Autonomy and Competence Drive High School Seniors’ Academic Intentions

Table 1

*Proportion of Ideas Embedded in Seniors’ Reflection Essays*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | School mission |
| Culture-focused(*n* = 64) | College-preparatory(*n* = 74) |
| Themes noted | % of total sample | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| In school | 99% | .16 | .06 | .15 | .05 |
| For the future | 65% | .08a | .07 | .10a | .06 |
| Needs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Autonomy | 66% | .09 | .08 | .10 | .07 |
| Belongingness | 35% | .05 | .06 | .05 | .06 |
| Competence | 67% | .08a | .07 | .11a | .06 |
| Internal states |  |  |  |  |  |
| Action | 75% | .13 | .07 | .10 | .07 |
| Cognition | 97% | .16 | .06 | .15 | .04 |
| Emotion | 39% | ,06 | .08 | .05 | .07 |
| External supports |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parents | 4% | .00 | .02 | .01 | .02 |
| Peers | 17% | .03 | .05 | .02 | .04 |
| Teachers | 13% | .02 | .05 | .01 | .04 |
| Schools activities | 97% | .16 | .06 | .15 | .04 |

*Note*. Totals were calculated by counting the number of participants who referred to each theme in their essay. Proportions were calculated separately for each participant and then averaged.

Table 2

*Mean Survey Responses by School*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | School mission |
| Culture-focused(*n* = 64) | College-preparatory(*n* = 74) |
| Survey responses | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Purposes of school  | 4.38 | 0.75 | 4.26 | 0.74 |
| Goals in school | 4.30 | 0.43 | 4.44 | 0.47 |
| Goals for the future | 4.22a | 0.53 | 4.49a | 0.49 |
| School supports needs | 4.02a | 0.55 | 4.24a | 0.39 |
| Internal excuses | 2.98 | 0.88 | 2.70 | 1.04 |
| External excuses | 2.13a | 1.12 | 1.62a | 1.02 |

*Note*. a *p* < .05 when Bonferonni corrections for the number of tests were used.

Table 3

*Mean Proportions of Themes Raised in the Group Discussions by School*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | School mission |
| Culture-focused(*n* = 3) | College-preparatory(*n* = 3) |
| Themes noted | Freq. of references | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Goals |  |  |  |  |  |
| In school | 68 | .06 | .00 | .06 | .01 |
| For the future | 184 | .15 | .02 | .16 | .05 |
| Needs |  |  |  |  |  |
| Autonomy | 126 | .10 | .02 | .11 | .03 |
| Belongingness | 87 | .08 | .03 | .07 | .01 |
| Competence | 198 | .16 | .02 | .18 | .03 |
| Internal states |  |  |  |  |  |
| Action | 105 | .11 | .01 | .08 | .02 |
| Cognition | 137 | .12 | .01 | .12 | .03 |
| Emotion | 60 | .05 | .02 | .06 | .04 |
| External supports |  |  |  |  |  |
| Parents | 6 | .01 | .01 | .01 | .01 |
| Peers | 28 | .03 | .02 | .02 | .01 |
| Teachers | 19 | .02 | .01 | .02 | .01 |
| School activities | 138 | .12 | .01 | .12 | .03 |

*Note*. There were no differences between the schools or across classes within schools.