Differences between Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Education: Profiles to Describe Congruence and Friction

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Abstract
Teachers and students have their own perceptions of education. Congruent perceptions contribute to optimal teaching-learning processes and help achieving best learning outcomes. This study investigated patterns in differences between students' and teachers' perceptions of their learning environment. Student profiles were identified taking into account the degree of congruence/friction with teachers' perceptions. Teacher profiles were identified based on their differences in perceptions to students. Profiles were validated with regard to learning-related student characteristics and approaches to teaching. Tenth graders (N = 994) of four secondary schools filled out the Inventory of Perceived Study Environment-Extended (IPSEE) and the Inventory of Learning Styles. Their teachers (N = 136) filled out the teacher version of the IPSEE and the Approaches to Teaching Inventory. Latent class analyses were conducted to define profiles with respect to the magnitude of differences in perceptions. Results showed three student profiles: Closest match profile (30%), intermediate profile (59%), and distal profile (11%). While closest match students had desirable learning-related characteristics, others did not and are at risk for destructive friction. Two teacher profiles described idealistic teachers (70%) and adaptive teachers (30%), which related to approaches to teaching. Subgroups of students and teachers provide a comprehensive picture of those who are at risk because of too large differences in perceptions. This study stresses that differences in perceptions deserve detailed attention for optimising learning environments. Involving both students and teachers in the instructional design process could be a way to better account for perceptions of both stakeholders.