The Transition to University Can Friends Serve as Gatekeepers

UNIVERSITÄT SALZBURG

Martin Fleidl, MA. University of Salzburg – Department of Educational Science

Introduction

- lifelong learning increasing importance of educational achievements
- getting higher qualifications includes passing several institutional transitions
- transition to university as an important turnig point in a chaotic phase of life
- indecisiveness even shortly before student's graduation
- easier admission to university increasing number of "non-traditional"

Theoretical Framework

Schlossberg's model to analyse human adoption to transition

- transition as a process
- process devided into a pretransition and a posttransition environment
- Choice of study often before graduation (pretransition environment)
- for adapting to transition, various systems can be supportive

- students
- there is a need for upcoming students to have access to support systems
- students report dissatisfaction with institutional support
- in adolescence peers and friends gaining in importance

 \rightarrow friendship as a significant support system for the choice of study?

(European Commission, 2001; Freitag, 2012; Knauf & Rosowski, 2009; Newman & Newman, 2012)

• friends/friendship as a potential social support system

Gaupp`s Gatekeeping – an interactive view on the process of choice of study Motivation, support, exchange of information and similarity as major elements

Development tasks differ across life-stages – "non-traditionals" generally older

• More autonomous and mature \rightarrow less need for external support (Gaupp, 2013; Heckhausen, Wrosch & Schuz, 2010; Hillmert & Jacob, 2005; Schlossberg, 1981)

Research Questions

- 1. Is there a relation between the perceived quality of friendship and the perceived gatekeeping funktion for the choice of study in the pretransition environment?
- 2. As theoretically proposed, can age be a moderator of the association between the relationship of the perceived quality of friendship and the perceived gatekeeping-function?

Methods

87 first-year students of a university in Germany participated in a cross-sectional online assessment

- The range of the participants age was from 17 to 35 with a mean of 22.3 years (SD = 3.47)
- Perceived Quality of Friendship (PQF, 20 items, sample item: "My friend would listen if I talked about my problems"., Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$; Mendelson & Aboud, \bullet 1999)

Results

- Gatekeeping function (GK, 4 items, sample item: "My friend supported me, following my choice of subject of study"., Cronbach's $\alpha = .76$; Gaupp, 2013)
- Sex, age, number of friends and HISEI included as control variables
- Statistical analysis by SPSS moderater-analysis by PROCESS, Model 1, Johnson Neymann Method (Hayes, 2013)

Research Question # 1 –	relation betw	veen PQF and	GK?
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The model was statistically significant, F(5, 82) = 7.24, p = .000, $R^2 = .31$

Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Gatekeeping

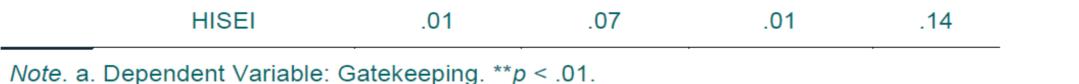
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Variable	В	SE	β	t
(Constant)	.02	.88		.03
PQF	.43	.13	.33**	3.39
Sex	.24	.17	.14	1.46
Age	.02	.02	.09	.94
Number of Friends	.17	.04	.39**	4.01

Research Question # 2 – relation between PQF and GK moderated by the age of the participants?

Conditional effect of X on Y at values of the moderator (M)

Age	Effect	SE	t	р	LLCI	ULCI
17	.79	.22	3.51	.000	.4130	1.1584
18	.72	.20	3.67	.000	.3931	1.0464
19	.65	.17	3.82	.000	.3690	.9386
20	.59	.15	3.92	.000	.3386	.8372
21	.52	.13	3.89	.000	.2987	.7452
22	.46	.13	3.61	.001	.2460	.6661
23	.39	.13	3.06	.003	.1778	.6023
24	.32	.14	2.35	.021	.0948	.5535
25	.26	.16	1.66	.100	0002	.5167
26	.19	.18	1.08	.283	1037	.4883
27	.06	.23	.26	.795	3257	.4466
28	01	.26	02	.983	4412	.4302
29	07	.29	24	.808.	5584	.4155
30	14	.32	42	.671	6769	.4021
31	20	.36	57	.570	7963	.3897
32	27	.39	69	.491	9165	.3780
33	34	.42	79	.429	-1.0371	.3667
34	40	.46	88	.381	-1.1582	.3560
35	47	.49	96	.342	-1.2796	.3455

relation between The PQF and GK is moderated by students` age.



Discussion / Implications

- the sample size of the survey was relatively small
- according theories, friends can be a resource during orientation phase
- "non-traditionals" seems to be more autonomous in their decision
- providing situated learning situations and fostering interactive processes
 - \rightarrow further research in the field of transition is needed

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