POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS WITH AUTISM-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS: STEM FIELDS AND GPA

BACKGROUND
- Attendance: Increasing numbers of students with autism attending postsecondary education
- RQ1: To what extent do college students exhibit autism-related characteristics?
- RQ2: Do students with high levels of autism-related characteristics pursue degrees in STEM fields?
- RQ3: Do autism-related characteristics relate to students’ persistence in STEM majors?
- RQ4: Are student grades (GPA) related to students’ levels of autism-related characteristics?

METHODS
- Sample: 1,213 undergraduates at a major research university in the Southeastern United States
- RQ1: Students with autism-related characteristics have a near-normal distribution across all students.
- RQ2: Relative to their non-STEM peers Students in STEM fields have Khiy’s higher scores on the AQ10.
- RQ3: Persistence within a STEM major is not related to students’ levels of autism-related characteristics.
- RQ4: Students’ autism-related characteristics have no relationship with students’ grades (GPA).

RESULTS
- Autism: Increases in enrollment of students with autism in postsecondary education.
- Perception of Math and Science Depictions in Math and Science.
- STEM Field: STEM fields are suited for the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) fields.
- RQ3: Students with slightly elevated levels of autism-related characteristics are more likely to persist in STEM majors.

IMPLICATIONS
- Students with autism-related characteristics were measured by the 10-question version of the Autism Spectrum Quotient. The distribution of AQ10 scores in the overall sample is near-normal.
- Few students scored at the extreme boundaries of scores.

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