

The Impact of Academic Incompletes upon Academic Self-Efficacy, Grit, and Coping Strategies of College Students

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ABSTRACT

Number of research suggests that Academic Self-Efficacy is a strong predictor of academic success and student achievement.[1] Furthermore, previous literature has shown that Grit and Adaptive Coping strategies has key consequences upon college students' academic performance.[2,3] However, we have previously found that Academic Incompletes had a strong negative association with three out of the four dimensions of Academic Self-Efficacy. On the other hand, we also previously found that Grit and Adaptive Coping styles had a positive influence on Academic Self-Efficacy. Therefore, we speculated that Academic Incompletes will have a negative effect on Academic Self-Efficacy, Adaptive Coping strategies, and Grit personality trait. We surveyed college students ($n = 101$) and found that Academic Incompletes had a negative influence on all four dimensions of Academic Self-Efficacy, Grit, and Acceptance ($F(4,72) = 1.79, p = .015$). Specifically, the impact of incompletes on all Academic Self-Efficacy dimensions was the strongest; the effect was as strong for having one incomplete versus none ($p < .001$) or having two or more versus none ($p < .001$)

INTRODUCTION

Academic Incompletes: may be assigned when a student's work is of passing quality and represents majority of the proportion of required materials for the final grade, but for a good cause (serious personal problems, accident, severe family problems, illness, or large necessity to increase working hours) the final exam requirements and time of extension can be agreed upon with the instructor. [5,6]

Grit: a lower level personality trait in the domain of Conscientiousness and has been defined as the ability for perseverance and passion for long-term goals. 2 dimensions: *Consistency of Interest & Perseverance of Effort*

Coping Styles: they serve the effort to minimize stressors' occurrence in advance, thus increases the ability to elicit a cognitive transformation in how the stressor is perceived. 2 main domains: *Problem-Focused & Emotion-Focused*

Academic self-efficacy: the levels of confidence individuals have in their ability to execute courses of actions of attain specific performance outcomes. 4 dimensions: *Interaction at School, Academic Performance in Class, Academic Performance Out of Class, and School-Work-Life Balance.*[4]

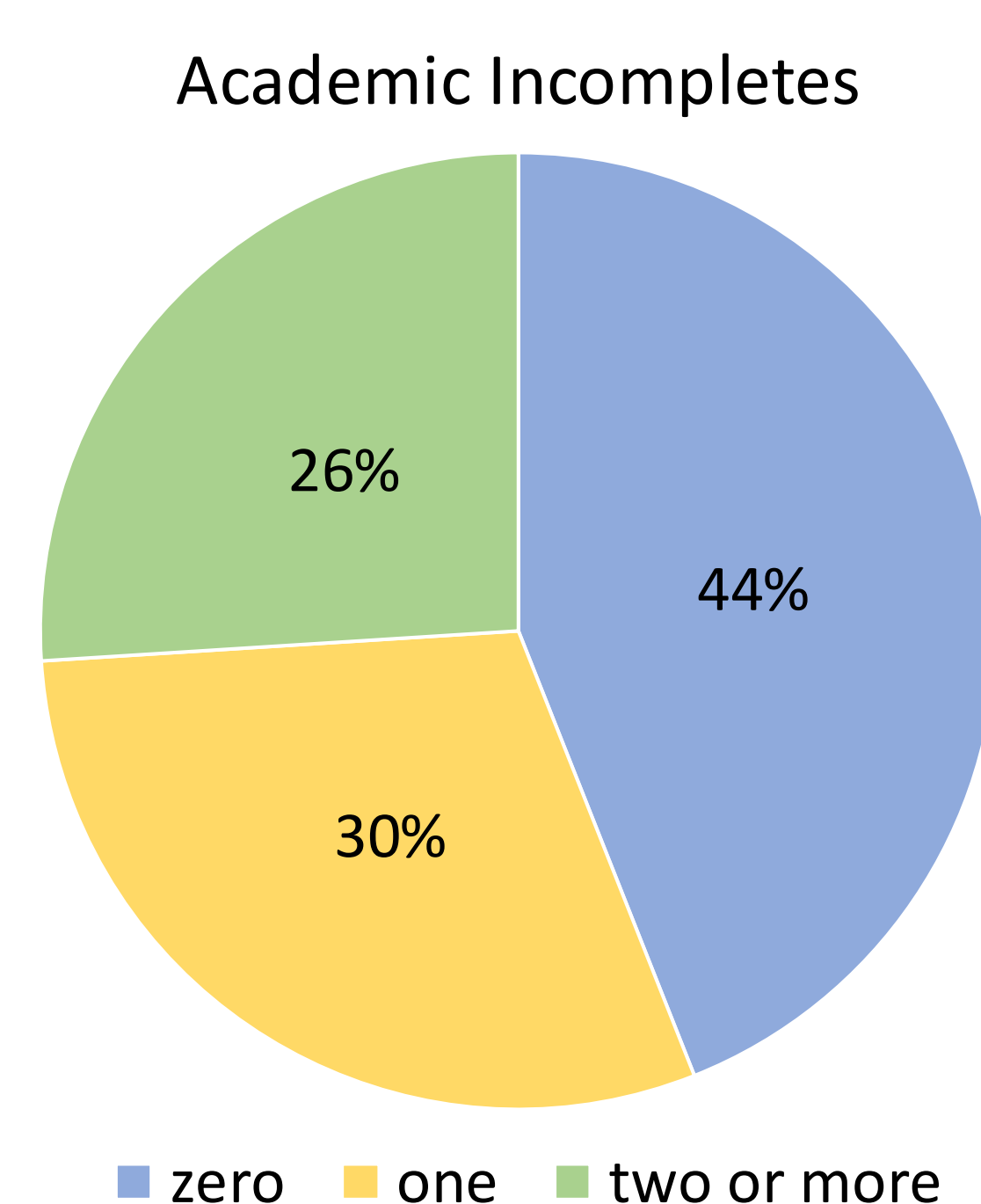
HYPOTHESIS

The goal of our study is to identify the negative impact of Academic Incompletes upon the distinct dimensions of Academic Self-Efficacy, various Coping mechanisms of that students use to handle stress, and Grit personality trait.

