Predictors of academic adaptation of beginners in the Psychology course

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ABSTRACT

Academic adaptation is a multifactorial phenomenon and its investigation can provide subsidies that contribute to the permanence of beginning students at the University. The present study aimed to identify the predictive relationship of the explanatory variables Academic Expectations, Maturity for Professional Choice, Social Skills, Career Adaptability and Academic Satisfaction in the variable Adaptation to the University in Psychology students. There were 426 university students (M=24.17, SD=7.27), 330 women, 90 men, and 6 did not report sex. The following instruments were used: Academic Expectations Scale for Higher Education Students (EEAEIES), Career Adaptability Scale (EAC), Academic Experience Satisfaction Scale (ESEA), Professional Choice Maturity Scale (EMEP), Social Skills Inventory (IHS) and Academic Experience Questionnaire (QVA-r). The results showed that university students with higher scores on social skills, academic expectations and satisfaction with the academic experience are those who also present higher scores in academic experiences. It is noteworthy that university adaptation is a complex process and, in the specific case of this sample, it was positively related to factors such as interpersonal relationships, academic achievement and institutional involvement.

KEYWORDS

College student. Social skills. Professional development.

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Preditores da adaptação acadêmica de iniciantes no curso de Psicologia

RESUMO

A adaptação acadêmica é um fenômeno multifatorial e a sua investigação pode oferecer subsídios que contribuam para a permanência dos estudantes iniciantes na Universidade. O presente estudo teve como objetivo identificar a relação preditiva das variáveis explicativas Expectativas Acadêmicas, Maturidade para a Escolha Profissional, Habilidades Sociais, Adaptabilidade de Carreira e Satisfação Acadêmica com a variável critério Adaptação Acadêmica em estudantes de Psicologia. Participaram 426 universitários (M=24,17; DP=7,27), sendo 330 mulheres, 90 homens. Foram utilizados os seguintes instrumentos: Escala de Expectativas Acadêmicas de Estudantes Ingressantes na Educação Superior (EEAEIES), Escala de Adaptabilidade de Carreira (EAC), Escala de Satisfação com a Experiência Acadêmica (ESEA), Escala de Maturidade para a Escolha Profissional (EMEP), Inventário de Habilidades Sociais (IHS) e Questionário de Vivências Acadêmicas (QVA-r). Os resultados apontaram que universitários com maiores escores de habilidades sociais, expectativas acadêmicas e satisfação com a experiência acadêmica apresentam maiores escores nas vivências acadêmicas. Dessa forma, o estudo aponta a relevância dessas variáveis para uma adaptação acadêmica satisfatória. Ressalta-se que adaptação universitária é um processo complexo e, no caso específico desta amostra, esteve relacionada positivamente a fatores como as relações interpessoais, o aproveitamento nos estudos e o envolvimento institucional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Estudante universitário. Habilidades sociais. Desenvolvimento professional.

Predictores de adaptación académica de principiantes en el curso de Psicología

RESUMEN

La adaptación académica es un fenómeno multifactorial y sú investigación puede brindar subsidios que contribuyan a la permanencia de los estudiantes principiantes en la Universidad. El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo identificar la relación predictiva de las variables explicativas Expectativas Académicas, Madurez para la Elección Profesional, Habilidades Sociales, Adaptabilidad Profesional y Satisfacción Académica en la variable Criterion Adaptación a la Universidad en Psicología estudiantes. Los participantes fueron 426 estudiantes universitarios (M=24,17; SD=7,27), 330 mujeres, 90 hombres y seis no declararon sexo. Se utilizaron los siguientes instrumentos: Escala de Expectativas Académicas de Estudiantes Ingresantes en Educación Superior (EEAEIES), Escala de Adaptabilidad Profesional (EAC), Escala de Satisfacción de Experiencia Académica (ESEA), Escala de Madurez para la Elección Profesional (EMEP), Inventario de Habilidades Sociales (IHS) y Cuestionario de Experiencias Académicas (QVA-r). Los resultados mostraron que los estudiantes universitarios con mayores puntuaciones de habilidades sociales, y la satisfacción con la experiencia académica son aquellos que también tienen puntuaciones más altas en experiencias académicas. Llama la atención que la adaptación universitaria es un proceso complejo y, en el caso específico de esta muestra, se relacionó positivamente con factores como las relaciones interpersonales, el rendimiento académico y la implicación institucional.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Estudiante universitario. Habilidades sociales. Desarrollo profesional.

