

AUTONOMY AS A PERSONAL RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract. Background. The awareness of resources that help to overcome life challenges and flourish even in the conditions of uncertainty is critically important for young individuals transitioning from school to labor market. Autonomy, as self-governance, based on the basis of personal interests, integrated goals and values, is linked with a number of positive constructs. Those include performance, creativity, greater sense of personal reward and energy, engagement in pro-social activities and etc. Thus, autonomy might be a promising personal resource for successful functioning and occupational well-being manifested as satisfaction with life, engagement and academic major satisfaction. **Purpose.** The purpose of the study was to analyze the role of students' autonomy when predicting satisfaction with life, engagement and academic major satisfaction. **Method.** The sample consisted of 148 college students (97.3% male, 2.7% female; mean age 19.69 ± 1.30). The Short version of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – student version (Schaufeli et al., 2002), Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (Nauta, 2007) and Dispositional Index of Autonomous Functioning scale (Weinstein et al., 2012) were used in the study. **Results.** Only one of the components of autonomy, authorship/self-congruence in particular, had significant positive relationship with study variables and was a significant predictor of study engagement, satisfaction with life and academic major satisfaction. **Conclusion.** Our findings suggest that at least to some extent autonomy might serve as an important resource of students' well-being while struggling in academic settings.

Keywords: autonomy, engagement, academic major satisfaction, satisfaction with life, students.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the complexity of reality results in limitations on human capacities to control themselves and the circumstances of their lives. Individuals as well as the world they live in constantly experience change and unpredictability (Pryor, 2010). Individuals can no longer plan to be working 30 years developing a career within the boundaries of one job or even one organization (Savickas, 2012). Thus, the awareness of resources that help to overcome life challenges and flourish even in the conditions of uncertainty is critically important. We believe that autonomy might serve as a personal resource that is linked to students' occupational well-being manifested as satisfaction with life, engagement and academic major satisfaction. Although the topic of human autonomy has been under discussion for a substantially long time (Ryan & Deci, 2006), there is enough evidence to believe it still might play an important role in this age of chaos and possibilities brought on by globalization and digital revolution. Hence, the purpose of the study was to reveal the role of students' autonomy when predicting satisfaction with life, engagement and academic major satisfaction.

BACKGROUND

Psychological Resources. In response to current labor market challenges, there are many recent attempts to define possible personal or contextual resources that are necessary for performance, career satisfaction and optimal functioning. Hirschi (2012) summarizes various constructs of career self-management behaviors and proposes four critical career resources which are necessary for career development in the modern context: human capital resources (e.g. education, transferable skills, and cognitive ability), social resources (e.g. networks and social support), identity resources (e. g. self-concept clarity, goal congruence, and goal clarity) and psychological resources (e.g. optimism, hope, and self-efficacy). In spite of the variety of attempts to explain resources, it is now clear that people need certain resources to adapt (Savickas, 2012) and they strive to obtain, protect, and foster those resources they value (Hobfoll, 2012).

Previous studies suggest that various constructs might serve as psychological resources in predicting work and career behavior and outcomes as well as higher psychological functioning. For example, such resources devoted to coping with uncertainty as optimism, flexibility, persistence, curiosity and risk taking are linked with students' career exploration and certainty with career decisions (Kim, Jang, Jung, Lee, Puig, & Lee, 2014); hope is linked with students' psychological well-being (Shorey, Little, Snyder, Kluck, & Robitschek, 2007); finally, enhancing graduates' career adaptability can increase their chances for finding a qualitatively good job (Koen, Klehe, & Van Vianen, 2012). It is evident that students benefit from a variety of positive constructs that serve as resources in career development. Accordingly, we propose that autonomy might be a significant psychological career resource and play an important role in students' occupational well-being.

