



The Relationship between Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms, Academic Self-Efficacy, Academic Motivation, and Performance in Veteran College Students

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Introduction

- The U.S. has the largest military in the world with more than 2.7 million armed forces members (Hurt, Ryan & Straley, 2011).
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been a major problem among veterans
 - Negatively impacts health
 - Makes reintegration into society more difficult
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and many other services aim to reintegrate veterans; however aiding veterans has been a challenge due to the complex impact that posttraumatic stress symptoms can have on an individual's functioning.

Literature Review

- A national survey revealed that 46% of a veteran student sample reported significant symptoms of PTSD (Rudd et al., 2011).
- Due to the rapid growth in the numbers of veteran students on college campuses, it is important to understand how posttraumatic stress (PTS) might be impacting these students' abilities to perform academically.
- Only a few research studies have focused on veteran college students, and even fewer have focused on students' posttraumatic stress.

Hypotheses

- The present study used the Social-Cognitive model to examine if posttraumatic stress symptoms in veteran college students are related to decreased academic motivation and lower GPAs. The study also examined if these relationships are mediated by academic self-efficacy.

Hypotheses:

- In a sample of veteran college students, more severe posttraumatic symptoms will be negatively correlated with academic motivation and GPA. Based on Social-Cognitive Theory, it was also hypothesized that these relationships will be mediated by academic self-efficacy.

Method & Sample

- Participants included 26 veteran college students at UNH

Gender	69% Male	27% Female	
Mean Age	28	(Range: 19-42)	
Ethnicity	77% White	12% Biracial	8% African American
Year	50% Seniors	15% Sophomores	15% First year 12% Juniors
Student Status	89% Full Time		
Combat Exposure	46% Not Exposed	31% Exposed a Few times	19% Exposed Frequently

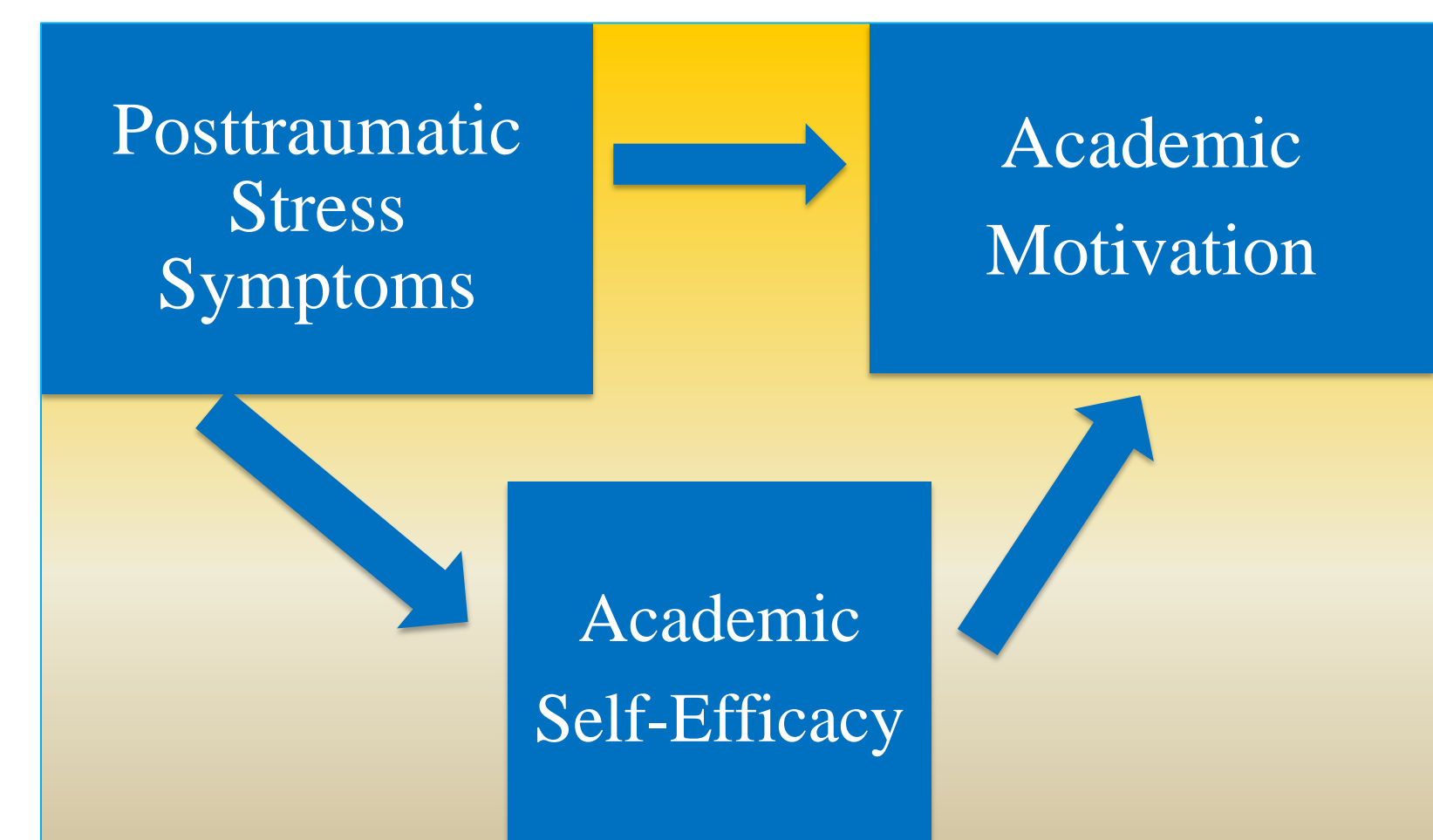
Measures included:

- The PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5; Weathers et al., 2013). A 20-item self-report checklist of PTSD symptoms based on the DSM-5.
- The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS; Vallerand et al., 1992). A 28-item measure of intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation.
- The College Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (CASES; Owen & Froman, 1988). A self-report measure of the degree of confidence for performing typical academic behaviors of college students.
- Demographics Questionnaire

Procedure:

- Participants were emailed a link to the electronic survey and invited to participate.
- After providing informed consent, participants completed the three questionnaires online as well as the demographic questionnaire.
- Participants were thanked for their participation and offered a gift card as compensation for their participation.

Path Analyses:



Results & Discussion

Path Analysis 1 (Intrinsic Motivation):

PTS -> Intrinsic Motivation, $\beta = -.05$ (S.E. = 9.10), *ns*
 PTS -> Self-Efficacy, $\beta = .16$ (S.E. = 16.36), *ns*
 Self-Efficacy -> Intrinsic Motivation, $\beta = .29$ (S.E. = .11), *ns*

Path Analysis 2 (Extrinsic Motivation):

PTS -> Intrinsic Motivation, $\beta = .18$ (S.E. = 9.86), *ns*
 PTS -> Self-Efficacy, $\beta = .16$ (S.E. = 16.36), *ns*
 Self-Efficacy -> Intrinsic Motivation, $\beta = -.04$ (S.E. = .12), *ns*

- Two path analyses revealed no relationships between posttraumatic stress symptoms (PCL-5) and academic motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic).
- Also no relationships between the variables and academic self-efficacy

Future Directions

- We are currently collecting data from more participants to obtain a larger sample
- Future studies could examine other variables related to academic success for veteran college students
- These studies are important to understand the experiences and cognitions of veterans students and how they might impact their ability to perform academically
- The information gathered could then be used by colleges to help support veterans as they work towards their degrees

References

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