

**TITLE:** PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL KNOWLEDGE AS A PREDICTION OF SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE.

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### **ABSTRACT**

Private higher education in Brazil has expanded greatly in the last 20 years: the number of students rose from 1,059,163 to 6,241,663, an increase of 370%. Without the appeal of gratuitousness and the prestige of some public schools, it is expected that its selection processes will not be as crowded as those of the former. This can lead to entry of unprepared people. This situation impacts both the student, who would need more attention, and the teacher, who ends up being held accountable for any high failure rates. Early detection of this unpreparedness would have a preventive effect, both for correct accountability and for taking remedial measures. In this context, an instrument of cognitive performance evaluation was conceived that could be simple and objective to apply and, at the same time, to correlate with the performance of the students in the discipline studied. A virtual test of 25 questions based on data of public understanding of the science of the Eurobarometer agency sought to measure: a)logical reasoning; b)mathematical reasoning; c)vocabulary; d)general knowledge about science; d)social updates; e)perception of the fallacy of traditionally widespread myths. The sample space consisted of two classes of 3<sup>o</sup> semester, one veterinary (n = 17) and the other of nutrition (n = 37). Students were duly informed about the research and only those who agreed to participate voluntarily answered the questionnaire in person through their cell phones. The performance data in this questionnaire were compared with their scores in the regular discipline that involved only individual (not group) activities and a correlation index was drawn between them. Taken as a single universe of students, Pearson's correlation ( $r = 0.238$ ) was not significantly different from zero (with  $p = 0.083$ ); therefore, there is no significant correlation between the two notes (significance level = 5%). The paired Student-t test shows that it is not possible to consider that there are significant differences between the grades. There was a reasonable difference between the classes, although this did not allow a qualitative change of this correlation. Even the purging of itens with low discrimination rates (below 0.2) calculated by point biserial correlation did not improve the correlation. Although the applied questionnaire sought to be comprehensive, current and based on previous improved use, it failed to serve as an estimate of future performance.

**Keywords:** performance indicator, performance prediction, testing.