

What Do I Think is What I Perform? Contrasting Subjective and Objective Performance Measures of Students from Business Undergraduate Programs

Vitor Hideo Nasu¹, Yana Miranda Borges², Breno Gabriel da Silva¹, Brian Alvarez Ribeiro de Melo³

¹ University of São Paulo (USP)

² Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Amazonas (IFAM)

³ State University of Maringá (UEM)

Abbreviated abstract: This study examines the relationship between subjective and objective performance measures of business undergraduate students. Data were collected from the INEP's website and refer to ENADE 2018. Results show there is a negative correlation between students' perceived exam's degree of difficulty (subjective measure) and their official grades (objective measure). We recommend caution when interpreting the results of business education studies that use perceived performance as it might not correspond to the student's actual performance.

Related publications:

- J. M. Zukswert *et al.*, CBE – Life Sciences Education 18 (1), 1-12 (2019)
- C. A. Naughton *et al.*, American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 76 (4), 1-7 (2012)



Problem and Previous Works

Problem

- Prior studies rely on perceived measures (how well students think they have performed on a task, students' perception on an exam's degree of difficulty, etc.) to analyze student performance and drawn conclusions from it
- Perceived measures might not correspond or be highly correlated with student's actual performance
 - Zukswert *et al.* (2019) – students overestimated their understanding
 - Naughton *et al.* (2012) – students rated their competencies slightly higher than national averages
- In business education, we compare students' perception on the exam's difficulty and their official grades



Methods

Data Collection

- INEP's website (Exame Nacional de Desempenho dos Estudantes - ENADE 2018)
- Performance variables
 - Final grade (FGD) is composed of 75% of the SCQ and 25% of the GFQ
 - Student grade on specific component questions (SCQ)
 - Student grade on general formation questions (GFQ)
- Student Questionnaire (five-point scale)
 - Student's perception on the level of difficulty of the specific component questions (SCQ)
 - Student's perception on the level of difficulty of the general formation questions (GFQ)

Standardization of the students' perception

- Scale range: zero (low difficulty) to ten (high difficulty) points

Analysis

- Correlation analysis



Results and Conclusions

Results

- Correlation analysis between students' perception of difficulty and performance measures
- FGD: coefficient = -0,18; $p < .05$
- GFQ: coefficient = -0,16; $p < .05$
- SCQ: coefficient = -0,16; $p < .05$

Conclusion

- As student's grade increases, their perception of difficulty tends to decrease mildly
- The correlations found are low, we then recommend additional caution when interpreting the results of studies that use perceived measures to analyze student performance since it might not correspond to their official grades

Thank you!