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1 Introduction

In the previous decade, there has been a significant growth in demand for the Psychology course in Brazil. In 2017, for example, the number of enrollments placed Psychology as the course with the seventh highest number of enrollments in the entire national territory. If only female enrollments are considered, this position increases to sixth place among the courses with the most students in Brazil (INEP, 2018). Comparing this information with data from the 2009 Higher Education Census, a significant increase in demand can be observed since, in that year, the Psychology course was not yet in the ranking that presented the ten Higher Education courses with the highest enrollment. While the 2014 Census (INEP, 2015) already highlighted the Psychology course in seventh place in the number of enrollments, there was a further significant increase of 20.71% between 2014 and 2017. During this period the number of new entrants to this course, in public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), jumped from 207,070 to 249,956. This growth highlights the need to comprehend this massification process, due to its implications for the university context, for the arrangements and throughout the course in question.

The study by Macedo et al. (2018) analyzed data from 28,227 Psychology students who participated in the National Higher Education Student Performance Exam (ENADE) in 2009, 2012 and 2015. Through the longitudinal analysis of the sociodemographic profile of the respondents, the authors concluded that over these years there had been a phenomenon of popularization of the profile of Psychology students in Brazil, which was attributed by the researchers to the educational policies of the Federal Government between the years 1999 and 2007, more specifically to the Federal Universities Restructuring and Expansion Plan (REUNI) and the Student Financing Program (FIES). Yamamoto et al., (2011) demonstrated the social discrepancy of two distinct groups among Psychology students (elite and non-elite). According to their study, which included the sociodemographic profile from the 2006 ENADE, the differences point to the difficulties faced by students with worse social conditions, who generally need to reconcile study with working life, who have lower family incomes, and who mostly went through public education, factors that can negatively contribute to the academic adaptation of students who enter the university.

Entering Higher Education is a remarkable period in the life of the young person, who, upon leaving Fundamental Education, is faced with new social, academic and institutional demands. For many students, this event is seen as an achievement, as the possibility of building a life project and as an opportunity to establish new interpersonal relationships and assume responsibilities. Given these significant changes, it is important to consider that the challenges faced by freshmen from lower social classes can bring about psychosocial demands due to the independence from parental figures and the family home, the assumption of new roles and responsibilities, the management of new friendships and the organization of academic tasks (SOARES, MONTEIRO, SILVA, 2018).

Aiming to provide a resource for measuring the academic experiences of those entering Higher Education, Soares et al. (2006), developed the Multidimensional Model of Adjustment of Young People to the University Context (MMAU). The authors sought to consider the process of academic adaptation as a product of reciprocal and dynamic interactions between individuals. They stated that university education is not only concerned with aspects of cognitive development, but also with the ways in which students adapt to the academic context, taking into account contextual factors of the university arrangement and also the personal aspects of each student. The interaction between the students' personal characteristics (sociodemographic conditions, academic abilities and developmental experiences) and the contextual aspects of the university (services and resources offered) must be considered in order to understand the academic experience. Faced with the need to comprehend the academic adaptation in a multi-determined way, this article will investigate some psychosocial constructs found in the initial experience of students in the Psychology course.

1.1 Professional Choice Maturity

Professional choice maturity is, according to Junqueira and Melo-Silva (2014), relevantly linked to the adjustment to university life and can be an important aspect to be considered faced with the growing demand for the Psychology course in Brazil. The search for a profession, according to these authors, encompasses skills, needs, values and interests, as well as the knowledge that the young person has about the career in question. Accordingly, some constructs have been considered important to explain professional choice, as is the case of professional choice maturity, which can be understood as a set of attitudes and knowledge that accompany the individual in the process of a more mature and conscious professional choice (NEIVA, 2014).

Cericatto, Alves and Patias (2017) exemplify professional choice maturity through the developmental perspective, the maturity to make professional decisions, through the social bias, which compares the evolutionary tasks of the individual in relation to those that are socially expected for their age, and through the psychological consideration that compares the cognitive and affective resources with those that are actually needed to cope with a task. Furthermore, this construct is mainly defined and operationalized by two models. The first emphasizes the attitudinal (planning and exploration) and cognitive (decision-making and information about the world of work) dimension and the second encompasses the cognitive dimension (occupational information, planning, self-assessment, goal selection and problem solving) and affective dimension (determination, involvement, independence, guidance and concession) (JUNQUEIRA & MELO-SILVA, 2014).

Mognon and Santos (2013) compared academic adaptation and career development in 208 university students from private universities in São Paulo and Minas Gerais aged between 18 and 51 years. The most expressive results showed that students who were in the intermediate stages of the course, aged between 22 and 25, sought to make new friends, believed more in themselves and sought to identify their skills and information about their

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profession in the labor market. Students in this age group are usually from the middle to the end of the course and present greater exploration of their professional skills, thus combining more maturity, responsibility and knowledge of the reality considering the chosen profession.

