ABSTRACT

TITLE: “The Library Catalog is Definitely the Best Place to Find Articles!” Overconfidence Among Undergraduate Library Users

METHODS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM LIBRARY KNOWLEDGE CONFIDENCE SCALE

1. The library catalog is the best place to go to search for academic journal articles.
   - True / False
   
2. The following is an MLA citation for a book: Taylor, J. (2012). Beyond the struggle to understand the interaction of nature and nurture. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
   - True / False
   
3. A summary is a journal article.
   - True / False

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM GENERAL KNOWLEDGE SCALE

1. An insect camera is still called a Polarian.
   - True / False
   
2. Aphrodite is the Greek goddess of sex.
   - True / False
   
3. Microsoft is the company of Bill Gates.
   - True / False

RESULTS

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for the Library Knowledge and General Knowledge Scales and confidence levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Confidence Mean</th>
<th>Confidence Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Knowledge</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Knowledge</td>
<td>68.41</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for the number of incorrect answers on the Library and General Scales presented by confidence category (two-one-way between-group ANOVAs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confidence Category</th>
<th>Low (n=4)</th>
<th>Medium (n=16)</th>
<th>High (n=9)</th>
<th>Library Skills Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>M=56.57</td>
<td>M=69.00</td>
<td>M=76.00</td>
<td>60.57 (10.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

- Alternative hypothesis was confirmed
- Students demonstrated overconfidence with regard to both library and general skills tests
- Results in line with psychology and educational literature
- Tendency to overestimate one’s knowledge can be extrapolated to additional topical areas
- Conducted a similar study of undergraduate library patrons by Gross and Lathun (2012)
- Students with lowest test scores most likely to show overconfidence

LIMITS

- Lack of diversity among gender and class year
- 31 women and 1 man
- Small sample size

Strategies for decreasing overconfidence and improving research skills

- Partner with teaching faculty to develop reflective and interactive courses featuring an embedded librarian (Polkinghorne & Wilson, 2010)
- Teach students to carefully evaluate each answer on a test
- Reflect on their reasons for deciding that an answer is correct, first writing their rationale and then discussing their selection
- Teach metacognitive critical thinking skills with an emphasis on improving self-monitoring abilities (Melton & Chan, 2015)
- Invigorate self-assessment of skills in outside disciplines, such as human information behavior, the development of user interfaces, and evaluation of information systems and services” (Gross & Lathun, 2012, p. 382)

WORKS CITED

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