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Psychological resources and gaudiebility

Recursos psicológicos y gaudibilidad

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SUMMARY

Introduction: *A correlational study to find out the relationship between the independent variables (psychological resources and gaudiebility) and the dependent variables (academic performance, stress, and risk behaviors) is developed and a Structural Equation Model (SEM) is proposed.*
Objective: *To find out the relationships between psychological resources and gaudiebility with academic performance, stress, and risk behaviors in university students.*
Design, setting, and participants: *Quantitative type of study with non-experimental design, transversal and correlational with a selected sample by convenience. A total of 507 university students (56 % women and 44 % men) with an average age of 20.2 participated in this study. Instruments were applied to evaluate the following variables: psychological resources, gaudiebility, perceived stress, sexual risk behaviors, substance abuse risk behavior, and student's academic performance.*
Results: *A SEM model is proposed with adequate adjustment ($X^2/df=1.537$, GFI=0.996, AGFI=0.979, CFI=0.994, RMSEA=0.033, TLI=0.976, NFI=0.983, IFI=0.976).*
Conclusion: *The results indicate that psychological resources were positively related to gaudiebility while gaudiebility was negatively correlated with stress. It is concluded that gaudiebility can be a type of psychological resource acting as a protector against perceived stress. The gaudiebility variable is of recent creation and there is still a lot to do in order to know its relationship with different variables including risk behaviors and academic performance.*

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RESUMEN

Introducción: *Un estudio correlacional para encontrar la relación entre las variables independientes (recursos psicológicos y gaudibilidad) y las variables dependientes (desempeño académico, estrés y comportamientos de riesgo) se desarrolla y un Modelo de Ecuaciones Estructurales (MEE) se propone.*
Objetivo: *Encontrar las relaciones entre recursos psicológicos y gaudibilidad con desempeño académico, estrés y comportamientos de riesgo en estudiantes universitarios.*
Diseño, arreglo y participantes: *Estudio de tipo cuantitativo con diseño no experimental, transversal y correlacional. La muestra fue seleccionada por conveniencia. Un total de 507 estudiantes universitarios (56 % mujeres y 44 % hombres) con*

un promedio de edad de 20,2 participaron en este estudio. Fueron aplicados instrumentos para evaluar las siguientes variables: recursos psicológicos, gaudibilidad, estrés percibido, conductas sexuales de riesgo, consumo de sustancias psicoactivas y desempeño académico.
Resultados: *Un MEE fue propuesto con ajuste adecuado ($X^2/gl=1.537$, GFI=0.996, AGFI=0.979, CFI=0.994, RMSEA=0.033, TLI=0.976, NFI=0.983, IFI=0.976).*
Conclusión: *Los resultados indican que los recursos psicológicos correlacionaron positivamente con gaudibilidad mientras que la gaudibilidad correlacionó negativamente con el estrés. Se concluye que la gaudibilidad puede ser un tipo de recurso psicológico que actúa como protector ante el estrés percibido. La variable gaudibilidad es de reciente creación y aún hay mucho por hacer a fin de conocer su relación con diferentes variables incluyendo conductas de riesgo y desempeño académico.*

INTRODUCTION

The positive development of youth demands the prevention of different factors jeopardizing their health and wellbeing. Although most adolescents enjoy good health (1), youth morbidity and mortality have been identified to be associated mostly with external and behavioral factors (2). In this way, the positive development of youth demands institutions to progress towards the research and development of interventions favoring the psychological resources of students, since they are considered important protective factors against risk behaviors and stress since otherwise it is possible to have academic performance being negatively impacted (3-5).

During the latest years in Positive Psychology, the positive aspects of life have been studied with scientific rigor. Among these positive aspects are positive experiences and psychological resources (6) aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of people (7).

Psychological resources are defined as tangible and intangible elements (internal and external) helping people to cope with situations perceived as stressful (8). Several studies have shown that psychological resources are protective factors positively related to health and wellbeing, besides favoring proper stress management (9,10).