Autonomy as a Resource. Autonomy, like previously mentioned psychological resources (e.g. hope, flexibility, or adaptability), has a huge impact on personality functioning and wellness (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Ryan and Deci (2006) define autonomy as regulation by the self or as self-governance, while its opposite, heteronomy, refers to controlled regulation or regulation that occurs without endorsement from oneself (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Humans are active and growth-oriented organisms and they possess a natural developmental tendency toward autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Autonomous individuals tend to regulate their behavior in congruence with their interests, goals and values, and they have a sense of choice about their behavior and a sense of control of their actions (Weinstein & Ryan, 2011). It is evident that autonomy is linked with a number of positive constructs such as creative thinking (Liu, Zhang, Zhang, Lee, Wang, & Brownell, 2013), greater sense of personal reward and energy (Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, 2012), test performance (Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004), engagement in pro-social activities (Gagné, 2003) and etc. Thus, naming autonomy as one of the promising personal or psychological career resources seems quite reasonable since the evidence suggest that autonomy is linked with a diversity of positive consequences. Of those possible consequences, we are particularly interested in students' satisfaction with life, study

engagement, and satisfaction with academic major. These constructs indicate students' occupational well-being and are likely to have an impact on students' career development.

Engagement and Autonomy. The concept of study engagement rises from definition and operationalization of work engagement (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). Analogous to work engagement, study engagement is defined as positive and fulfilling state of mind and is characterized by three components: vigor (being full of energy while studying), dedication (being strongly involved and experiencing a sense of enthusiasm while studying) and absorption (concentrating totally and being fully immersed in one's studies) (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Previous studies have mainly focused on a variety of organization-related resources that facilitate work engagement such as supporting employees' autonomy, giving performance feedback, and providing opportunities for development (Freney & Fellenz, 2013; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). Studies have proved the benefits of contextual and personal factors that might influence *study* engagement as well. For instance, positive emotions boost study engagement through such personal resources as academic self-efficacy, study-related hope and study-related optimism (Ouweneel, Le Blanc, & Schaufeli, 2011); such resource as ability to cope proactively alleviates the impact of stress on study engagement (Gan, Yang, Zhou, & Zhang, 2007); task autonomy and teacher support enhance study engagement (Salanova, Schaufeli, Martínez, & Bresó, 2010) and etc. In accordance to the notion that autonomy support is positively linked with both study and work engagement (Salanova et al., 2010; Freney & Fellenz, 2013; Schaufeli et al., 2009), we hypothesize that autonomy is an important personal resource itself and is a predictor of study engagement.

Academic Major Satisfaction and Autonomy. In organizational behavior research, the importance of career success, both for individuals and organizations, is well-established. Subjective career success is usually operationalized by self-referent criteria such as individual's satisfaction of current career or job situation, goals and aspirations. Also, individuals

evaluate their career success in reference to the expectations and outcomes attained by other people and in reference to their personal aspirations (Heslin, 2003). However, according to Nauta (2007), for students, satisfaction with their academic major is a more adjacent construct to evaluate. Academic major satisfaction represents global satisfaction with one's chosen major and is operationalized as happiness with academic major and unwillingness to change it (Nauta, 2007). Previous studies suggest that career-related optimism (McIlveen, Beccaria, & Burton, 2013) and increased ability to make occupational choices despite perceived constraints lead to greater academic major satisfaction (Jadidian & Duffy, 2012). Also, increased career decision self-efficacy is a significant predictor of self-determined motivation, satisfaction with the course, and satisfaction with the major (Komarraju, Swanson, & Nardler, 2014). We presume that more autonomous students also make more autonomous career choices, which results in higher satisfaction with chosen specialties. In other words, we hypothesize that greater autonomy will predict higher academic major satisfaction.

