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Resilience of vulnerable students transitioning into a South African university / Adrian D. van Breda

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Abstract

Youth transitioning into university face numerous life challenges, particularly in South Africa with its high levels of poverty and inequality. This article, recognising the vulnerability of many students, sets out to identify the resilience processes that facilitate the resilient outcomes of life satisfaction and academic progress. Using a sample of 232 psychosocially vulnerable undergraduate students, a quantitative survey was conducted and analysed using multivariate procedures. Results indicate that 27% of the variance in life satisfaction was accounted for by 19 resilience variables, with community relationships and family financial security being individually significant, and that 18% of the variance in academic progress was accounted for, with learning orientation being individually significant. Family relationships also emerged as important for both outcomes. The findings suggest that, during times of adversity, South African students draw in particular on relational resources in their home communities, and that academic progress is protected from deterioration by vulnerable students' love for learning. Practice implications for universities are proposed that go beyond reactive, therapeutic services towards creating a supportive academic community.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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