The results of interventions focused on the development of psychological resources such as a positive attitude towards oneself and others, as well as the development of pro-social behaviors, indicate that this kind of intervention reduces behavioral problems and distress, which improves academic performance (4).

A concept gaining interest and referring to positive subjective experiences is gaudiebility. Padrós Blàzquez and Fernández-Castro (11) define gaudiebility as a set of modulators regulating enjoyment experienced by people. Some studies show that gaudiebility positively relates to positive affect and psychological wellbeing and it negatively relates to negative affect and the presence of depressive symptoms (12). Psychological resources focus on reducing stressful situations, whereas gaudiebility focuses on how enjoyment is achieved. The objective of this study is to know how psychological resources and gaudiebility relate to academic performance, stress and risk behaviors when considering the design of interventions to reduce stress, prevent risk behaviors and improve academic performance.

METHODS

Research question

What are the relationships between psychological resources and gaudiebility with academic performance, stress, and risk behaviors in university students?

Type and study design

The present study is quantitative with a non-experimental design, transversal and correlational.

Instruments

Perceived Stress Scale (EEP) from Cohen et al., translation to Spanish made by Remor and Carrobles, Mexican adaptation by González Ramírez and Landero Hernández (13). It measures the degree to which life situations are evaluated as stressful. Includes 14 items, with

5 response choices, where never = 0 and very often = 4. The punctuation of items 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13 are reversed. High punctuation corresponds to greater perceived stress. It can be applied to people having 18 years or older. If there is a guarantee of understanding, it can also be applied to earlier ages. Results indicate adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's alfa = 0.83).

CARLOS/CRAFFT (Car, Relax, Alone, Forget, Friends, Trouble) Instrument from Knight, Sherritt, Shrier, Harris, and Chang (14). The official Spanish version was used. It consists of a screening instrument allowing to identify adolescents at risk of substance abuse. It includes 6 items. The instrument presents two sections: one for quick screening consisting of three questions and another for diagnosis consisting of six questions. The diagnosis questions are the ones considered in this study. The answer format is binary (yes or no). If the first three quick screening questions are answered as no (A1, A2, and A3), only the first diagnosis questions should be answered (B1). If any of the quick screening questions are answered as yes then the six diagnosis questions must be answered (B1 to B6). In case of answering negatively (no), then a score of zero is assigned, whereas an affirmative answer (yes) is assigned a score of one for each diagnosis question. To evaluate the result given by the instrument all the scores of the six diagnosis questions are added. A minimum score of 0 or 1 affirmative questions is the cutting point (indicative of the absence of problematic substance abuse risk). Scores greater or equal than 2 suggest the presence of abusive consumption (15). The results of the psychometric study in university students in Zacatecas show that the CARLOS/CRAFFT instrument presents an acceptable internal consistency, calculated using Cronbach's alpha (α= 0.73). The ROC analysis shows that the best cutting point was 2 with a sensitivity of 0.85 and specificity of 0.73. The instrument is valid and reliable to identify youth at risk of substance abuse in the Zacatecas population (16).

About Sex in University Students Questionnaire (SSEU-yo) from Pulido Rull, Carazo Cardona, González Sicilia, Coronel Villalobos and Vera García (17). It evaluates the following areas of sexual behavior: presence or absence of sexual activity, use of anti-conception methods, sex in risky situations (casual sex and sex under the influence of psychoactive substances), sexual history, and consequences of the sexual activity. The SSEU version applied includes 17 basic items (odd ones) plus another 17 items (even ones), with the even items asking the frequency with which the odd items identify some behavior; there is also at the end an open question asking the number of sex partners the person has had. For example: "have you had sexual relationships?" has different answer options (last 30 days, last 12 months, some time, and never). In the even group of questions information concerning the frequency of the behavior is requested (for example, three or more times a week, twice a week, and so on), The instrument presents acceptable psychometric confidence levels in the Mexican population (Cronbach's α= 0.815) (17,18).