1.2 Career Adaptability

In addition to professional choice maturity, adaptability can also be considered an important element in the academic adaptation process. According to Savickas (2013), this construct can be defined as the readiness of individuals and the resources used by them when faced with current and anticipated tasks of vocational development. According to the career adaptability model described by the author, the construct is composed of four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity and confidence. Concern is related to orientation toward the future and career planning; control refers to the individual's beliefs about their responsibility and their willingness to act proactively in terms of their goals; curiosity is related to exploratory behaviors that allow the individual to expand their perspectives of action in the occupational scenario, and confidence refers to the beliefs in the ability to face the challenges related to the construction of a career.

Rossier et al. (2017) stated that career adaptability is a set of personal resources that help individuals to design their career, and to make better use of the elements that are available to them to develop professionally or maintain their employability. According to Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher (2017), career adaptability is a psychosocial resource for managing career-related tasks, transitions, and difficulties. Paradnikė and Bandzevičienė (2016) related features such as concern, control, curiosity and confidence present in career adaptability to the engagement of university students in their studies. The results showed that the components of career adaptability were associated with engagement in relation to vigor, dedication and learning absorption, with concern and confidence significantly predicting all dimensions of engagement in the study. With this result, the authors emphasized the importance of career adaptability for university life.

The study by Ambiel et al. (2016) highlighted positive correlations between Career Adaptability and Academic Adaptation. The results showed that the more the 89 students from the fifth to the ninth semester of a private university in the state of São Paulo worried about their future and made an effort for their professional growth, the more they sought to participate in vocational planning activities during the university period. Furthermore, they showed that students with more responsibility and autonomy could better manage their study time and that students who sought to explore the services offered by the university also had interests in professional growth.

In turn, the study by Ambiel, Santos and Dalbosco (2016) evaluated whether the academic adaptation and career adaptability of a sample of 153 university students were associated with reasons for dropping out of higher education, according to the course and stage of the course. The results showed that academic adaptation and career adaptability negatively predicted career-related reasons for dropping out of higher education.

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1.3 *Academic Expectations*

As with the constructs presented so far, students' expectations regarding Higher Education can be considered fundamental for comprehending their adaptation to the university context (SOARES et al., 2016). It can be said that academic expectations are defined as the goals or aspirations with which students support their reasons for applying for a particular course. In this way, they are associated with different levels of involvement, permanence and academic success (ARAÚJO et al., 2015).

The expectations generated when entering university, especially in the first year of the course, can differ among people and are subject to changes in the individual over time (MARINHO-ARAÚJO et al., 2015). Empirical studies with university students indicate that their expectations may have a positive relationship with academic adaptation (SOARES et al., 2020) and may vary according to sociocultural differences (ARAÚJO et al., 2015), gender (COSTA et al., 2014) and the stage of the university course, differing mainly between students in the first and last years of the course.

In a study carried out with 214 Psychology students from public and private universities in Rio de Janeiro, it was found that the most realistic Academic Expectations were positively related to academic adaptation. Regarding sociocultural differences, in a study with 717 Spanish and Portuguese first-year students Araújo et al. (2015) showed that the former had lower academic expectations than the latter. However, when considering whether or not the student is a first-generation student, the results were in the opposite direction, that is, students whose parents had higher education had higher expectations in Portugal, with the opposite situation occurring with students in Spain. In general, students had high academic expectations in the Employment and Career Training and the Personal and Social Development dimensions.

The study by Porto and Soares (2017) evaluated the expectations and academic adaptation of 400 university students from different courses. The results showed that better levels of academic adaptation were significantly associated with the Personal dimension for students in the areas of Exact and Applied Social Sciences, in the Career for those in the Humanities and Health and in the Institutional dimension for those in the Humanities and Exact Sciences. The highest expectations were significantly highlighted in the Use of Resources factor for the university students in the areas of Exact Sciences and Humanities. The authors emphasized the importance of the role of HEIs in the process of integrating students into university life, providing resources that positively help students in their educational pathway.

1.4 *Academic Satisfaction*

Ramos et al. (2015) stated that when entering Higher Education, the young person undergoes personal, professional, social and affective changes, with their expectations

regarding the chosen course positively or negatively interfering in their construction as a scholar and future professional. One of the difficulties in measuring satisfaction is related to the fact that it is an intrinsic variable of the individual. The authors refer to academic satisfaction as a subjective analysis of the experience linked to the quality of education, resulting from the confirmation, or not, of the students' expectations regarding their academic reality, in the way they perceive their teaching environment. In addition, academic satisfaction includes the institutional context, considering the quality of the course, theory and practice, assessment system, interpersonal relationships between professors and students, curriculum, administration, physical structure and resources provided.

