

Development and Validation of Instruments Designed to Identify Reasons and Factors Influencing Decisions to Attend Summer Session and Attend at a Particular Higher Education Institution

Thomas F. Kowalik, Ed. D.; Binghamton University, SUNY

Objective:

To develop and validate instruments to determine reasons and motivational factors influencing student decisions to participate in Summer Session and to attend a particular higher education institution.

Design: Two instruments were developed. The first was to determine motivational factors to attend Summer Session. The second was to determine factors influencing student decisions to attend particular institutions. Both instruments were developed through literature reviews, structured interviews with Summer Session directors throughout North America, past Summer Session students, and students contemplating attending Summer Session. A panel of Summer Session administrators reviewed the instruments to determine face validity, appeal, understanding, and ease of self-administration. A pilot study was conducted with a small random sample of 20 students representing the undergraduate target population, i.e. undergraduate students previously attending Summer Session, to assess initial validity and reliability, administration procedures and overall instrument design. The instruments were administered to a total random sample of 373 students enrolled in Summer Session undergraduate liberal arts courses, 263 students from a midsized state institution and 110 from a small private liberal arts university.

Settings: A midsized public university and small private university in the U.S. Northeast.

Measurements:

Simple descriptive statistics were performed on pilot and full studies. Individual items were tested for internal consistency and alpha reliability (Chronbach's alpha). Inter-item scale correlation was tested. Corrected item to scale correlations were tested. Exploratory factor analysis was performed on both instruments.

Results: The content validity of items within both instruments was implicit in the elaborate procedures for item selection. Internal consistency and alpha reliability (Chronbach's alpha) for the The Kowalik-Fish Summer Session Motivation Inventory, i.e., the instrument to test reasons to participate in Summer Session was .92 on the pilot administration and the original 41-item survey was revised to yield a 42-item survey resulting in a Chronbach alpha of .92 for the full study. Chronbach's alpha for the Kowalik-Fish Summer Session Institutional Choice Inventory, i.e., the instrument to determine reasons for attending a particular institution for summer studies was .93 for the pilot administration and the original 29-item survey was retained resulting in a Chronbach alpha of .95 for the full study. Using exploratory factor analysis it was determined items from both instruments satisfactorily loaded into factors to determine usable factor structures.

Conclusion: The instruments described in this paper are reliable and valid instruments for assessing the reasons and factors influencing student decisions to participate in Summer Session and to attend a particular higher education institution for summer studies.