Psychological Resources Scale (ERP) from Rivera Heredia et al. (8) further developed by Pérez Padilla and Rivera Heredia (19). It includes five self-applicable scales to evaluate the following psychological resources: affective, cognitive, instrumental, social, and material. The scales have 4 answer choices: 1 = almost never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes and 4 = almost always. Items 10, 13, 18, 40, 43, and 44 are inversely marked. In the Mexican population, the scales present the following psychometric characteristics:

1. Affective resources (Cronbach's α= 0.82), the original scale of affective resources are divided into four dimensions: self-control, sadness management, anger management, and balance recovery.
2. Cognitive resources (Cronbach's α= 0.77), the original scale is divided into the following dimensions: reflection upon problems, religious beliefs, and self-reprimands. Later, Pérez Padilla and Rivera Heredia (19) added the optimism dimension (Cronbach's α=0.68).
3. Instrumental resources (Cronbach's α= 0.71) includes one dimension: social skills.
4. Social resources (Cronbach's α= 0.75), the original scale includes the following dimensions: support network and ability to seek support. Later, Pérez Padilla and Rivera Heredia (19) added the altruism dimension

presenting a value for Cronbach's α= 0.75.

5. Material resources (Cronbach's α= 0.67), it has only one dimension: material resources.

Gaudiebility Scale (EGP) from Padrós Blàzquez and Fernández-Castro (11). It measures the level of functioning of the enjoyment modulators; it includes 23 items; people indicate the degree of agreement with each of the items, where 0 = not at all agrees to 4 = completely agrees. The final score is calculated by the sum of all 23 items. Items 15, 19, and 22 are reversely marked. Values can oscillate between 0 and 92. High scores indicate high gaudiebility or potential for enjoyment. The results for the Mexican adaptation by Padrós Blàzquez et al. (12) show an acceptable validity and adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's a between 0.84 and 0.86); the mean of the gaudiebility scale is 65.24 (SD= 10.54).

To measure academic performance, the general average of the student was used expressed on a 5 to 10 scale where 6 is the approval sufficiency point.

Procedure

The sample composed of university students was not probabilistically built and it was built by convenience. Participation was voluntary. Participants had to comply with the following inclusion criteria: students enrolled in any semester of an Academic Unit of the Autonomous University of Zacatecas (UAZ), having ages between 18 and 24 years and being willing to participate in the study.

All participants were informed of the objective of the study, specifying its anonymity and the confidentiality of the data provided, ensuring that the information given was solely and uniquely for research. They were informed of the importance of answering truthfully and completely to all the questions portrayed. Those who decided to participate did so voluntarily.

When applying the instruments, the self-administered technique was used. Questionnaires were applied collectively and without a time limit, having a response time between 35 minutes and one hour. Once the instruments were answered, students placed them inside an envelope they were given, they closed it and returned it to the researcher.

For the statistical analysis, the following Windows programs were used: SPSS 21 and AMOS 21.

RESULTS

The sample of 507 participants had 56 % women and 44 % men with ages between 18 and 24 years, with a mean age of 20.2 and a standard deviation (SD) of 1.5.

Table 1

Bivariate correlations between the ERP dimensions and the other variables in the study

Subscale or dimension	Academic average	EGP	EEP	SSEU	CARLOS/CRAFFT
ERP_RA_AC	0.106*	0.454**	-0.562**		
ERP_RA_MT		-0.282**	0.544**		
ERP_RA_ME		-0.230**	0.358**		0.153**
ERP_RA_RE		0.356**	-0.250**		
ERP_RC_RP	0.181**	0.384**	-0.373**	-0.103**	
ERP_RC_CR				-0.125**	-0.090*
ERP_RC_AR		-0.264**	0.538**		0.112*
ERP_RC_O		0.483**	-0.415**		
ERP_RI_HS		0.486**	-0.337**		
ERP_RS_RAP		0.241**	-0.128**		
ERP_RS_IBA		-0.332**	0.410**		
ERP_RS_A		0.387**	-0.197**		
ERP_RM_RMT		0.286**	-0.396**		0.089**