According to Osti (2020a), satisfaction can influence the student's permanence in the institution and the completion of their course. Therefore, the requirements of students need to be considered. For this, it is important to know how students relate to the institution, including their satisfaction with the course, with the resources offered by the institution, with the services and opportunities they find on campus, with the curricular organization, with the faculty, and with the psychosocial support offered.

The study by Osti et al. (2020b), for example, showed that night period students showed lower satisfaction with security, institutional services provided on campus, and time for dedication and involvement with the university and colleagues. For the students of the humanities and exact science courses who participated in this study, differences appeared in the relationship with professors and academic performance. The exact science professors were considered colder and more distant than those of the humanities. The exact science students reported having greater difficulties with content and subjects than the humanities students.

1.5 *Social Skills*

The ability to adapt to Higher Education is beyond the one-dimensional view of the individual's intellectual competence. Experiences in the university context are eminently interpersonal, therefore, adapting to this environment requires relationship skills. The study by Oliveira et al. (2014) demonstrated that in order to adapt to the university, it is necessary to maintain good social and interpersonal relationships with peers, as the way in which students experience integration into the new environment depends on their autonomy, and their personal and interpersonal development capacity, so that there are no difficulties that interfere with the academic adaptation.

Santos et al. (2015) sought to identify the opinions of university students regarding the characteristics of the relationships established with their peers, as well as how they change during the graduation course and how they influence academic adaptation according to the perception of freshmen and graduates. This highlighted the positive impact of social skills on the process of adapting to the university. Social skills refer to the existence of different classes of social behavior of the subject to adequately deal with the demands of interpersonal situations in different contexts, favoring social competence. This, in turn, refers to the effects

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of the performance of the skills in situations experienced by the individual. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that a more elaborate repertoire of social skills can facilitate the process of adaptation to Higher Education (SOARES; DEL PRETTE, 2015), with some studies having found positive relationships between social skills and academic adaptation (SECO et al., 2016; SOARES; DEL PRETTE, 2015).

Considering this, Soares et al. (2017) conducted a study with 177 students from different courses at public and private universities in the state of Rio de Janeiro to identify the impact of social skills and academic expectations on Academic Adaptation. The social skills and academic expectations variables presented a positive predictive relationship for university adaptation. These results are similar to those of the study by Gomes and Soares (2013) that sought to relate social skills, academic expectations and abstract reasoning in 196 first-year students from public and private universities in Rio de Janeiro. The study identified correlations between social skills and academic expectations, however, found no association between social skills and abstract reasoning.

Considering the growing need to understand the transitions emphasized by academic adaptation and later, adaptation to the career, it has been verified that this process is marked by personal and contextual difficulties, intrinsic and extrinsic to the individual, which can corroborate for professional success in the midst of constant changes in the world of work. Therefore, the present study aimed to identify the predictive relationship of the Academic Expectations, Professional Choice Maturity, Social Skills, Career Adaptability and Academic Satisfaction explanatory variables with the Adaptation to University criterion variable in Psychology students enrolled in HEIs in the metropolitan area of the state of Rio de Janeiro.

Accordingly, the initial hypotheses were that a satisfactory process of academic adaptation is linked to knowledge about the profession and the chosen course (JUNQUEIRA; MELO-SILVA, 2014); adaptability provides better conditions for adjustment to academic challenges (SILVEIRA, 2013); academic expectations are related to greater vocational, curricular and social involvement (GOMES; SOARES, 2013); academic satisfaction influences the performance of students, affecting their professional education, relationships, retention and well-being (RAMOS et al., 2015); and finally, social skills are required in a profession full of interpersonal demands, such as Psychology, and can also contribute to better academic adaptation (SOARES; DEL PRETTE, 2015).

2 Method

2.1 Participants

The study included 426 Psychology students from HEIs located in the metropolitan region of the state of Rio de Janeiro. The participants were aged between 17 and 52 years (M=24.17; SD=7.27). A total of 330 (77.46%) were female and six (1.40%) did not declare their gender. The number of students according to the period was 212 (49.76%) in the first, 101 (23.70%) in the second and 112 (26.29%) in the third, with one participant (0.23%) not

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providing this information. Regarding the HEIs, 379 students (88.96%) were from three private institutions and 47 (11.03%) from two public ones. Considering the social level, 29 (6.80%) belonged to class A, 42 (9.85%) to B1, 131 (30.75%) to B2, 134 (31.45%) to C1, 62 (14.55%) to C2, 14 (3.28%) to D/E and 14 (3.28%) did not provide this information. With regard to marital status, 336 (78.87%) declared themselves single, 61 (14.31%) married, 19 (4.46%) reported their marital status as 'other' and 10 (2.34%) did not respond.

