TOWARD PREDICTORS OF SUCCESS IN ONLINE EDUCATION

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Abstract

In the last decade, online education has received more attention from both researchers and educators. Proponents highlight its convenience and reach, while detractors question its richness and effectiveness. In this study, we explore the impact of cognitive style, personality, socio-economic status and first generation college attendance on success in an online class. We are particularly interested in the impact of e-learning on diverse types of students and learners. To assess the proposed research model, we will administer a survey to undergraduate students in a required online humanities course at a southeastern university in the United States. Our instrument includes the group embedded figures test, “Big Five” personality variables and pertinent demographic questions to assess the student’s socio-economic status. We define success as a student obtaining a passing grade in the online course. Implications for research and practice will be discussed.

Keywords: Online education, e-learning, cognitive style, personality, distance learning.