* The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (bilateral).
** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

Note: ERP means *Escala de Recursos Psicológicos (psychological resources scale)*; RA means *Recursos Afectivos (affective resources)*; AC means *Autocontrol (self-control)*; MT means *Manejo de la Tristeza (sadness management)*; ME means *Manejo del Enojo (anger management)*; RE means *Recuperación del Equilibrio (balance recovery)*; RC means *Recursos Cognitivos (cognitive resources)*; RP means *Reflexión ante los Problemas (reflexión upon problems)*; CR significa *Creencias Religiosas (religious beliefs)*; AR significa *Auto-reproches (self-reprimands)*; O means *Optimismo (optimism)*; RI means *Recursos Instrumentales (instrumental resources)*; HS means *Habilidades Sociales (social skills)*; RS means *Recursos Sociales (social resources)*; RAP means *Red de Apoyo (support network)*; IBA means *Incapacidad para Buscar Apoyo (unability to seek help)*; A means *Altruismo (altruism)*; RM and RMT means *Recursos Materiales (material resources)*. Thus, for example, ERP_RA_ME indicates *Manejo del Enojo (ME or anger management) of Recursos Afectivos (RA or affective resources) from the Escala de Recursos Psicológicos (ERP or psychological resources scale)*. Consequently, in this table, all the dimensions of the five psychological resources scales are separately correlated (RA, RC, RI, RS and RM) with academic average (pomedio), EGP (Padrós Gaudiebility Scale), EEP (Perceived Stress Scale), SSEU (About Sex in University Students) and the CARLOS/CRAFFT instrument measuring psychoactive substance abuse risk.

Correlations of each of the dimensions of the different scales in psychological resources were carried out comparing them with each of the scales used (EGP, EEP, SSEU, CARLOS/CRAFFT, and academic average) to see the relationships among them. We can see in the results obtained (see Table 1 and Figure 1) that six significant correlations resulted to be between very low to moderate in the total sample. Three out of four negative correlations correspond to the academic average variable. The highest positive correlation is between sexual behavior (SSEU) and psychoactive substance consumption (CARLOS/CRAFFT), while the highest negative correlation corresponds to gaudiebility (EGP) with perceived stress (EEP).

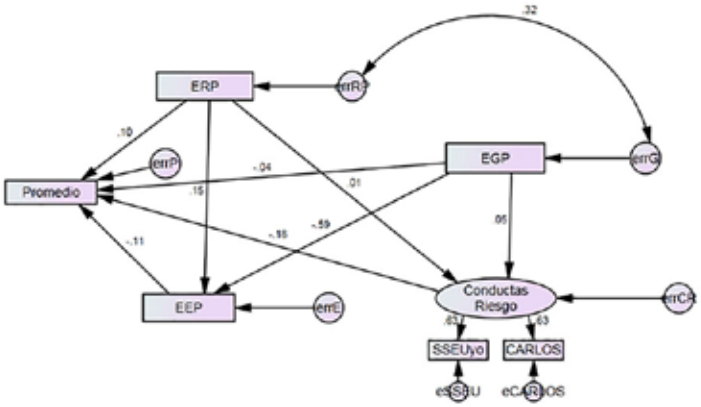

Figure 1. Structural Equation Model (SEM).

Table 2

Goodness of fitness indices of the SEM built

Model or Criteria	X^2/df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	TLI	NFI	IFI
Model	1.537	0.996	0.979	0.994	0.033	0.976	0.983	0.976
Moderated adjustment	< 3	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90	< 0.08	> 0.90	> 0.90	> 0.90
Strict adjustment	< 3	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95	< 0.05	> 0.95	> 0.95	> 0.95

The model (SEM) proposed presents a strict adjustment. However, there are causal relationships very low such as psychological resources (ERP) with risk behaviors having a relationship coefficient of 0.01. Psychological resources (ERP) and gaudiebilty (EGP) are positively related (0.32). Gaudiebility is associated with stress (EEP) negatively and moderately (-0.59), such that an increase in guadiebility decreases stress, which in turn increases the average. No significant relationships were observed between gaudiebility and average (-0.04) as well as between gaudiebility and risk behavior (0.05).