2.2 *Instruments*

Professional Choice Maturity Scale (*Escala de Maturidade para a Escolha Profissional* - EMEP) (NEIVA, 2014). The scale consists of 23 positive items (which indicate maturity) and 22 negative items (which indicate immaturity). The instrument is composed of five subscales: 1) Determination (10 items, α = .91); 2) Responsibility (10 items, α = .75); 3) Independence (8 items, α = .75); 4) Self-knowledge (7 items, α = .75), and 5) Knowledge of the Professional Reality (10 items, α = .82).

Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) (SAVICKAS; PORFELI, 2012, translated by AUDIBERT; TEIXEIRA, 2015). This is a 24-item instrument (six per dimension) with four first-order factors, corresponding to the dimensions: 1) Concern (α = .88), 2) Control (α = .83), 3) Confidence (α = .89), and 4) Curiosity (α = .88). The four factors described are hierarchically subordinated to a general second-order factor Adaptability, referring to the individual's ability to manage their career faced with the changes and uncertainties that characterize the world of work. The total Cronbach's alpha of the scale is .94.

Academic Perceptions Scale: Expectations (*Questionário de Percepções Acadêmicas - Expectativas* - QPA-E) (ALMEIDA et al., 2012, adapted to the Brazilian context by MARINHO-ARAUJO et al., 2015). This scale is composed of 61 items distributed in seven factors: 1) Academic Training of Quality (12 items, α = 0.82); 2) Social and Academic Commitment (13 items, α = .90); 3) Extension of Interpersonal Relationships (8 items, α = .84); 4) Opportunity for Students' Interchanges and Internationalization (8 items, α = .87); 5) Professional Success and Perspectives (5 items, α = .71); 6) Self-Image Concerns (6 items, α = .78) and 7) Development of Transversal Competencies (9 items, α = .79).

Academic Experience Satisfaction Scale (*Escala de Satisfação com a Experiência Acadêmica* - ESEA) (SCHLEICH; POLYDORO; SANTOS, 2006). Composed of 35 items, this instrument aims to assess the degree of satisfaction students attribute to their academic experience. The items are divided among three dimensions, namely: 1) Satisfaction with the course (13 items, α = .87); 2) Opportunity for development (10 items, α = .90), and 3) Satisfaction with the institution (12 items, α = .90).

Social Skills Inventory (*Inventário de Habilidades Sociais* - IHS) (DEL PRETTE; DEL PRETTE, 2001). This instrument was developed to assess the repertoire of social skills usually required in everyday interpersonal situations. Consisting of 38 items, it assesses five factors: 1) Self-affirmation and Coping with Risk (11 items, α = .96); 2) Self-affirmation in

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the Expression of Positive Affect (7 items, α = .86); 3) Conversation and Social Resourcefulness (7 items, α = .81); 4) Self-Exposure to Strangers or New Situations (4 items, α = .75), and 5) Self-control of Aggression (3 items, α = .74). The total Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the instrument is .75.

Academic Experiences Questionnaire (*Questionário de Vivências Acadêmicas* - QVA-r) (ALMEIDA; FERREIRA; SOARES, 2002 adapted by GRANADO *et al*., 2005). This instrument is composed of 55 items that aim to assess the academic adaptation of students in the first year of admission to the University. The items are divided into the following response dimensions: 1) Personal (14 items, α = .84); 2) Interpersonal (12 items, α = .82); 3) Career (12 items, α = .86); 4) Study (9 items, α =.78), and 5) Institutional (8 items, α = .77).

2.3 Data Collection Procedure

Contact was made with professors of the first, second and third periods of the Psychology courses at the Universities to request the application of the questionnaires at some opportune moment in their classes. The inventories were applied to groups of approximately 20 students simultaneously in the following order: ESEA, EMEP, CAAS, QPA-E, IHS and QVA-r, with no length of time for completion set.

2.4 Ethical Procedures

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University. After explaining the objectives, all participants signed the consent form, guaranteeing the confidentiality of their identity and the possibility of withdrawing from the study at any time.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedures

To verify the impact of the explanatory variables (Academic Satisfaction, Academic Expectations, Professional Choice Maturity, Career Adaptability, and Social Skills) on the criterion variable (Academic Adaptation), Multiple Linear Regression (MRL) was performed using the SPSS 16.0 software.

