Academic motivation in New Zealand

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Introduction/background:
Academic motivation is an important aspect of student learning and can be defined as “a process that is inferred from actions … and verbalizations …, whereby goal-directed physical or mental activity is instigated and sustained” (Jones, 2009, p. 272). It is this motivation which spurs students to engage with teaching and learning and optimise their study strategies to excel in their programme. Jones (2009) has developed the MUSIC model of academic achievement that considers student perception of empowerment, usefulness, success, interest and caring and has been shown to be effective in measuring university student academic motivation.

Aim:
The aim of this study is to determine, through Confirmatory Factor Analysis, if the MUSIC inventory developed by Jones (2009, 2017) is a valid measure of New Zealand medical student engagement in learning. This will be a first step in a planned series of studies looking at ways to engage students and staff in teaching and learning.

Our progress so far:
We have sent out an electronic survey to 4th year students at the three main campus centres of the Otago Medical School and are currently in the process of collecting data. While interim results look promising, we will not be able to confirm the five-factor structure until we have completed data collection.

Discussion:
Based on previous validation studies of students at university level, we expect that New Zealand medical students’ responses will show a five-factor structure similar to that previously found. This initial analysis will pave the way for an ongoing research programme utilising the inventory as an evaluation measure for innovative teaching methods in the medical school curriculum.

Issues for exploration:
A key question we have with regards to this model and its inventory is how it can be used to guide and assist teaching staff in the development of innovative learning solutions for medical students.

References