DISCUSSION

The first thing to study was the relationship between psychological resources and gaudiebility. Results indicate there is a low positive relationship between the two variables. The result coincides with what Rivera Heredia and Salazar García found (20), also reporting a positive relationship between psychological resources and gaudiebility.

There is empirical evidence suggesting that psychological resources are protective factors positively related to health and wellbeing (9,21). Likewise, gaudiebility has been related to mental health protective variables such as positive affect and psychological wellbeing (12). Consequently, gaudiebility could be conceived as a type of psychological resource, which possibly is a reason why the two variables are correlated.

The relationship between psychological resources and academic performance is also studied. Results indicate there is a low and positive relationship between the two variables. Although results must be taken cautiously, it is possible that the results obtained in this study were given because academic performance may require skills different than those evaluated. The results were not the expected ones, since there is empirical evidence highlighting the importance of student's resources over their academic performance (3,5).

The relationship between psychological resources and perceived stress have been studied. Results indicate there is a positive and weak relationship between both constructs. However, in the analysis for each dimension of psychological resources (Table 1), we find results coherent with the scientific literature indicating that stress correlates negatively and moderately with optimism (21-25) and self-control (26). Notice that the instruments used to evaluate psychological resources in the studies quoted are not the same ones used in this study.

On the other hand, the negative aspects of psychological resources (difficulty managing sadness, self-reprimands, and inability to seek help) correlate positively and moderately with perceived stress. These results are to be expected since a previous study using the same scale for psychological resources used in the present study indicated that university students with high and low cognitive vulnerability to depression show less self-control, balance recovery, and difficulties asking for help (10).

We also seek to know the relationship between psychological resources and risk behavior (psychoactive substance consumption and sexual risk behaviors). The results indicate no association between the variables. This was not expected since, in previous studies, psychological resources have been negatively related to some health risk behaviors. For example, there are suicidal attempts and feeding risk behaviors (7). However, in the analysis performed with each of the psychological resources' dimensions, we see that the consumption of psychoactive substances is positively related, although weakly, with the following negative aspects of psychological resources: difficulties managing anger and self-reprimands. We also observed that the consumption of psychoactive substances was weakly and negatively related to religious beliefs. Concerning sexual risk behaviors, we observed a weak and negative relation to reflections to problems. These results are similar to the findings reported by Esteban and Tabernero (27), where a positive and significant relation was observed between impulsiveness (contrary to reflection) and some risky sexual behaviors such as the age for starting sexual relationships and the number of sexual partners. In the present study, we also observed a weak and negative relationship between sexual risk behaviors and religious beliefs. Similarly, Pulido Rull et al. (18) observed an inverse correlation between religiosity and risky sexual behavior. Štulhofer, Šoh, Jelaska,

Baćak, and Landripet (28) found that when youth are religiously educated the possibility of starting sexual activity at an early age is reduced.

The data for the current study suggests that the development of positive psychological resources is important to prevent different risk behaviors. Religious beliefs are a cognitive resource negatively related to risk behaviors.

The relationship between gaudiebility and academic performance was studied: we did not find a correlation. We were expecting a positive relationship between the two constructs since factors such as cognitive competence, motivation, causal attributions, perception of control, self-efficacy, and psychological wellbeing have shown to be factors positively influencing academic performance (5), and, in a sense, these factors are similar to some of the characteristics constituting gaudiebility modulators: imagination, concentration ability, having an interest in things or in what is done, ability to set challenges, attributional style and personal organization (11). One of the limitations of EGP is that it is unifactorial (12). It is possible that with a multifactorial scale such as the one recently elaborated to evaluate gaudiebility in children and adolescents (29) we could observe significative relations with some specific modulators.