3 Results

The mean and standard deviation values of the participants' scores, as well as the Cronbach's Alpha (α) of each factor of the instruments are presented in Table 1. The reliability index determined by Cronbach's Alpha showed satisfactory levels in almost all factors, with levels varying between scores considered acceptable (> .60) and excellent (> .90) (Damasio, 2012). Only the Self-control of Aggression factor can be considered to present a poor reliability index (> .50), being 10% below the acceptable parameter. Regarding this result, it should be highlighted that in the IHS validation studies, this factor presented the lowest Cronbach's Alpha, similar to the data from the present study.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Indices

Variables	Factor	Mean	SD	α
Academic expectations	Academic Training of Quality	5.07	0.71	.87
	Social and Academic Commitment	5.02	0.64	.83
	Extension of Interpersonal Relationships	4.87	0.71	.69
	Opportunity for Students' Interchanges and Internationalization	4.59	0.88	.81
	Professional Success and Perspectives	5.02	0.77	.67
	Self-Image Concerns	4.83	0.76	.67
	Transversal Competencies	4.56	0.81	.77
	Academic Expectations	4.85	0.64	.96
Academic Adaptation	Personal	3.04	0.78	.85
	Interpersonal	3.58	0.67	.81
	Career	3.92	0.58	.79
	Study	3.47	0.68	.78
	Institutional	3.45	0.64	.65
	Academic Adaptation	3.50	0.48	.91
Academic Experience Satisfaction	Course	3.78	0.70	.92
	Opportunity for development	3.57	0.72	.87
	Institution	3.39	0.76	.89
	Academic Experience Satisfaction	3.60	0.65	.95
Career Adaptability	Concern	4.03	0.84	.89
	Control	4.05	0.73	.82
	Curiosity	3.92	0.76	.86
	Confidence	4.09	0.74	.88
	Career Adaptability	4.02	0.65	.94
Social Skills	Coping	2.37	0.74	.81
	Self-affirmation positive affect	2.89	0.59	.61
	Conversation	2.01	0.89	.81
	Self exposure	1.99	0.77	.60
	Self-control of aggression	2.50	0.80	.59
	Social Skills	2.37	0.48	.84
Professional Choice Maturity	Determination	3.39	0.66	.68
	Responsibility	3.28	0.66	.69
	Independence	3.02	0.78	.68
	Self knowledge	3.37	0.59	.63
	Knowledge of reality	3.09	0.57	.73
	Professional Choice Maturity	3.23	0.53	.90

Source: the authors.

Table 2 presents the impact of the explanatory variables on the QVA-r factors. In this table, only the variables that demonstrated significant prediction for the criterion variable were maintained.

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For the Personal dimension, the factors Determination, Responsibility and Knowledge of the Professional Reality of the EMEP were negatively associated with the criterion variable. While the factors, Social and Academic Commitment and Extension of Interpersonal Relationships of the Academic Expectation variable showed a positive association. These factors explained 33% of the Personal dimension of the QVA-r.

The QPA-E factors: Academic Training of Quality, Academic Social Commitment, Extension of Interpersonal Relationships, Opportunity for Students' Interchanges and Internationalization, Professional Success and Perspectives, Self-Image Concerns, and Development of Transversal Competencies had a negative impact in relation to the Interpersonal dimension. However, the Satisfaction with the Course factor of Academic Expectations had a positive impact on the criterion variable. The set of variables explained 43% of the Interpersonal variable.

The Course factor of the ESEA and the Determination factor of the EMEP had a positive impact on the Career dimension. The Responsibility, and Knowledge of the Professional Reality factors of the EMEP had a negative impact on this dimension. The set of variables explained 41% of the Career variable.

Considering the Study dimension, the factors that constituted positive predictors were the Confidence factor of the CAAS and the Determination factor of the EMEP. The set of variables explained 36% of the Study criterion variable.

Considering the Institutional dimension, the factors that constituted predictors were the Institution factor of the ESEA that had a positive impact and the Conversation and Social Resourcefulness, and Self-Control of Aggressiveness factors of the IHS, which had a negative impact. The set of variables explained 36% of the Institutional criterion variable.

Academic Adaptation was positively impacted by the Course factor of the Satisfaction with the Academic Experience variable and the Responsibility factor of Professional Choice Maturity. The set of variables explained 51% of the general academic adaptation.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results: predictive factors for the Academic Adaptation criterion variable

Academic Adaptation - Personal			
$R^2_{adjusted} = .33$	$F = 7.51; p < .01$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	t	p
Acad_Expec_Social and Academic Commitment	.61	2.34	.02*
Acad_Expec_Extension of Interpersonal Relationships	.57	2.41	.02*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Determination	-.21	-4.00	.00*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Responsibility	-.25	-2.02	.04*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Knowledge of Professional Reality	-.23	-2.46	.01*
Academic Adaptation - Interpersonal			

