

The Effects of Advancement Via Individual Determination (Avid) on Students' Perceptions of Classroom Community at a Hispanic Postsecondary Serving Institution

By

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Abstract

First year students enrolled in college have faced many challenges and difficulties throughout the years that continue to spark inventive measures to address them within higher education. As institutions of higher education approach student success and retention rates with innovative programs, there is still an issue of concern sparking the assumption that these initiatives are not working. The main concentration for this research was to identify if the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program affected students' perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning within the first year of their postsecondary education. Results suggest that female students appear to have a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction whereas males only have a stronger perception of learning with the AVID method.

Keywords: AVID, student success, first year

1. Introduction

The student-focused university of the 21st century has deep roots in the political movements and economic struggles which characterized much of the latter half of the 20th century. During the 1960s, universities saw a rise in student protest movements while the 1970s led to diversity among institutions (Fugazzotto, 2010). As the evolutionary process continued, concerns over whether universities were meeting student and societal needs became critically important to administrators at United States institutions of higher education (Fugazzotto, 2010). More recently, universities have transformed from social institutions into competing economic entities in a demanding economy (Fugazzotto, 2010). Market demand and growing competition has prompted universities to grapple with the difficult issues of how to retain students and increase enrollments (Jamelske, 2009).

Faculty members and administrators debate whether students admitted into a four year university with low standardized test scores are able to succeed in a university classroom. This is especially true in areas of written composition and mathematics (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). Regardless of this concern, it has become the responsibility of both faculty and staff members for retaining students admitted into the university and meeting their academic needs. High emphasis is placed on retention rates not surprisingly because students are the financial lifeline for institutions through their tuition and fees along with governmental support for public institutions (Jamelske, 2009).

Government support and federal funding has led to the rise of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) for those that qualify. Approximately six percent of all postsecondary institutions can claim HSI status. Based on enrollment data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), there are three hundred and thirty five HSIs spread across fourteen states and Puerto Rico (Stearns, Watanabe, & Snyder, 2002). Half of all the HSIs are located in Texas and California due predominately to their proximity to the Mexican border (Laden, 2004). High graduation rates of Hispanic students seeking a degree at a Hispanic Serving Institution have become a striking characteristic of HSIs (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010). Forty percent of

all Hispanic students graduate with their associate's degree from a HSI, while thirty seven percent of all baccalaureate degrees are issued to Hispanic students from HSIs as well. In addition, twenty two percent of all first professional degrees and fifteen percent of all doctoral degrees awarded to Hispanic students graduate from a HSI (Laden, 2004). Yet, more research is needed to determine what type of support programs are necessary to enable greater numbers of Hispanic students enrolled at a HSI to precede through the higher educational pipeline (Perrakis & Hagedorn, 2010).

The rise of the first year experience programs became popular in an effort to improve retention rates among this population of students. Research has confirmed that students who enrolled in a freshman experience seminar course had correlating results that supported academic success. These students completed more credit hours, earned higher cumulative grade point averages, and had higher retention rates than students who did not complete this type of transitional course (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). First year experience programs also include student resources like freshman orientations, freshman seminars, supplemental instruction, peer mentoring, learning assistance centers, recreation activities, and student success initiatives. Literature shows that the greater the student-faculty interactions inside and out of the classroom are, the greater student academic integration and persistence will be (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). Ultimately, institutions of higher education are approaching reoccurring challenges of student transition and adjustment by implementing support programs during their first year of college (Sidle & McReynolds, 2009). One specific program introduced to postsecondary education to help retain freshman students is called Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

For over thirty years, AVID has been very successful at meeting their goal to prepare elementary and secondary students for the rigorous curriculums and societal needs of higher education. More recently, researchers are recognizing the importance of employing AVID strategies in the postsecondary environment thus creating a support pipeline from grades four through sixteen which places emphasis on what is needed for students to gain support and achieve with rigorous college curriculums (AVID Postsecondary, 2011).