Satisfaction with Life and Autonomy. Theoreticians and practitioners urge to find and evaluate the most important indicators and factors of individual well-being (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). One of those indicators is general life satisfaction, which represents how individuals assess their satisfaction with life as a whole according to their chosen criteria (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). There are thousands of studies where life satisfaction and both its antecedents and its outcomes are investigated. However, only a few measure the links between autonomy and satisfaction with life. The results of those few studies indicate the importance of autonomy and autonomy support to happiness and well-being. For example, greater autonomy is linked with greater positive affect, self-esteem, life-satisfaction, sense of clear meaning in life, and value for personal growth (Weinstein et al., 2012). Also, autonomy is one of the universal, basic needs (Ryan & Deci, 2006). The perception of significant support for this need by others results in higher subjective well-being (Ratelle, Simard, & Guay, 2013) and life satisfaction (Niemiec, Lynch, Vansteenkiste, Bernstein, Deci, & Ryan, 2006). In addition, more autonomous students experience higher levels of well-being on

daily basis (Weinstein et al., 2012). With regard to previous studies, we hypothesize that autonomy might be a predictor of students' satisfaction with life.

RATIONALE OF CURRENT STUDY

Occupational well-being of employees is operationalized as job satisfaction, low level of emotional exhaustion and job-related enthusiasm (Zacher, Jimmieson, & Bordia, 2014; Cheung & Lun, 2015; Li, Xu, Tu, & Lu, 2014). Based on this operationalization, we propose that high level of study engagement, satisfaction with academic major, and students' satisfaction with life are three noteworthy indicators of students' occupational well-being. Since study engagement is linked with students' academic performance (Salanova et al., 2010), intrinsic motivation (Siu, Bakker, & Jiang, 2014), achievement (Bigna et al., 2014), and satisfaction with life (Mokgele & Tothmann, 2014), information about the antecedents of engagement, as an indicator of occupational well-being, seems to be crucial. In addition to engagement, satisfaction with life and satisfaction with academic major might also be taken into consideration when representing students' occupational well-being. Given that life satisfaction is related to important career outcomes, such as career satisfaction, performance, turnover intentions (Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, & Mansfield, 2012) and college retention (Frisch et al., 2005), the importance of exploring possible antecedents of satisfaction with life seems to be unquestionable. In addition, students' satisfaction with academic major is another important construct when considering occupational well-being. It represents subjective career success, when job (or career) satisfaction is too distant for students to evaluate and is also connected to a variety of positive outcomes such as performance and grades (Nauta, 2007). To conclude, we suggest that high level of study engagement, satisfaction with academic major, and students' satisfaction with life indicate occupational well-being of students. The purpose of the current study is to explore the links between autonomy, as a resource, and those three constructs.

METHOD

Participants

The participants were 148 students from The Faculty of Electronics and Informatics of Vilnius kolegija/University of Applied Sciences. The sample consisted of students awarding Professional Bachelor's degree in Informatics, Informatics Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Computer Engineering and Telecommunications Engineering. Since the absolute majority of faculty students are male, the sample was dominated by male students (97.3 % male, 2.7 % female students). The age of participants ranged from 18 to 26 ($M = 19.69$, $SD = 1.30$). Among the participants, 12.20 % have had work experience in their occupational field, 68.70 % have worked in some other field, and only 19 % of participants had no work experience.

Procedure

Data collection was conducted in December, 2014. The administration of the institution was informed about the date, time and procedure of the research. All participants were informed that participation was voluntary. The questionnaires were administered by researchers and were completed in lectures during regular lecture hours. The participants were not paid for participation.

Measures

The Lithuanian versions of the instruments were prepared with permission from the authors of the measures. After translation into Lithuanian using the translation/back-translation procedure, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with the Maximum Likelihood estimation in Mplus 6 (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2010) was performed in order to check the factor structure of the Lithuanian version of the measures. Model fit was ascertained using various indices (Byrne, 2012): the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should exceed .90, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be less than .08.

