC Davis Health (School of

Medicine) supports this idea by emphasizing that "these clinics survive because of student dedication."

As a summer volunteer (SV) at BC during the summer of 2023, I met my fellow volunteers in my cohort and the established interns from previous cohorts. From the time I was accepted as an SV in March to when my volunteer period ended in September, I consistently admired all my peers' dedication, intelligence, and kindness. A majority of students had difficult science majors and other extracurricular activities aside from BC. I always questioned, "How can my peers have so much on their plate, yet seem to manage everything so smoothly?" Being around this passionate group of people inspired me to be more intentional with my thoughts and time to strengthen habits that appear to come more naturally to them.

Methodology

To assess my research question, I utilize primary, secondary, and personal account research. As a former SV at BC, I used the information I learned from my experience to illustrate how BC is organized. Before obtaining secondary research, I knew that I must become aware of scientifically measuring self-discipline and motivation for students to successfully fulfill goals. To formulate a gauge for my research, I found peer-reviewed articles about scientifically measuring techniques behind self-discipline and motivation. The questions I created related to the methods discussed previously, from the peer-reviewed articles I chose to further interpret. For my primary research, I created a Google form survey to send to the undergraduate students in Bayanihan Clinic.

While formulating my survey, I knew I wanted to use more multiple-choice questions rather than short answer questions to reduce completion time. In addition, if my survey was too

long, the quality of responses may have decreased. To give an example of the questions from my survey, question 10 asked about the respondent's confidence in achieving desired results of created goals, or self-efficacy. Respondents could choose a number (1-5) that best describes their answer from 1 being the least confident to 5 being the most confident.

Findings







In terms of stress levels, BC undergraduate interns are highly stressed when it comes to managing time and future career plans. On a scale from 1 (not stressed) to 5 (extremely stressed), 71% of students feel time management stress while 88.3% of students feel stressed about their career goals.



5. How would you rank your time management organization? 17 responses

On a scale from 1 (not organized) to 5 (extremely organized), 58.9% of students consider themselves to be very organized. From the previous image, nearly 75% of students feel time management stress, a majority maintain time management organization through various techniques. Question #6 (not pictured) asks students to list methods that assist with organizing their time. 76% of students utilize some form of organizing events and tasks, such as notion, Google Calendar, or to-do lists. 35% of students form daily plans, such as a list of tasks or planning events with time blocks.



3. Approximately, how many hours per month do you spend at/preparing for clinic-related events (clinic shifts, outreach, meetings, etc.)?



4. Approximately, how much time do you spend on homework and studying for school each week? 17 responses

The hours that BC students spend at or planning for clinic-related events can vary depending on what position they hold within the clinic. Similarly, the hours spent on courses differ with each student, especially their academic year and enrolled courses. Students spend 12-20 hours of homework and studying each week (~48-60/month). However, they can spend 10-50 hours a month on clinic-related events. Higher hours are represented by interns on board for the clinic, who have more responsibilities on the clinic's functioning and structure.





8. How would you describe your adjustment from High School to University? 17 responses

On a scale from 1 (not satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied), all BC students feel at least moderately satisfied with their current degree plan at UCD. On a scale from 1 (not difficult) to 5 (very difficult), a majority of students felt a combination of both for their adjustment. However, more students would say their transition was not difficult compared to those who experienced more difficulties adjusting. 35.3% of students felt a combination of both, 35.5% of students did not have a difficult transition, and 29.4% of students felt a more difficult adjustment. On Question #9 (not pictured), students were asked to describe their intentions towards the classes they take. The majority of students, 41.2%, aim to take classes to genuinely learn and increase their knowledge. However, 29.4% of students claim they mainly take classes to strengthen their application for further education or need it for their degree. This question is intended to understand students' intrinsic motivation. Those who took classes to benefit themselves directly show intrinsic motivation.