METHODS

Sample characteristics

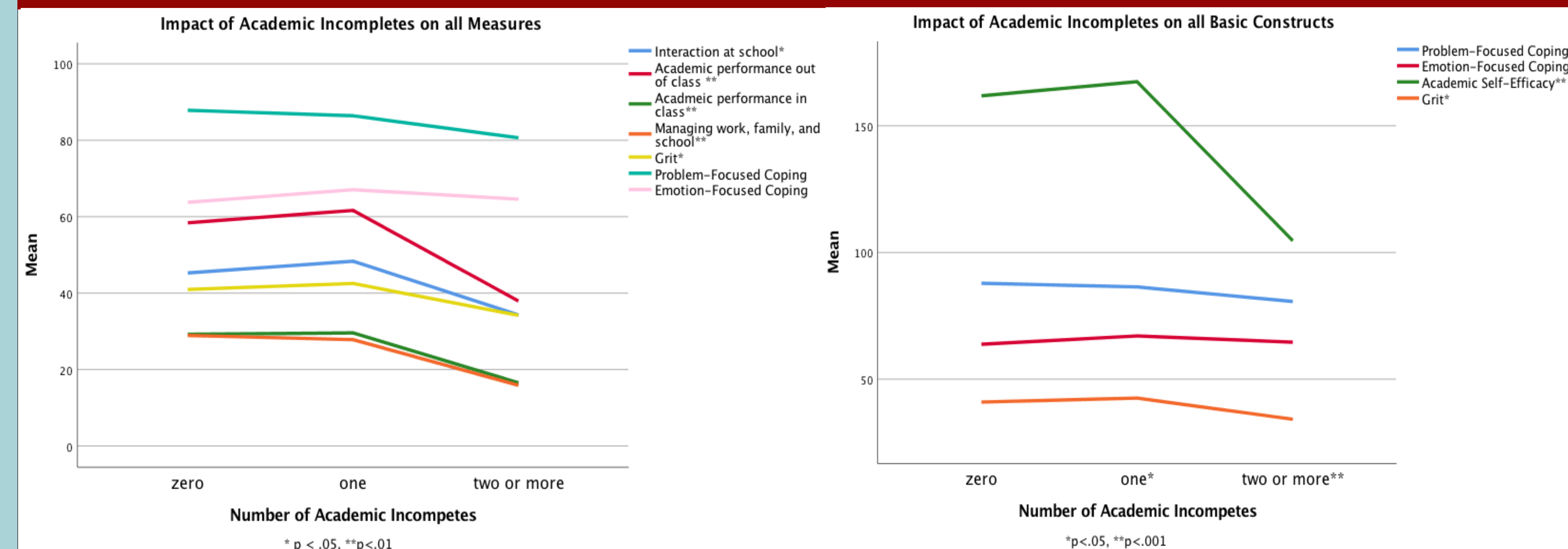
- ☐ 101 college students surveyed at a California State University
- ☐ Ethnically diverse population
- ☐ 49% males, 51% females
- ☐ Mean age is 24 years old
- ☐ Age range 18-35 years old
- ☐ Mean GPA is 3.28
- ☐ Average college education completed is 3.5 years
- ☐ 63% of students planning to attend graduate school



Multivariate ANOVA was applied where Academic Incompletes were grouped (none, one, two or more) and the following Dependent Variables were assessed:

- ☐ Overall Grit
- ☐ Perseverance of Effort
- ☐ Consistency of Interest
- ☐ 8 Problem-Focused Coping styles
- ☐ 7 Emotion-Focused Coping styles
- ☐ 4 dimensions of Academic Self-Efficacy

RESULTS



Post hoc Analysis

When combining dimensions for each construct Academic Self-Efficacy was found to be most affected by Academic Incompletes ($p < .001$), Further results showed that all four dimensions were influenced ($p < .01$) by Academic Incompletes, as well as Perseverance ($p < .01$), but no significant effect on any of the coping styles ($p > .05$).

Number of Academic Incompletes	One to Two or more	Zero to Two or more	p-value
Interaction at school	✓	✓	.009
Academic performance out of class	✓	✓	.000
Academic performance in class	✓	✓	.000
Managing work, family, and school	✓	✓	.000
Perseverance	✓	✓	.007

Post hoc analysis showed that there were no established differences from having zero versus one Academic Incomplete ($p > .05$), however, when obtaining two or more Academic Incompletes resulted in a strong effect on all dimensions of Academic Self-Efficacy ($p < .01$), and on Perseverance of Effort ($p < .01$), which is a dimension of Grit personality trait

CONCLUSION

- ☐ Academic policies about incompletes have been not standardized among higher education institutions in the U.S. [6]
- ☐ We suggest to lower the number of units students can use for incomplete grades and withdrawals because it lowers students Academic Self-Efficacy, Grit, and show mildly negative effects on Problem-Focused coping strategies.
- ☐ Obtaining two or more incompletes had a strong negative influence on overall Academic Self-Efficacy and on all of its separate dimensions, furthermore, Grit, specifically Perseverance was effected too.
- ☐ Implications of our findings may suggest alternative ways to counsel students how to succeed in college and suggest to students not to over-use this policy for their own betterment

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