

Career: Findings from the Wellness Inventory

Center for the Study of Student Life

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INTRODUCTION

The pilot Wellness Inventory is a comprehensive measure of the well-being of incoming first-year students. The instrument was designed after reviewing extant literature on college student wellness. In the pilot phase, all incoming first-year students were invited to take the survey prior to the start of classes in fall 2011. Students who were enrolled in the Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience orientation course on Carmen, the primary learning platform at The Ohio State University, were solicited to take the assessment prior to entering Ohio State. After completing the consent form (in the form of a Carmen “quiz”), students were offered a link to the wellness inventory. Students could elect to have their educational records accessed by institutional researchers over time, so that the aggregate inventory results can be related to institutional indicators such as GPA, retention, and residence.

METHODOLOGY

Of the 4,215 students invited to take the survey, 3,582 responded, yielding a response rate of 85.0%. Researchers performed an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principle axis factoring to examine underlying factors that may contribute to the overall wellness of survey respondents. Past research indicates that different areas of wellness correlate with each other (Hey, Calderon, & Carroll 2006; Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney 2004), suggesting oblique rotation is appropriate (Brown, 2006). This brief focuses on findings related to academic and career wellness and its relationship to other areas of wellness.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **77.6%** of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* they were confident in their major/career decision.
- More Hispanic students *strongly agreed* or *agreed* they felt challenged by their academics than students of other ethnicities.
- Confidence in problem solving abilities is moderately correlated ($r = .359$) with ability to cope with stress.
- African American students reported engaging in mentally stimulating activities less frequently than did students of other ethnicities.
- **94.3%** of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they felt their current studies will be helpful to their future career.
- **93.4%** of students *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they envisioned their future career as a means to contribute to society.

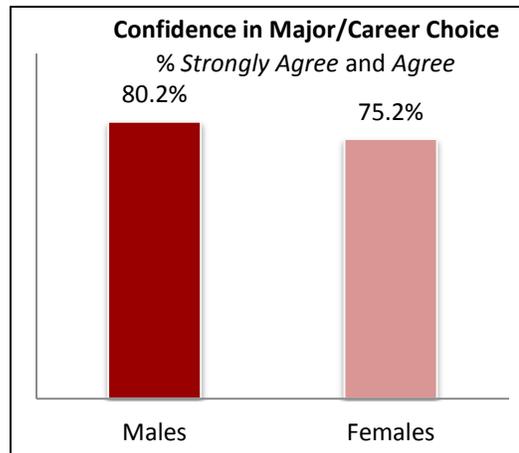
DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	Sample	Race/Ethnicity	Sample
Male	45.7%	American Indian/ Native American	.4%
Female	54.2%	Asian/ Pacific Islander	5.9%
		Black/ African American	3.8%
		Hispanic/ Latino(a)	2.7%
		Multiracial	3.6%
		White/ Caucasian	83.6%

Multiracial and White students were over-represented, while African American students were underrepresented. Male students were underrepresented while females were overrepresented.

CONFIDENCE

Students reported high levels of self-confidence, with 99.2% reporting they *strongly agree* or *agree* they were confident in their ability to learn new skills. Males reported being slightly more confident than females regarding their ability to solve problems (96.5% compared to 93.4%). The majority of students (88.8%) felt that their choice of major/career was an appropriate expression of their abilities and personal strengths, while 77.6% of students reported confidence in their major/career choice. Overall, 93.3% of respondents felt they could manage their academic workloads.

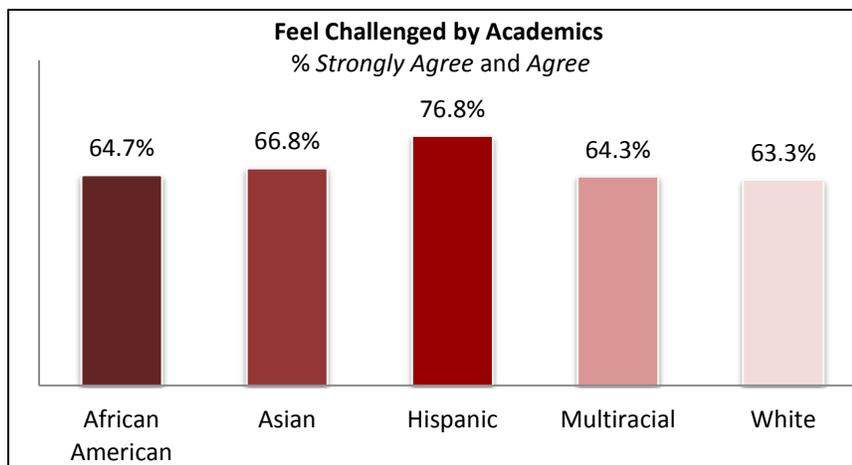


STRESS

Students *strongly agreed* and *agreed* that they felt challenged by their academics (63.9%). Females reported feeling more challenged by their academics coursework than did males (67.2% compared to 60.5%). Most (95.3%) respondents felt that they were able to cope with daily stress, while males were more likely to *strongly agree* (54.3%) on this item than females (34.1%), similar results emerged when using both *strongly agree* and *agree* responses on this item.