Through AVID, postsecondary institutions hope to alleviate retention concerns and promote student success and college readiness (Gira, 2008). AVID postsecondary initiatives support under-prepared college students by: (i) providing a year-long academic training program to develop college success skills needed for academic success, persistence and graduation, (ii) reducing barriers that traditionally limit levels of academic achievement, (iii) facilitating professional development using student success pedagogies applicable across academic disciplines and student services, and (iv) designing a college plan around five AVID postsecondary essentials. (AVID Postsecondary, 2011)

The AVID program provides a holistic, comprehensive effort to address the issue of student persistence in the postsecondary environment.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was focused around the theory of knowledge called constructivism. Constructivism was developed by theorists such as Jean Piaget (1952) who argued that humans generate knowledge and significance from an interaction between their experiences and ideas within the environment. This theory can be applied to a current model used in education known as the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model. Educators in a PLC must include: 1) a shared mission statement, vision, values, and goals, 2) collaborative teamwork, 3) collective inquiry, 4) action oriented and eager to experiment, 5) efforts to improve, 6) assess on the basis of results rather than intentions, and 7) the PLC model must be designed to touch the heart (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhenek, 2004). The constructivist theory and the PLC model have been the foundation for several advances directed toward student success which includes first year experience programs and the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program in postsecondary education.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to be part of a larger body of research that tested the theory that the AVID program will affect students' perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning and that there is a significant difference between the AVID Freshman Experience course and the traditional college success course. The research concentrated on first year students attending a Hispanic Serving Institution in south Texas that implemented both the AVID Freshman Experience course and the traditional college success course.

The study examined student perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning using the Classroom Community Scale assessment instrument created by Alfred P. Rovai (2002). The gathered data added to the literature on the importance of classroom community, connectedness, and learning in order to improve postsecondary retention rates by promoting satisfaction and persistence within this unique population (Rovai, 2002). Moreover, this study also examined certain demographics to determine if significant differences existed. Specifically gender was considered when determining if there was a difference in student perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning.

The following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: Do student perceptions of classroom community differ by gender between AVID and traditional college success courses?

Research Question 2: Do student perceptions of connectedness differ by gender between AVID and traditional college success courses??

Research Question 3: Do student perceptions of learning differ by gender between AVID and traditional college success courses?

3. Literature Review

Outside Factors Contributing to Underachievement among College Students

Research explains that there rarely is a single reason why students leave or stop pursuing their higher education. In most cases, the reason is multifaceted and students leave as a result of a combination of interconnected factors (Crosling et al., 2009). Recent literature has shown that even high achieving high school students may fail once they start taking college level courses and do not graduate within the four year planned framework (Crosling et al., 2009). What are some of the outside factors that are contributing to cause underachievement among college students? Students must be able to possess academic control and utilize cognitive resources to set goals, create plans to attain them, and be able to monitor his or her success and failures. These traits will optimize chances of succeeding in college and contribute to student adjustment (Perry, Hladkyj, Pekrun, Clifton, & Chipperfield, 2005).

Many high achieving, first-year undergraduate students are content with the study skills they possess and the goals they have set for themselves and are shocked when they fail dramatically and are forced onto scholastic probation or even enforced withdrawal (Crosling et al., 2009). Research shows that most students in this situation were not skilled on how to get through demanding situations. Other factors contributing to college underachievement included insufficient study skills, lack of time management, and no motivation (Balduf, 2009). Through counseling, freshman college success courses, and other academic departments such as tutoring and campus wellness centers, students can gain insight to inspire and encourage themselves to work through challenging matters when academic success does not come as easily (Coll & Stewart, 2008).

The first two years of postsecondary education are considered to be the peak period of student growth and development. This includes eighty to ninety five percent of total gains in English, science, social studies, math, and critical thinking skills (Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2006). Student involvement early on in

a college experience will encourage ongoing involvement with the institution increasing satisfaction and perseverance (Daniel et al., 2009).

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

AVID developed its program around these concepts along with five main postsecondary essentials. These essentials include: 1) Administrative Leadership and Support, 2) AVID College Planning Team, 3) Professional Development, 4) AVID Freshman Experience and Beyond, and 5) Data Collection and Research (AVID, 2010). The AVID program decided that they wanted to extend their services to postsecondary education in 2008 in effort to build a pipeline between secondary and postsecondary schools. Their hope in doing so is to secure any achievement interruption between the two levels of education. The five essentials had to be addressed individually within each participating institution of higher education when involving the implementation of the AVID Postsecondary program (AVID, 2010).