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$\overline{R}^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .43$	$F = 11.23; p < .001$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	t	p
Acad_Expec_Academic Training of Quality	-.83	-3.5	.00*
Acad_Expec_Social and Academic Commitment	-.66	-2.76	.01*
Acad_Expec_Extension of Interpersonal Relationships	-.44	-2.6	.01*
Acad_Expec_Opportunity for Students' Interchanges and Internationalization	-.62	-2.88	.00*
Acad_Expec_Professional Success and Perspectives	-.38	-3.04	.00*
Acad_Expec_Self-Image Concerns	-.40	-2.63	.01*
Acad_Expec_Transversal Competencies	-.89	-3.88	.00*
Aca_Exp_Sat_Course	.32	4.33	.00*

Academic Adaptation - Career

$\overline{R}^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .41$	$F = 10.54; p < .001$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	t	p
Aca_Exp_Sat_Course	.30	3.98	.00*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Determination	.14	3.04	.00*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Responsibility	-.34	-2.97	.00*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Knowledge of Professional Reality	-.26	-2.99	.00*

Academic Adaptation - Study

$\overline{R}^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .36$	$F = 8.58; p < .01$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	t	p
Career_Adapt_Confidence	.15	2.17	.03*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Determination	.10	2.19	.03*

Academic Adaptation - Institutional

$\overline{R}^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .36$	$F = 8.48; p < .001$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	t	p
Aca_Exp_Sat_Institution	.29	4.16	.00*
Soc_Skill_Social Resourcefulness and Conversation	-.39	-3.16	.00*
Soc_Skill_Self-control of Aggression	-.16	-2.46	.01*

Academic Adaptation

$\overline{R}^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .51$	$F = 15.14; p < .001$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	t	p
Aca_Exp_Sat_Course	.28	4.11	.00*
Prof_Cho_Mat_Responsibility	-.24	-2.33	.02*

Source: the authors.

The results presented in Table 3 show a positive impact of the Academic Expectation, Satisfaction with the Academic Experience, Career Adaptability and Social Skills variables in relation to Academic Adaptation. The set of variables explained 49% of the academic adaptation.

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Table 3. Predictive constructs of Academic Adaptation

$R^2_{adjusted} = .49$	$F = 67.50; p < .001$		
Explanatory Variables	Beta	*t*	*p*
Academic Expectations	.14	2.96	.00*
Academic Satisfaction	.30	6.87	.00*
Career Adaptability	.14	2.91	.00*
Social Skills	.41	9.53	.00*

Source: the authors.

4 Discussion

The Personal dimension, which addresses aspects such as emotional balance, affective stability, optimism, decision-making and self-confidence, was positively impacted by the Social and Academic Commitment, and Extension of Interpersonal Relationships factors. These components of Academic Expectations are associated with a critical-reflective posture when faced with social problems and the opportunity to establish new networks of relationships and to participate in extracurricular activities. Students with a greater intention or sense of contributing socially to their profession and those who can access international opportunities in their education have a greater level of well-being in their academic experience. This result differs from those found by Soares et al. (2014), in which no dimension of Academic Expectations presented a positive prediction for the Personal dimension of Academic Adaptation. However, it is similar to the findings of Costa et al. (2008) who verified that Psychology students are focused on existential issues, both for their own lives and for those of their patients.

The present study found that the factors Determination, Responsibility and Knowledge in the aspects referring to the chosen profession were those that had a negative impact on this same Personal dimension, which may suggest that those who are less concerned with responsibilities related to the degree course, put less effort into studies and the search for professional opportunities, enabling experiences of greater relaxation, leisure or personal satisfaction. That is, less concerned students tend to experience higher levels of personal well-being because they demand lower levels of performance from themselves. Contrary to this mode of functioning, according to the findings of Soares, Poubel and Mello (2009), students who are overly concerned with activities, present responsibility and interest in the chosen profession and seek to fulfill their academic commitments, consequently demand more from themselves and may experience lower levels in the Personal dimension of the QVA-r.

Regarding the Interpersonal dimension, which refers to relationships with colleagues and relationship competence in situations of establishing friendships and seeking help, it was found that students with high expectations feel frustrated when faced with difficulties in relationships in the university environment. According to Soares et al. (2014), there are not always colleagues available for new friendships and social support, while experiences of less family control or greater freedom are not positively experienced. On the contrary, students satisfied with their experience in the course obtained better results in the Interpersonal

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dimension. According to Soares and Del Prette (2015), social processes involve interpersonal interactions between students and between the students and the professors, managers and employees. These aspects can be impacted by the conditions established by the institutional infrastructure, the type of course and the norms of that context, leading to more (or less) adaptive behaviors, which can promote or inhibit, respectively, formative social relationships and experiences. For Santos, Oliveira and Dias (2015), the perceptions of friendship and cooperation among colleagues, both in the academic context and outside of it, can favor the permanence of students on their courses, in this way, it can be assumed that good interpersonal relationships have comprehensive impacts on the life of the student.