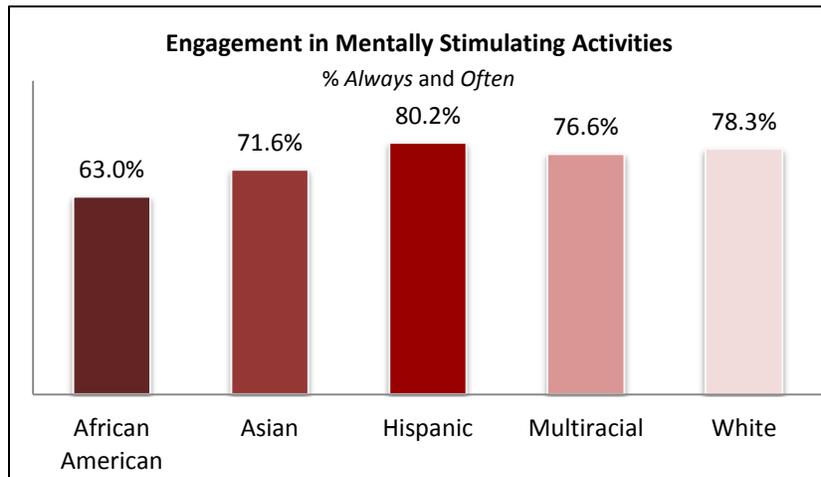
Correlations (r)	Cope with daily stress
Manage academic workload	.369
Confident in ability to learn new skills	.354
Confident in ability to solve problems	.359

Consistent with past research, findings indicate that confidence in problem-solving ability correlated with being able to cope with one's daily stress (Largo-Wight, 2005) (see table right). According to Ohio State's findings from the National College Health Assessment, student stress increases as students enter higher class ranks (Center for the Study of Student Life, 2011).



INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Students reported high levels of intellectual engagement. Respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they were interested in learning new things (99.0%). However, rates of engaging in mentally stimulating activities were somewhat lower, with 77.2% of students reporting they *always* or *often* engaged in these activities. Males (80.7%) reported slightly higher engagement in mentally stimulating activities than females (74.8%). Most students

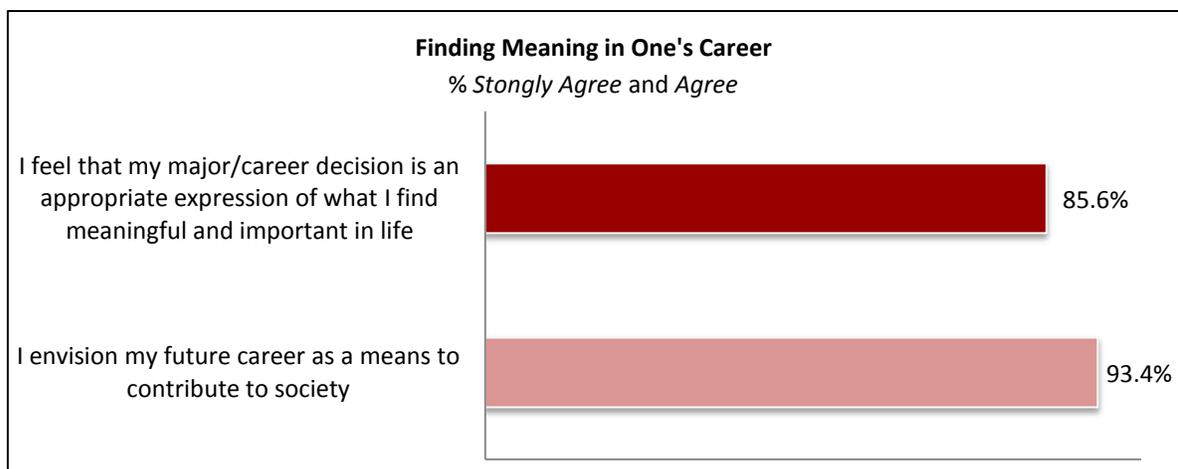


(91.2%) reported *always* or *often* being focused on whatever activity they were performing. Specific to academics, respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that their education was a priority (99.0%) and felt that their current studies would be helpful to their future careers (94.3%). According to Oguz-Duran (2009), having life goals and motivation to pursue these goals is related to higher self-esteem, which in turn positively correlates with other aspects of wellness.

PURPOSE AND CAREER

Dorn (1992) found that satisfaction with one's career is associated with better emotional well-being. The data from this study indicate that career choices that are consistent with what one finds meaningful in life are moderately correlated with feeling that one's life has purpose, which in turn is moderately inversely correlated with depression (see table right).

Correlations (r)	I feel that my life has purpose
My career choice is consistent with what I find meaningful in life	.339
Depression	-.306



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