Study engagement was measured with the short version of *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – student version* (UWES-S-9; Schaufeli et al., 2002) that consists of three subscales: (a) *vigor* (3 items), a sample item is “When I’m doing my work as a student, I feel bursting with energy”,

(b) *dedication* (3 items), a sample item is “My studies inspire me”, and (c) *absorption* (3 items), a sample item is “I am immersed in my studies.” All items were scored on a seven-point Likert scale from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always/every day*). Cronbach’s alphas were .72 for vigor, .80 for dedication and .70 for absorption subscale. The results of CFA indicate that the three-factor structure (with correlation between two items) provided an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 30.596$ ($p < .05$), $df = 23$; CFI = .987, TLI = .980; RMSEA = .047 [.001; .088].

Satisfaction with life was measured with the *Satisfaction With Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) that consists of 5 items. A sample item is “I am satisfied with my life.” Subjects responded to items using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Responses were summed up to produce a total SWLS score, with higher scores indicating more life satisfaction. The Cronbach’s alpha in the present study was .81. The results of CFA indicate that the one-factor structure provided an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 6.568$ ($p < .05$), $df = 5$; CFI = .994, TLI = .988; RMSEA = .046 [.001; .130].

Satisfaction with academic major was assessed with the *Academic Major Satisfaction Scale* (AMSS) developed by Nauta (2007). The scale consists of six items with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). A sample item is “Overall, I am happy with the major I’ve chosen.” Total scores were calculated by averaging responses to the six items. Cronbach’s alpha was .88 in this study. The results of CFA indicate that the one-factor structure (with correlation between two items) provides an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 5.783$ ($p < .05$), $df = 7$; CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.005; RMSEA = .001 [.001; .090].

The autonomy of students was measured with the *Dispositional Index of Autonomous Functioning scale* (IAF, Weinstein et al., 2012) which consists of three subscales: authorship/self-congruence (5 items, e.g. “My decisions represent my most important values and feelings”), interest-taking (5 items; reversed; e.g. “I am interested in understanding the reasons for my actions”), and susceptibility to control (5 items, e.g. “I believe certain things so that others will like me”). All items were scored on a five-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 5 (*completely true*). Higher means of the authorship/self-congruence and interest-taking subscales and lower scores of susceptibility to control subscale indicate greater autonomy. Cronbach’s alphas were .80, .87, and .71, respectively. The re-

sults of CFA indicate that the three-factor structure (with correlation between two pairs of items) provides an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2 = 147.31$ ($p > .05$), $df = 85$; CFI = .926, TLI = .909; RMSEA = .070 [.051; .089].

RESULTS

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations among all the study variables. Authorship/self-congruence was positively related to all study variables: vigor ($r = .48, p < .01$); dedication ($r = .44, p < .01$); absorption ($r = .38, p < .01$); satisfaction with life ($r = .33, p < .01$), and academic major satisfaction ($r = .21, p < .01$). Neither susceptibility to control nor interest-taking had significant correlations with any study variables, except with each other ($r = -.46, p < .01$) and authorship/self-congruence (respectively $r = -.26, p < .01$, and $r = .19, p < .05$).

Table 1. Summary Data and Intercorrelations Among all Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Vigor	–	.71**	.69**	.45**	.36**	.48**	–.10	.02
2. Dedication		–	.59**	.40**	.58**	.44**	–.14	.13
3. Absorption			–	.35**	.35**	.38**	–.15	.15
4. SWLS				–	.33**	.33**	–.04	–.12
5. AMSS					–	.21**	–.01	–.01
6. Authorship / self-congruence						–	–.26**	.19*
7. Susceptibility to control							–	–.46**
8. Interest-taking								–
M	2.72	3.10	2.64	21.61	3.84	3.30	2.93	3.07
SD	1.08	1.15	1.12	6.35	0.76	0.70	0.76	1.02

Note. SWLS – Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985); AMSS – Academic Major Satisfaction Scale (Nauta, 2007).

N = 148

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

We predicted that autonomy would serve as a personal resource and have a positive effect on study engagement, satisfaction with life and academic major satisfaction. Regression analyses were used to examine the relation of the autonomy dimensions to indicators of students' occupational well-being. To decrease the amount of variance explained by

non-significant correlates, we included only the variables significantly related to factor variables. Specifically, only the authorship/self-congruence was entered to regression equation. We expected to find significant interactions between the authorship/self-congruence and other study variables.

