

Copyright © 2021

Michael Paul Waide

Abstract

College students' persistence to academic success has been a concern for higher education institutions (HEIs). The educational attainment and academic achievement of community college students have created employment and economic opportunities for individuals. Despite the benefits of higher education, some community college students failed to continue toward academic success while others persisted. Continued research beyond a focus on barriers was needed to address a gap and determine protective factors' role on academic success. Further investigation was needed to determine if protective resources, such as resilience, and college persistence factors were useful in helping nontraditional community college students in rural Appalachia persist toward academic success. The purpose of the nonexperimental, quantitative correlational study was to explore the relationship between the resilience and college persistence of nontraditional community college students in rural Appalachia and success. The study's scope included 136 nontraditional aged college students, enrolled in community colleges in rural Appalachia. Grounded in an adaptation and resilience model and resilience theory, the study incorporated a correlational design. Two Pearson product-moment correlations were analyzed and determined statistically significant correlations between Appalachian nontraditional community college students' resilience, persistence, and academic success. The study's significant findings offer practical implications for higher education leaders, who seek to promote college students' academic success through resilience or capacity-building programs and student-centric persistence initiatives. Policy changes and recommendations for future studies are discussed.

Keywords: resilience, college persistence, non-traditional, community college, rural Appalachia