CHARACTER STRENGTHS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:

DO STUDENT'S DEMOGRAPHICS AND UNIVERSITY CHARACTERISTICS MATTER?

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of 24 character strengths as operationalized by "Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA)" on academic achievement based on a sample of 200 undergraduate students from Islamabad, falling within the age group of 18 to 25. The data was collected from four universities i.e. NUST, FAST, Riphah University, and Iqra University using the convenience sampling technique. In order to analyze data, t-tests and the linear regression model are used. The relationship is analyzed controlling for gender, family size, the background of the student (rural/urban), university discipline (sciences/social sciences), Intelligence Quotient (IQ), type of school (public/private), participation in sports, and parental involvement in children's education. The study reveals a positive and significant relationship between the character strengths of humanity (kindness, love, and social intelligence) and academic achievement, however, an inverse relationship between the character strengths of wisdom & knowledge (curiosity, creativity, love of learning, judgment, & perspective) and justice (fairness, leadership, and teamwork) with academic achievement was found. The study also analyzed gender differences in character strengths and academic achievement. Our results show that only one character strength i.e. zest varies for male and female students where male students score higher on this character strength. The study also revealed a significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students where female students are found to achieve better grades than male students. Lastly, academic achievement also varies for students studying exact sciences and social sciences where students studying exact sciences tend to score higher than the students studying social sciences. Based on the findings, we have suggested policy recommendations for policymakers, regulators, and educators. The study recommended the introduction of character education programs which may help students understand their signature strengths and perform well. The study also suggested educators

focus on providing knowledge and enhancing critical and analytical skills instead of encouraging rote memorization.

Dedication

For *Abu* and *Ammi.*

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