Also, we aim at finding the relationship between gaudiebility and stress. We found there is a negative and moderated relation between both constructs. The data obtained seem to be coherent with the relationship observed by Padrós Blàzquez, Hurtado-Izguerra, and Martínez-Medina (30) reporting a moderated and negative relationship between gaudiebility and the generalized anxiety symptomatology alteration.

Finally, we try to know the relationship between gaudiebility and risk behaviors (psychoactive substance consumption and sexual risk behavior). The results obtained indicate there is no relationship among the variables. We expected to find a negative relationship between both variables since gaudiebility is positively associated with health protection variables such as positive affect, psychological wellbeing, and life satisfaction (12). Furthermore, low levels of gaudiebility have been found in people with substance dependencies (31). Recently it has been observed that low gaudiebility levels can be conceived as risk factors for alcohol abuse in adolescents (32).

CONCLUSION

Results revealed that psychological resources are positively linked with gaudiebility, whereas gaudiebility is negatively related to perceived stress. In conclusion, the present study suggests that gaudiebility can be a type of psychological resource acting as a protective factor for perceived stress. Keep in mind that psychological resources and gaudiebility do not focus on the same thing. That is possibly the reason for their low correlation. Thus, they could be conceived as the two (different) sides of the same coin.

The results from this study can be useful to elaborate some interventions focused on the positive development of youth within the educational context orientated to the creation of an intervention program to increase the gaudiebility level and psychological resources aiming at reducing stress and risk behaviors and improving academic performance. Notice there are already some programs developed to increase gaudiebility (33), as well as improving psychological resources (34).

The most important limitations of this study are due to the evaluation carried out through self-reporting instruments that, although valid to use, reliable, and adapted to our environment, there is a possible bias due to beliefs, self-perception, and the social desirability of participants. Some variables that could have provided information on the social desirability of students belong to the items evaluating sexual risk behaviors. Another limitation could be the degree of subjectivity of the grade as a measure of academic performance since it is the professor the one who determines the grade through his/her criteria (35). Also, the grade reported by the student was not checked against university records or whether we had failing students repeating courses. Another limitation is that the gaudiebility scale is unifactorial so that the relationship between each of the modulators of enjoyment could not be studied when compared to all the variables in the study.

Something to consider in the present study is the type of sample used, which in our case was by convenience. Also, it is important to consider the type of population we had: university students. Thus, we do not pretend to generalize the results obtained.

As a line of research to be suggested we propose generating knowledge of variables referring to the positive aspects of people, such as psychological resources and gaudiebility, aiming at improving health and wellbeing through the prevention of several psychosocial problems that could be present in different moments of life.

Currently, a gaudiebility scale for children and adolescents has been developed (EGNA) (29) that considers several factors. It would be interesting once the scale is available, to do a longitudinal study in students evaluating the gaudiebility level and the academic performance. In case the relationship of some factors of gaudiebility with academic performance was corroborated, it would be useful to do a gaudiebility intervention in those showing low academic performance and low gaudiebility, to later assess if the intervention resulted in improved academic performance or not. Counting with a high gaudiebility level could favor enjoyment in areas such as a greater interest in the information offered in classes, as well as easier comprehension due to an increased concentration level.

We also suggest doing a longitudinal study assessing the gaudiebility level and sexual risk behavior. Later, an intervention in gaudiebility could be done with the people showing risk behavior. Finally, the relationship between gaudiebility and sexual risk behavior could be evaluated to determine if there were changes and in which way this kind of intervention could be useful in the creation of prevention programs for this kind of pernicious behaviors, contributing to a positive and healthy development environment for the adolescent.

It would be interesting to do a study evaluating the association between the gaudiebility level, the type of psychoactive substance consumption, and the expectations of youth towards their consumption, in light of the idea that some youth use this kind of substances to experience some kind of joy or enjoyment while others do it to evade an upsetting situation.

We also suggest doing different correlational studies between psychological resources and gaudiebility in different populations aiming at observing whether they are consistent with the results here obtained or not.

Finally, it is also of interest to know if negative aspects of psychological resources such as anger management and self-reprimands cause the consumption of psychoactive substances and vice versa.

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