

IMPACTS OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON CRITICAL THINKING DISPOSITION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

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Demographic factors, as certain covariates, can be controlled for the betterment of assessments, showing the significance of analyzing their effects. As for critical thinking disposition (CTD), most studies seem to have neglected these influences, except for a few large-scale assessments, which is because studies on CTD assessment mostly use an intervention approach with small sample size. This study, through t-test and ANOVA, aimed to identify the impacts of CTD for the accurate planning of future studies. The sample of the study consisted of 661 Chinese undergraduates in various years of study attending different degree programs (vocational and bachelor) at public and private universities (Age: $M=19.57$, $SD=1.27$; seven missing values); 328 of the participants were males (49.6%; Age: $M=19.22$, $SD=1.21$; three missing values) and 333 of them were females (50.4%; Age: $M=19.91$, $SD=1.24$; four missing values). The data were collected with the help of the Employer-Employee-Supported Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (2ES-CTDI). We found that (a) there was no difference between males and females ($t=-.174$, $p>.05$); (b) students of private universities ($M=120.34$, $SD=15.06$) showed higher CTD than those of public ones ($M=116.63$, $SD=14.72$; $t=-2.85$, $p<.01$); (c) no difference was found between majors in Arts ($M=118.75$, $SD=14.03$) and Sciences ($M=119.71$, $SD=15.74$; $t=-.812$, $p>.05$), and between students' residence in cities ($M=118.25$, $SD=15.38$) and rural areas ($M=119.85$, $SD=14.87$; $t=1.29$, $p>.05$); (d) the degree program had a significant effect on disposition scores ($t=-2.604$, $df=659$, $MV=116.62$, $MB=120.17$, $p<.01$). In addition, an evident difference was found with regard to years of study ($F(6, 654)=2.726$, $p<.05$); the post hoc of Tukey's b test demonstrated that the disposition scores of students in year two and three of their vocational training differed significantly from (they were lower) the disposition scores of those who were in the first year of their bachelor program; (e) no significant effects were found for disposition scores concerning parents' educational level and family income. To conclude, the influential demographic factors of CTD were found to be the type of the university (public or private), the degree program (vocational or bachelor) and years of study. However, the reasons why the differences appear are necessary to be discussed in future studies.

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