Community, Connectedness, and Learning

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define community as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (p. 9). Research supports this view in suggesting that crucial elements of community include “spirit, trust, mutual interdependence among members, interactivity, shared values and beliefs, and common expectations” (as cited in Rovai, 2002, p. 198). These essential elements in terms of a classroom community have a direct correlation to classroom connectedness and learning. “They have duties and obligations to each other and to the school and they possess a shared faith that members’ educational needs will be met through their commitment to shared learning goals” (Rovai, 2002, p. 189).

According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, a sense of social belonging is significant in order to maintain this sense of connectedness within the classroom community. This level of social belonging (third level from the bottom) is considered a learning motivator and is given more attention than the other two levels below on Maslow’s hierarchy. The two lower levels (psychological needs and safety) are considered the hygiene motivators (Prescott & Simpson, 2004).

Maslow’s argument was that once the lower level needs, such as physiological and safety needs, are met other higher needs emerge. In the context of student retention and motivation, once environmental conditions are satisfied, the individual becomes dominated by the unsatisfied needs. However, the environmental conditions must be satisfied before progress to other levels will succeed. (Prescott & Simpson, 2004, p. 253)

According to Maslow hierarchy of needs, the classroom community, connectedness, and sense of social belonging must be satisfying to the student in order for learning environments to emerge.

4. Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach through a quasi-experimental design with alternative treatment post-test only using non-equivalent groups (Creswell, 2009) in order to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between students’ perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning between the AVID Freshman Experience course and the traditional college success course. It integrated quantitative procedures that included both descriptive and inferential statistics (Creswell, 2009).

Research Design

A Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in the research to determine if there were any significant differences between the main effects of the study as well as any interaction effects in the results. The independent factors for this study included the method of instruction (AVID and traditional college success course) and gender (male and female). The dependent variables were students’

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perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning. Research question one examined the method main effect, research question two examined the gender main effect, and research question three analyzed the method and gender interaction effect (Green & Salkind, 2008).

Population

Data for this study was collected from a Hispanic Serving Institution in south Texas during the fall 2011 semester. The population for this study included all students taking a first year college success course (AVID and traditional college success courses) at this particular institution. The population was approximately six hundred students in this specific environment.

Faculty members with various position titles taught all sections of the courses included in the population. All courses were delivered to students during a span of a sixteen week fall semester. There was no attempt to control the design or instructional delivery of these courses by the researcher.

Instrumentation

Rovai's (2002) Classroom Community Scale (CCS) was used to collect data for this research. The CCS contains 20 five-point Likert-scaled items, 10 items for each of the subscales of connectedness and learning and an overall score for classroom community. Total scale scores were created for each of the three areas for analysis that included classroom community, classroom connectedness, and classroom learning. The instrument used in the study was previously tested for validity and reliability by Rovai (2002). The twenty items reveal that on face value they appear to measure what is required to determine classroom community in an educational environment. Additionally, the measures utilized to develop the Classroom Community Scale provides high assurance that the test instrument also acquires high content and construct validities (Rovai, 2002). Rovai tested internal consistency for the Classroom Community Scale by testing and re-testing correlations to determine triangulation (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). In addition to testing the correlations, "two internal consistency estimates of reliability were calculated for the Classroom Community Scale: Cronbach's coefficient alpha and the split-half coefficient corrected by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula" (Rovai, 2002, p. 206). The Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the scale was .93 and the split-half coefficient was .91 which both indicated excellent reliability (Rovai, 2002). The two subscales of connectedness and learning were also tested for internal consistency to indicate reliability. The connectedness subscale resulted in .92 for both the Cronbach's coefficient alpha and the split-half coefficient resulting in excellent reliability (Rovai, 2002). The learning subscale had a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of .87 with a split-half coefficient of .80. These results indicated good reliability (Rovai, 2002).