Authorship/self-congruence was a significant predictor of vigor ($R^2 = .23, F(1, 146) = 42.44, p < .01, 95\% \text{ confidence interval (CI) } [.11, .35]$); dedication ($R^2 = .20, F(1, 146) = 35.60, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI } [.09, .32]$); and absorption ($R^2 = .14, F(1, 146) = 24.39, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI } [.04, .24]$). Also, authorship/self-congruence accounted for significant variance in satisfaction with life ($R^2 = .11, F(1, 146) = 17.52, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .20]$) and academic majors satisfaction ($R^2 = .05, F(1, 146) = 3.88, p < .05, 95\% \text{ CI } [.02, .11]$) (see Table 2). However, it appears that the predictive value of authorship/self-congruence is the highest when predicting vigor and dedication, as in all other cases the accounted variance is lower than 20 percent.

Table 2. Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Major Satisfaction, Satisfaction with Life, and Study Engagement

Predictor	Factor	β	B	R^2
Equation 1:				
Authorship/self-congruence ^a	Academic major satisfaction ^b	.21	0.23	.05*
Equation 2:				
Authorship/self-congruence ^a	Satisfaction with life ^c	.33**	2.97	.11**
Equation 3:				
Authorship/self-congruence ^a	Engagement: Vigor ^d	.48**	0.73	.23**
Equation 4:				
Authorship/self-congruence ^a	Engagement: Dedication ^e	.44**	0.73	.20**
Equation 5:				
Authorship/self-congruence ^a	Engagement: Absorption ^f	.38**	0.60	.14**

Note. β – estimated value of standardized regression coefficient (Beta); B – estimated value of unstandardized regression coefficient; R^2 – R squared (coefficient of determination).

N = 148.

The table depicts 5 separate regression equations, where Authorship/self-congruence^(a) is a predictor of outcome variables^(b, c, d, e, f).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Since the assumption of the study was that autonomy would serve as a resource for students’ study engagement, satisfaction with life and academic major satisfaction as indicators of occupational well-being, we performed a multivariate analysis with the Maximum Likelihood estimation in Mplus 6 (Muthén and Muthén, 1998–2010) in order to check whether autonomy predicts other study variables. We included only authorship/self-congruence as a predictor of factor variables. We checked the fit of two possible models. Model 1 included authorship/self-congruence as a predictor and study engagement (indicated by vigor, dedication, and absorption), satisfaction with life and academic major satisfaction as outcome variables. Model 2 excluded academic major satisfaction as an outcome variable since in the linear regression analysis the predictive value of authorship/self-congruence accounted only for 5 percent of the variance of academic major satisfaction. Table 3 shows the results of comparison of the both models.

Table 3. Comparison of Model 1 and Model 2

Model	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA [90% CI]
Model 1	26.85 ($p < .05$)	25.86	6	.94	.86	.153 [.097–.214]
Model 2	0.99 ($p > .05$)		4	1	1	.001 [.001–.048]

Note. χ^2 – chi-square test statistic; $\Delta\chi^2$ – delta chi square; df – degrees of freedom; CFI – Comparative Fit Index; TLI – Tucker-Lewis Index; RMSEA – root mean square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval.

N = 148.

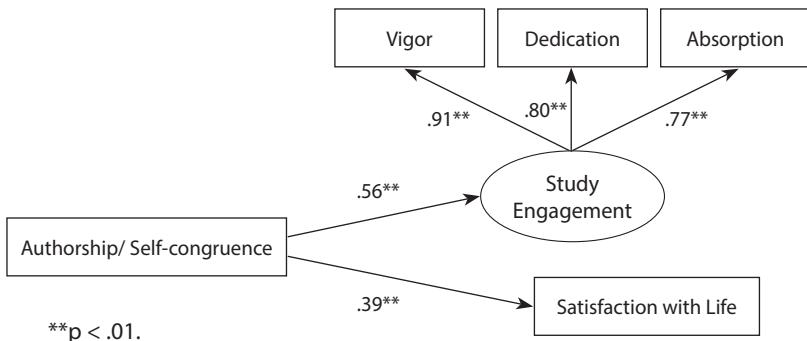


Figure 1. Results (standardized estimates) of the structural equation modeling predicting study engagement and satisfaction with life (Model 2). N = 148.