Regarding the Career dimension, it appears that university students who express satisfaction with the course tend to better identify with their career. Those who are more involved with the activities of their course seek to fulfill themselves professionally, constructing new knowledge that will support the exercise of their profession in the future (RAMOS et al., 2015). Concerning determination, students who seek more self-knowledge and information about their professional career are more optimistic and have the desire to remain in the institution (MOGNON; SANTOS, 2013). However, the Responsibility and Knowledge of the Professional Reality factors show that individuals with low commitment and little exploratory behavior in relation to their academic choices can become limited without meeting the minimum requirements established by the course, failing to take advantage of the experience of personal and professional growth (CASTRO; TEIXEIRA, 2013).

Regarding the Study dimension, it was found that university students who feel confident to engage in their career, improve their professional aptitudes and are determined regarding their vocational aspirations, are dedicated to commitments and study habits, manage time, and use learning resources, aiming to achieve the objectives and make the most of the opportunities for action available in the job market, as stated by Oliveira et al. (2016). These results are similar to those found in the study by Araújo et al. (2016) on attention and commitment directed toward study, indicating that determination allows the development of positive study habits.

For the Institutional dimension, it was observed that students who appreciate the good infrastructure of the university in which they study (classrooms, comfort, safety and cleanliness) (ARAÚJO et al., 2015) would probably complete the course at the institution. These freshman students, who are able to interact properly and explore the resources made available by the institution, adapt better to the academic environment throughout the Higher Education course (SOARES et al., 2016). The results also showed that students who have less ability to deal with neutral social situations that demand social skills related to conversation and have little control over their aggressiveness are less satisfied with the structure of the university campus, which negatively impacts their experiences at the institution (OLIVEIRA et al., 2016) and compromises their performance and their attendance.

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In general, students who experience levels of satisfaction with their course can adapt to the university in a more positive way, as they also tend to experience good interpersonal relationships with colleagues and professors. Ambiel and Barros (2018) found that students who are more socially and emotionally adapted have more reasons to remain in the chosen course and feel satisfied with the professional performance of professors and with the education offered by the university. However, students who take excessive responsibility for the requirements of their education and professional performance do not present satisfactory academic adaptation. Accordingly, the study by Vargas and Zampieri (2014), with Psychology students, showed the participants' concern regarding their professional insertion considering the limitations of the labor market, as well as the fear of freshmen due to not having had the opportunity to work in the area, thus having difficulties in articulating the theory learned in the classroom with the practice. There is a need not only to provide students with conditions conducive to more in-depth knowledge about their professional choices, but also to guarantee these students the emotional support that helps them face the challenges and difficulties of their academic and professional experiences.

Regarding the general scores, it was found that the Career Adaptability, Academic Expectations, Academic Experience Satisfaction and Social Skills variables contributed positively to the academic adaptation of university students. Soares et al. (2014), when addressing the expectations of freshman students, noted that these influence the quality of their academic adaptation. Students with greater involvement in curricular activities and social interactions are more satisfied and willing to continue in the course (SOARES et al., 2014). On the other hand, Ramos et al. (2015) identified that students who are more involved with activities related to their course present more satisfaction with their academic experience than those who need to reconcile work and the course. Finally, Seco et al. (2016) portrayed social skills as facilitators of academic adaptation, noting an improvement in academic performance and student interpersonal relationships.

5 Final Considerations

The present study sought to predict the impact of the Academic Expectations, Professional Choice Maturity, Social Skills, Career Adaptability and Academic Satisfaction constructs on the Academic Adaptation of Psychology students of the first, second and third periods. In general, the main results of this study showed that social skills, expectations and satisfaction with the academic experience contributed to the adaptation of Higher Education students. Accordingly, the study emphasizes that university adaptation is a complex and multidimensional process involving several factors that are related, such as interpersonal relationships, achievement in studies and institutional involvement.

The relevance of this study can be highlighted due to it providing knowledge that will contribute to future investigations and interventions in the academic environment, enhancing institutional proposals and public policies that strengthen the students' experience during their period of undergraduate education. More particularly, the results regarding the experience of students in the Psychology course can contribute to the improvement of the education

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processes in this area. Although the study contributes to the scientific and academic field, some limitations should be highlighted. These include the limited size of the sample and the fact that it was composed only of students from the metropolitan region of the state of Rio de Janeiro, which prevents generalizations and the verification of sociodemographic differences.

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