Procedures

A formal email was sent to the entire population of freshman seminar instructors (AVID and traditional) requesting permission to administer the survey instrument during their classes. Of the population, nine faculty members responded with consent to administer the survey and all were included in the sample to study. Also, four AVID Freshman Experience courses were researched in the study based on a convenient sample of availability (Creswell, 2009).

The entire student rosters of all thirteen courses in the sample were selected to participate within the research. The total number of participants for all thirteen sections was two hundred and twenty five students.

Data Analysis

The data received from the student surveys was compiled and compared using SPSS statistical analysis. In regards to all three research questions, a Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed in order to determine the main and interaction effects addressed in the study.

5. Analysis of Data

Descriptive Analysis of Population

Most of the six thousand and two hundred students at the researched institution come from south Texas bringing in a wide diversity into the population. The student body has an almost equal split between men (53 %) and women (47 %). Ethnically the population consists of sixty two percent of the students being Hispanic, twenty seven percent are White, and five percent are African American. International students make up about six percent of the student body.

The population for this study included all students taking a first year college success course (AVID and traditional college success courses) at this particular institution. The population was approximately six hundred students in this specific environment.

Descriptive Analysis of Sample

Descriptive data analyses resulted in the following conclusions: The sample was comprised of a large Hispanic and female population. In addition, the sample consisted of a strong majority of students who were in their first semester of college. (Table 1) Based on the interpretations regarding the descriptive data analyses, the researcher found that overall means of students' perceptions of classroom community, connectedness, and learning were higher among total participants and female participants with the AVID Freshman Experience Course method of teaching. (Table 2)

Table 1: Demographic Information about Participants, N = 225

Variable	N	Percentage
<i>*Gender</i>		
Male	73	33.00
Female	149	67.00
<i>*Ethnicity</i>		
Hispanic	162	73.00
White	38	17.00
African American	19	9.00
Other	3	1.00
<i>*Semester in College</i>		
1st Semester in College	206	92.80
2nd Semester in College	7	3.15
3rd Semester in College	6	2.70
4th Semester in College	3	1.35

**System missing 3 participants that did not complete gender, ethnicity, or semester in college question.*

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for Classroom Community, Connectedness, and Learning for the Total Sample, Each Gender, and Method of Instruction, N=225

	Community				Connectedness				Learning			
	Traditional		AVID		Traditional		AVID		Traditional		AVID	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Total	67.92	9.56	72.80	12.39	32.33	6.02	35.20	7.55	35.58	5.04	37.61	5.93
Female	67.50	9.06	73.55	12.50	31.84	5.40	35.80	7.45	35.67	5.18	37.75	6.18
Male	68.58	10.34	68.14	11.44	33.12	6.85	31.43	7.57	35.45	4.86	36.71	4.35

M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation

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Research Question One

Research question 1 on student perceptions of classroom community was analyzed by conducting a Two-Way Analysis of Variance testing the first and second main effect as well as the interaction effect. This included all twenty questions of the Classroom Community Survey. No significant differences were found between males and females on student perceptions of classroom community, $F(1, 218) = .94, p = .34, n^2 = .00$. No significant differences were found between AVID and traditional college success courses on student perceptions of classroom community, $F(1, 218) = 1.57, p = .21, n^2 = .01$. Lastly, no significant interactions were found between method of instruction (AVID and traditional college success courses) and gender on student perceptions of classroom community, $F(1, 218) = 2.09, p = .15, n^2 = .01$. (Table 3)

Analysis showed that in the first main effect (gender), female participants had a higher classroom community mean than male participants. The second main effect (method of instruction) showed that the AVID method of instruction had a higher classroom community mean than the traditional college success course. Last, the interaction effect (gender and method of instruction) showed that females had a higher classroom community mean when interacting with the AVID method of instruction. Meanwhile, male participants had a higher classroom community mean when interacting with the traditional college success course. (Table 4)

Table 3: Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Dependent Variable: Classroom Community, N=225