Figure 1 represents the Model 2, which was more adequate as indicated by various indices: the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) should exceed .90, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be less than .08 (Byrne, 2012).

The results of Model 2 indicate that authorship/self-congruence positively predict both study engagement and satisfaction with life. Authorship/self-congruence accounts for 15 percent of variance of satisfaction with life and 31 percent of variance of study engagement. These results support the assumption that at least one dimension of autonomy might serve as a resource or a predictor of positive occupational outcomes of students.

DISCUSSION

Today, transition from the academic setting to the 'real' world of fluid careers requires more effort, deeper self-knowledge, and greater confidence than ever before (Savickas, 2012). Individuals need to be able to manage their careers and encounter job or career demands in a quite chaotic environment, which requires a lot of personal resources. The purpose of our study was to assess the role of such possible personal resource as autonomy when predicting students' satisfaction with life, engagement and academic major satisfaction.

Weinstein and colleagues (2012) suggest that autonomy includes interest-taking, absence of susceptibility to control and authorship or self-congruence (Weinstein et al., 2012). In our study, authorship or self-congruence was positively related to all study outcome variables. Also, authorship or self-congruence was a significant predictor of the facets of engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption) and satisfaction with life both in the linear regression equations and in the structural equation model. Thus, experiencing oneself as the author of behavior and being responsible for one's actions might play a significant role in students' satisfaction with life and study engagement. The results support the presumption that at least to some extent autonomy might serve as a resource or a predictor of positive occupational outcomes of students. The results of the current study are in line with previous studies, where autonomy was linked with various positive outcomes (Liu et al., 2013; Gagné, 2003; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

However, without experimental or longitudinal studies, the causality between variables is unclear. Also, although we predicted that higher levels of autonomy could predict higher levels of students' engagement and life satisfaction, and the hypothesis was confirmed, it is not always clear whether well-being or life satisfaction is an outcome of resources or antecedent. In some studies, life satisfaction plays a mediating role between resources and outcomes or serves as a resource itself. For example, in some studies, the frequency of recognition and praise received by college students and their level of personal growth initiative is mediated by perceived life satisfaction (Stevic & Ward, 2008). On the contrary, in other studies, personal growth initiative is proven to be an antecedent of optimal functioning (Weigold, Porfeli, & Weigold, 2013) and predictor of life satisfaction (Yang & Chang, 2014). Similarly, we assume that satisfaction with life might be a resource itself in some cases, and this should be taken in consideration while interpreting the results of our study. In addition, some studies prove that engagement is linked with career and job satisfaction in employees' and students' samples (Barnes & Collier, 2013; Høigaard, Giske, & Sundsli, 2012; Rayton & Yalabik, 2014; Sovet, Sang, Park, & Jung, 2014; etc.). Thus, it is possible that it could also predict academic major satisfaction and vice versa. Nevertheless, our findings suggest that to some extent autonomy might serve as a means to succeed in the conditions of the present-day changing world and in the times of changing career paths. The current study extends the existing literature on career resources (Hirshi, 2012; King, 2004; Sturges, 2008; etc.) with a notion that autonomy is connected to well-being in the occupational field in a sample of students.

