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Motivation and student's behavior: A tertiary level study

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Student motivation is an important focus of research in Education. The research in the area has primarily focused on student motivation and academic achievement. There are no significant studies looking at the relationship of motivation with student behavior at tertiary level. This article draws on social exchange theory to examine the connection between motivation and student behavior as a learning outcome. The main premise of the article is that motivation basically depends upon the goal achievement that the students may be allowed to carry out. This means the extent to which creative skills and competence of students are appreciated. Students' needs for achievement were used as the moderator. Analysis was conducted on the sample of 200 students in one of the leading private universities in the province of Punjab in Pakistan. The findings reveal that an important factor that affects the motivation level is the extent to which students are duly given rewards. Results showed that if motivated, students display positive feelings towards their institute and vice versa. Recommendations in the light of the outcomes were made that the students need to be motivated by providing them more rewards. They should also be provided more encouragement to achieve their goals. This will result in positive behavior from students.

Key words: Goals, incentives, students' behavior, competencies, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Student behavior has always been considered to be greatly affected by the motivation they are provided at every level of their education. The students' attitude and behavior towards their education as well as towards those with whom they interact is hugely dependent on whether they have been motivated or demotivated by their superiors. Due to increasing globalization, it has become more important to keep on motivating the students to achieve more. The competition has increased due to which students are under a great pressure to win the race of being number one. Thus it has become very necessary to motivate the students so they can sharpen their skills and accomplish goals. In order to enhance the

competencies of students, it is important to keep them motivated. This may be done through giving incentives and rewards to students which may be tangible or intangible. Tangible rewards can be in monetary terms or certificates of appreciation, while intangible means acknowledging hard work of a student in front of others and giving praise.

According to Harackiewicz et al. (1997), motivation can be defined as the driving force behind all the actions of an individual. Behavior is strongly influenced by an individual's needs and desires. Achievement-related goals and emotions mostly form the basis of motivation. Scott (2001) says that most of our goals are incentive-based. Csikszentmihalyi and Figurski (1982) is of the view that education is the process whereby the young agree to become adults not just behaving like adults enjoying being an educated adult.

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The students work under great pressure to stay on the top and have to work really hard. It is very important that their hard work is paid off to keep them focused on aiming high. Student's willingness to achieve and excel depends largely on the way they are motivated. The government educational system of Pakistan does not efficiently and effectively motivate the students. In today's globalized world, it is very important that such educational systems are maintained which provide support for students rather than becoming a hindrance.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to Csikszentmihalyi's (1982), creativity by its very nature demands something novel. Main focus is on the task at hand along with the desire to understand more about the subject. Though creativity cannot be guaranteed by effort in itself, competence must exist in a field before significant advances are possible. Archer (1992) is of opinion that a person intent on mastery is more likely to reach that point at which creativity is possible. A mastery-oriented person also reacts more positively towards failure by attributing it to controllable factors, such as inadequate effort or inappropriate preparation.

Archer further stated that competence is linked with creativity such that the consequence of failure should be renewed effort rather than loss of confidence or withdrawal from the task because of a perceived lack of ability. Amabile (1983a, 1983b) argues that the best way to date of assessing competence is to consider products rather than to administer a test of divergent thinking. Ames and Archer (1988) hold that performance goals are concerned primarily with demonstrating their ability, and this is shown to best advantage by outperforming others on a task, that is, displaying an individual's competencies, particularly if success is achieved with little effort.

Incentives given for performing well also play important part in motivation of behavior. Covington and Omelich (1984) are of the view that one shows evidence of ability by being successful, by outperforming others, or by achieving success with little effort. A performance goal reflects a valuing of ability and normatively high outcomes. Maehr (1983) says that with a mastery goal, importance is attached to developing new skills. Felker et al. (1977) is of view that the process of learning itself is valued, and the attainment of mastery is seen as dependent on effort. Achievement goal orientations are presumed to differ as a function of situational demands, as well as to vary across individuals.

Reward leads to motivation. These rewards are determined by the incentives given as well as success recognition.

Motivation and student behavior

A wealth of recent experiments by Dickinson and Balleine (2002) has been devoted to the motivational control of conditioned behavior, revealing a rich and intricate tapestry of effects. A large body of literature suggests that motivational states affect at least some classes of instrumental actions only indirectly. According to Adams and Dickinson (1981) specifically, motivational states affect moderately trained instrumental actions by determining the incentive value of the outcome of the behavior.

Rescorla (1992) expressed that when behavior is tested in extinction, these studies show that the given appropriate incentive learning and the outcome devaluation causes a reduction in performance of moderately trained instrumental actions compared to non-devalued controls. Killcross and Coutureau (2003) suggested that when instrumental actions are over-trained, behavior becomes insensitive to post-training outcome devaluation, and subjects perform the trained action at comparable rates whether the outcome is devalued or not, regardless of incentive learning (that is, even when they are given explicit experience with the outcome's modified value).