Source	df	MS	F	Sig.	n ²
Gender (First Main Effect)	1	98.62	.94	.34	.00
Method of Instruction (Second Main Effect)	1	165.29	1.57	.21	.01
Interaction between Gender and Method of Instruction (Interaction Effect)	1	220.26	2.09	.15	.01
Error	218	105.45	-	-	-

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Two-Way ANOVA based on the First Main Effect, Second Main Effect, and Interaction Effect and the Classroom Community Variable, N=225

Source		M	Std. Error
Gender (First Main Effect)	Female	70.53	.92
	Male	68.36	2.04
Method of Instruction (Second Main Effect)	AVID	70.84	2.09
	Traditional	68.04	.81
Interaction between Gender and Method of Instruction (Interaction Effect)	Female	AVID	73.55
		Traditional	67.51
	Male	AVID	68.14
		Traditional	68.58

Research question two

Research question two on student perceptions of classroom connectedness was analyzed by conducting a Two-Way Analysis of Variance testing the first and second main effect as well as the interaction effect. This included ten specific questions from the Classroom Community Survey that included questions: 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17, and 19. No significant difference was found between males and females on student perceptions of classroom connectedness, $F(1, 218) = 1.24, p = 0.27, n^2 = .01$. No significant differences were found between AVID and traditional college success courses on student perceptions of classroom connectedness, $F(1, 218) = 0.67, p = 0.42, n^2 = .00$. Lastly, there were significant interactions found between method of instruction (AVID and traditional college success courses) and gender on student perceptions of classroom connectedness, $F(1, 218) = 4.15, p = 0.04, n^2 = .02$. (Table 5)

Analysis showed that in the first main effect (gender), female participants had a higher classroom connectedness mean than male participants. The second main effect (method of instruction) showed that the AVID method of instruction had a higher classroom connectedness mean than the traditional college success course. Last, the interaction effect (gender and method of instruction) showed that females had a higher classroom connectedness mean when interacting with the AVID method of instruction. On the other hand, male participants had a higher classroom connectedness mean when interacting with the traditional college success course. (Table 6)

Table 5: Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Dependent Variable: Classroom Connectedness, N=225

Source	df	MS	F	Sig.	n^2
Gender (First Main Effect)	1	49.98	1.24	.27	.01
Method of Instruction (Second Main Effect)	1	26.96	.67	.42	.00
Interaction between Gender and Method of Instruction (Interaction Effect)	1	167.78	4.15	.04*	.02
Error	218	40.45	-	-	-

*The *p* value is less than 0.05 which shows a significant difference.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics for Two-Way ANOVA based on the First Main Effect, Second Main Effect, and Interaction Effect and the Classroom Connectedness Variable, N=225

Source		M	Std. Error
Gender (First Main Effect)	Female	33.82	.57
	Male	32.28	1.26
Method of Instruction (Second Main Effect)	AVID	33.61	1.29
	Traditional	32.48	.50
Interaction between Gender and Method of Instruction (Interaction Effect)	Female	AVID	.96
		Traditional	.62
	Male	AVID	2.40
		Traditional	.78

Research Question Three

Research question three on student perceptions of classroom learning was analyzed by conducting a Two-Way Analysis of Variance testing the first and second main effect as well as the interaction effect. This included ten specific questions from the Classroom Community Survey that included questions: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12,14,16,18, and 20. No significant difference was found between males and females on student perceptions of classroom learning, $F(1, 218) = .29, p = .59, n^2 = .00$. No significant differences were found between AVID and traditional college success courses on student perceptions of classroom learning, $F(1, 218) = 2.11, p = .15, n^2 = .01$. Lastly, no significant interactions were found between

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method of instruction (AVID and traditional college success courses) and gender on student perceptions of classroom learning, $F(1, 218) = .13, p = .72, \eta^2 = .00$. (Table 7)

Analysis showed that in the first main effect (gender), female participants had a higher classroom learning mean than male participants. The second main effect (method of instruction) showed that the AVID method of instruction had a higher classroom learning mean than the traditional college success course. Last, the interaction effect (gender and method of instruction) showed that females had a higher classroom learning mean when interacting with the AVID method of instruction. Male participants also had a higher learning mean when interacting with the AVID method of instruction. (Table 8)