10. How confident are you that you will achieve desired outcomes to events that strengthen your personal and academic self (ex: applications to sch...ls/extra curriculars/jobs, wellness goals, grades)? ¹⁷ responses



11. When faced with several challenges at once, how confident are you that you can still perform well in each? 17 responses



On a scale from 1 (not confident) to 5 (extremely confident), 76.4% of students are very confident they will achieve desired outcomes to personal goals. Furthermore, 64.7% of students feel confident they will perform well when dealing with multiple challenges.

Discussion

Before I received the survey results, I created three separate predictions based on the peer-reviewed articles I used. First, I predicted that students who show the application of MCII will have strong time management skills and confidence in achieving their goals. From the article, "*From Fantasy to Action: Mental Contrasting with Implementation Intentions (MCII) Improves Academic Performance in Children*," with just three hours of training from an

interventionist, elementary school children learned and applied MCII to broaden their schoolrelated goals. This was proven by their academic improvement in two months after the study was conducted (*Duckworth, Kirby, Gollwitzer, Oettingen*). From my survey, I found that 58.9% of students consider themselves to be organized enough for themselves. Students ranged from spending 10-50 hours on clinic-related events and 12-20 hours on school work. While the stress levels for time management and career goals were also high, these students are very confident that they can achieve desired outcomes to events, even when faced with several challenges.

I also predicted that students with high self-efficacy will be more satisfied with their current major(s) and/or minor(s). To be specific, 76.4% of students are confident in achieving their goals, and 64.7% of them have the confidence to perform well with multiple challenges. In *"First-year university students' academic success: the importance of academic adjustment,"* individuals conducted an "empirical study to investigate how intrinsic motivation, academic self-efficacy, self-regulated study behavior and satisfaction with the chosen degree programme influenced academic adjustment in university and how these variables and adjustment affected three important indicators of student success: grade point average (GPA), attained number of credits (ECTS) and intention to persist" (van Rooij, Jansen, van de Grift 13). For their study specifically on self-efficacy, they concluded that there was no effect on the student success outcomes nor academic adjustment. However, in my research, a majority of students claim they have high self-efficacy and are very satisfied at 82.4% with their major(s) and/or minor(s).

Lastly, I predicted that intrinsic motivation will be positively correlated with adjustment from High School to college. To reiterate, if a student claims their adjustment to college was relatively easy, they will be more intrinsically motivated in their academic goals. From the same peer-reviewed article, a study on intrinsic motivation was also conducted. While motivational

and behavioral factors increased the chances of students being well-adjusted and better academic performance, "[they] did not influence GPA and credits directly but only through academic adjustment. Thus, effectively regulating study behaviour (e.g. maintaining study schedules, turning off social media when studying), being intrinsically motivated to gain academic knowledge and being satisfied with chosen degree programme did not necessarily mean students would achieve high grades and obtain all credits" (van Rooij, Jansen, van de Grift, 12). While there was no specific significance of intrinsic motivation in this study, through my research I found that 41.2% of students intend to take courses to learn for themselves, rather than for an external reason. Relating this to adjustment from High School to University, students' responses varied where 35.3% of students felt a combination of difficulties adjusting while 35.3% claimed their transition was not difficult.

Conclusion

To conclude, undergraduate students at the University of California, Davis in the Student-Run Bayanihan Clinic display immense passion as students and volunteers. Despite dedicating many hours into school and clinic work, students utilize methods that work special to them to assist with time management. A majority of the students are intrinsically motivated in their educational life, driving their passion to learn and build their careers. All SRCs at UCD are distinguished by their patient population, consisting of different ethnic groups. It is essential for volunteers to have a genuine passion for their work, rather than building their resume, making acceptance difficult for those who apply. Since SRCs generally aim to recruit excellent students with passion and cultural competency, this research can be somewhat generalized to all clinics. Overall, undergraduate students at SRCs are impressive young adults who have a strong start into their future career and educational journey.

Works Cited

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