According to Dickinson and Balleine (2002) theoretically, there are several different routes by which shifts in motivation can modulate habitual behavior. Perhaps most intuitive is a direct modulation of the propensity to act, which could be dependent on the identity of the outcome, that is, it can be outcome specific, as has been postulated in Pavlovian behavior. Fleming and Gottfried et al. (2001) argued that learners are most likely to show the beneficial effects of motivation when they are intrinsically motivated to engage in class-room activities.

Locke et al. (1981), is of view that different lines of investigation provide substantial converging evidence that explicit challenging goals enhance and sustain motivation. It is important to motivate students for their optimum growth. In Pakistan, mostly students are not awarded for their accomplishments. Due to this lack of appreciation, motivation level of students tends to become low and hence they lose the willingness to excel in future. It is very important to study the relationship between motivation and student behavior. To compete globally and have a competitive edge over others, Pakistani students must have high morale and willingness to compete.

Objectives of the study

Main objective of this study was to see whether motivation is positively correlated with students' behavior or otherwise. Bandura and Cervone (1983) explain that research has also begun to delineate the self-reactive

Table 1. Pearson's correlations coefficients among the variables, mean and standard deviation.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Goals	7.70	0.45	1						
Motivation	2.49	0.50	0.12	1					
Creativity	3.43	0.49	0.16*	0.10	1				
Success recognition	7.51	0.50	0.37**	0.00	0.36**	1			
Rewards	2.19	0.74	0.03	0.43**	0.02	0.33**	1		
Incentives	6.00	0.56	0.59**	0.16*	0.21**	0.54**	0.37**	1	
Students behavior	4.66	0.45	0.65**	0.77*	0.11	0.31**	0.62**	0.39**	1

**P < 0.01 and *p < 0.05, (N = 200).

influences by which personal standards create these powerful motivational effects. At tertiary level, it is essential to see what really, is the predictor of motivation to the students and their willingness to achieve their goals or reward system of the University. The way students behave has a great effect on building up of reputation of university. Thus it is necessary to analyze whether they need to be highly motivated and through what channels.

Research design

The purpose of this research is to see the "Effect of Motivation on Student Behavior". For this purpose, we have taken motivation as independent variable. Elements for motivation are goals and rewards. Goals are further divided into two facets: Creativity and competence. Similarly, two facets for rewards are incentives and success recognition. The dependent variable is student behavior.

Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant relationship between rewards and student behavior.

H02: There is no significant relationship between goals and student behavior.

H03: There is no significant relationship between motivation and students' behavior.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted over students of tertiary level studying at the University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab Pakistan. Sampling unit consists of 200 students, selected from ten departments of the university. There were over all three thousands students in all these departments. Non proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used. Research instrument

administered to collect data was self framed at 9-point Likert scale. This questionnaire ranges from 0 to 8 such as (never, very rarely, sometimes, often, very often, most of the time, nearly always, always). It covers all the factors related to student behavior and motivation. Cronbach's Alpha was found to be 0.74 from pilot testing.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data were analyzed by using the special package for social sciences (SPSS), mean and standard deviation were also found for each variable from descriptive statistics as represented in the Table 1. First question was about whether students feel themselves to be achievement-oriented or goals committed. Most of the students agreed strongly with this point, giving it high scoring that is, 7.70. Next students were asked how motivated they feel in their institution. This had a low score (2.49), as most of the students feel that their institute does not provide them with motivation. This could be due to various reasons but mainly it is due to lack of a proper system for appreciating the achievers and rewarding them duly. Students also feel that their creativity is not duly appreciated due to lack of motivation to achieve their goals.

Analysis shows that there is significant correlation between rewards and student behavior ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$), the hypothesis claiming no significant relationship between rewards and student behavior is therefore rejected. Regarding second hypothesis goals and students behavior are significantly correlated ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), the hypothesis claiming no significant relationship between goals and student behavior is therefore rejected. For third hypothesis, there is significant correlation between motivation and student behavior ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$), the hypothesis claiming no significant relationship between motivation and student behavior is therefore rejected.

This is crystal clear from the analysis that students behave in a positive manner toward the institution if they are motivated, which comes from various incentives

given by the institution.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This is reflected from the analysis of how student's behavior correlates with the provided motivation. Motivation can come from various sources: Encouragement to achieve the goals, allowing students to show their creative skills, providing incentives and rewards to students for their achievements and also by appreciating the success and achievements of students. When students are goal oriented, they tend to be more motivated. Motivation has positive relation with student behavior. This principally supports the students' behavior as an interpreter at tertiary level. This has been proved as it was determined that those students who are motivated constitute a positive attitude. This way they work more efficiently and also produce better performance.

This has been observed in the results of the study that motivation has deep impact on student behavior and students feel that their creative skills are not totally appreciated as well as their efforts are not properly rewarded which results on their low motivation level. Due to low motivation level, behavior of students is negative towards the institute, due to which they are not performing at optimum level.

Therefore, it is recommended that students should be provided with more incentives, rewards, appreciation and encouragement in addition of the more challenging environment for their judicious behavior. Further study is recommended to find out the effect of motivation on students' behavior.

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