Limitations and Future Directions. The results and conclusions from the present study need to be considered in light of a number of limitations. Firstly, the study included participants from a narrow occupational field – computer and engineering sciences. In earlier studies it was argued that different occupational sectors could encounter different challenges (Bakker & Sanz-Vergel, 2013). Hence, it seems reasonable to investigate if the patterns found in the current study would replicate in different samples. Also, the sample of the current study contained a disproportionate number of men. However, such a sample might seem to be novel since the studies of career field often include female-predominant samples of social science students (Duffy, Douglass, Autin, & Allan, 2014).

Nevertheless, gender is an important consideration in the career development area (Patton & Creed, 2001). Thus, future studies should consider samples with a more equal gender balance.

Although the findings of the current study have provided some new insights into the links among autonomy, study engagement, and academic and life satisfaction, this study had the limitation of adopting a cross-sectional design. Career resources might change over time and the existence of resources in one area promotes the development of resources in the other areas (Hirschi, 2012). Thus, in future studies, a longitudinal approach would be beneficial in understanding how the variables change and develop over time. Also, an experimental approach could give evidence of causality between variables. Moreover, one possible direction for future research could be expanding the current study to other career stages. This could establish a more complete understanding of the role of personal career resources during the life span.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study suggest that at least one facet of students' autonomy, namely, authorship or self-congruence, is related to study engagement, satisfaction with life and academic major satisfaction. Despite the shortcomings of the study, our findings suggest that at a certain extent autonomy might serve as an important resource of students' occupational well-being while struggling in academic settings and preparing for transition from college to the labor market.

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AUTONOMIJA KAIP STUDENTŲ PROFESINĖS GEROVĖS ASMENINIS IŠTEKLIUS

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Santrauka. Darbo problema. Šiandienos neapibrėžtumo ir neužtikrintumo sąlygomis nepaprastai svarbu suprasti, kurie ištekliai padeda įveikti gyvenimo sunkumus ir gerai pasiruoti konkuruoti darbo rinkoje. Autonomija, arba funkcionavimas vadovaujantis asmeniniais interesais, vertybėmis ir tikslais, gali būti reikšmingas asmeninis išteklis, susijęs su sėkmingu funkcionavimu akademinėje aplinkoje. Ankstesnių tyrimų duomenimis, autonomija susijusi su tokiais pozityviais konstruktais kaip atlikimas, kūrybiškumas, įsitraukimas į prosocialias veiklas ir kt. Taigi šiame tyrime keliami prielaidai, kad autonomija susijusi su studentų profesinę gerovę atspindinčiais konstruktais – įsitraukimu į studijas, pasitenkinimu jomis ir gyvenimu. **Tikslas.** Siekta ištirti autonomijos ir studentų įsitraukimo į studijas, pasitenkinimo gyvenimu bei studijomis sąsajas. **Tiriamieji ir metodai.** Tyrime dalyvavo 148 kolegijos studentai (97,3 proc. vaikų, 2,7 proc. merginų, kurių amžiaus vidurkis – 19,69, SD – 1,30). Tyrime naudoti instrumentai: Utrechto įsitraukimo į darbą skalė – trumpoji studentų versija (Schaufeli et al., 2002), pasitenkinimo gyvenimu skalė (Diener et al., 1985), Pasitenkinimo pasirinktu studijų dalyku skalė (Nauta, 2007) ir Dispozicinės autonomijos indekso skalė (Weinstein et al., 2012). **Rezultatai.** Teigiamai su kitais tyrimo kintamaisiais buvo susijęs tik vienas autonomijos komponentas – autorystė arba savikongruencija. Regresinė analizė atskleidė, kad autorystė arba savikongruencija buvo reikšminga ir prognozuojant studentų įsitraukimą į studijas, pasitenkinimą gyvenimu ir pasitenkinimą pasirinktomis studijomis. **Išvados.** Remiantis tyrimo rezultatais galima teigti, kad autonomija bent iš dalies yra reikšmingas išteklis, susijęs su studentų gerove akademinėje aplinkoje.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: autonomija, įsitraukimas, pasitenkinimas studijomis, pasitenkinimas gyvenimu, studentai.

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