Table 7: Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Dependent Variable: Classroom Learning, N=225

Source	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	η^2
Gender (First Main Effect)	1	8.18	.29	.59	.00
Method of Instruction (Second Main Effect)	1	58.74	2.11	.15	.01
Interaction between Gender and Method of Instruction (Interaction Effect)	1	3.57	.13	.72	.00
Error	218	27.87	-	-	-

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Two-Way ANOVA based on the First Main Effect, Second Main Effect, and Interaction Effect and the Classroom Learning Variable, N=225

Source		<i>M</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>
Gender (First Main Effect)	Female	36.71	.47
	Male	36.08	1.05
Method of Instruction (Second Main Effect)	AVID	37.23	1.07
	Traditional	35.56	.42
Interaction between Gender and Method of Instruction (Interaction Effect)	Female	AVID	.80
		Traditional	.52
	Male	AVID	2.00
		Traditional	.65

6. Summary

Data analysis trying to uncover statistical significance is conducted to determine whether the null hypothesis of “no difference” can be rejected. This then can verify the alternative or researched hypotheses of interest (Stallone, 2003). The results of the Two-Way ANOVA tests conducted for the study showed no significant differences were found on any of the variables except for a significant interaction between method of instruction (AVID and traditional college success courses) and gender on student perceptions of classroom connectedness ($p = .04$). Overall data analysis suggested that students had a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction. It is also assumed from the results that female students had a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction than male students based on the analysis.

Through the analysis of descriptive data and subsequent use of scale items to run a Two Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the researcher found significance only on the interaction effect between method of

instruction (AVID and traditional college success courses) and gender on student perceptions of classroom connectedness. This tested the interaction effect between gender and the method of teaching with classroom connectedness ($p = .04$). Even though significance was found, the magnitude of the difference for the interaction effect tested with a Two-Way ANOVA was extremely weak ($\eta^2 = .02$). Although inferential data suggested that research hypotheses were not significant, examination of data determined that there are patterns found between the means and concurrent data analysis. When interpreting the data using the total sample of participants ($N = 225$), the AVID method of teaching had a higher mean than the traditional college success courses with all three researched variables: Classroom Community (Avid: $M = 72.80$, Traditional $M = 67.92$), Classroom Connectedness (Avid $M = 35.20$, Traditional $M = 32.33$), and Classroom Learning (Avid $M = 37.61$, Traditional $M = 35.58$). These findings suggest that overall students had a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction. When interpreting the data using the total sample of participants ($N = 225$) and gender specific traits, the results were slightly different. Female participants had a higher mean with the AVID method of instruction versus the traditional college success course with all three researched variables: Classroom Community (Female Avid $M = 73.55$, Female Traditional $M = 67.50$), Classroom Connectedness (Female Avid $M = 35.80$, Female Traditional $M = 31.84$), and Classroom Learning (Female Avid $M = 37.75$, Female Traditional Avid $M = 35.67$). These findings can be interpreted as overall female students had a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction. Male participants however had various results in the study. First, male students had a slightly higher mean with traditional college success courses when focusing on the classroom community variable (Male Avid $M = 68.14$, Male Traditional $M = 68.58$). Looking at the classroom connectedness variable, male participants again had a stronger mean with traditional college success courses (Male Avid $M = 31.43$, Male Traditional $M = 33.12$). Finally, male students did have a higher mean with AVID method of instruction (Male Avid $M = 36.71$, Male Traditional $M = 35.45$) when analyzing the classroom learning variable. There was not a consistent pattern found with male participants and the results of the study but there was evidence that male students had a stronger perception of classroom learning with the AVID method of teaching versus the traditional college success course.

7. Conclusions

From the inferential data, it can be suggested that students appear to have a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction. It is also assumed from the descriptive statistic results that female students have a stronger perception of classroom community, connectedness, and learning with the AVID method of instruction than male students. Last, results of the inferential test suggest that there is a statistically significant interaction between method of instruction (AVID and traditional college success courses) and gender on student perceptions of classroom connectedness.

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