Key Learning Issues: Relationship Between Locus of Control and Study Habits with Academic Achievement

FATEMEH MASHAYEKHI1, MOTAHAREH FARAMARZPOOR1, ADELEH MASHAYEKHI1, SHIDEH RAFATI2* and SEDIGHEH MASHAYEKHI3

1Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Jiroft University of Medical, Sciences, Jiroft, Iran
2Department of Social Determinant in Health Promotion Research Center, Hormozgan University of Medical Sciences, Bandar Abbas, Iran.
3Department of Elementary Education, Kerman Ministry of Education.
*Corresponding author E-mail: shiderafati@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Academic improvement is a direct outcome of learning. Teaching and progress in learning are principle element that explains the degree of success in activities of every educational institute. Different factors such as individuals learning styles and studying skills can influence academic performance. Whereas students are the main mean for development in any society; this study examined the relationship between locus of control (LOC) and study habits (SH) with academic achievement (AA). In this study a descriptive correlative design were utilized. 220 undergraduate students of Azad University of Jiroft randomly selected from both College of Humanities and Agriculture. Instruments included demographic information, study habits questionnaire (PSSHI) and locus of control questionnaire (Rater). Data collected and analyzed via T-test and Pearson correlation using SPSS v.21. The results showed that 71.2% of boys and 28.8% of girls had external LOC and this difference was significant (p=0.045). In this study 89% of students take relatively desirable study habits score. A correlation was seen among the three variables (locus of control, study habits and academic achievement). There was a significant positive correlation between SH with AA(r =0.175, p =0.009) while Scores of LOC had significantly negative correlation with AA (r =-0.149, p =0.027). Given that variables such as study habits and locus of control have a significant relationship with the academic achievement and can be changed with learning; it is recommended that those involved with education of student and academic culture by teaching to improve the quality of student's education by instructing study techniques.

Key words: Study habits, key learning, Academic Achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Today's magnificent improvements are the consequence of learning. Progress in learning and teaching method is principle elements that explain the degree of success in activities of every educational institute. Validity of an educational system is dependent on quality and quantity of learning in the affiliated students. In fact learning and educational performance is multifactorial. Intelligence quotient, familial factor, gender, age and acquired factors like locus of control (LOC), learning method and study habit (SH) are effective items (Snelgrove and Slater, 2003, Forrest, 2003).

LOC as a personality related variable is highlighted in researches last two decades (Bagherzadeh R, 2010) . It is defined as a person's belief that his or her actions affect the special upcoming out come. The issue of internal against external LOC is rotted in social learning theory, introduced by Ratter in 1966. People are eager to find internal and external reasons for their victories and failures (Rotter, 1966) . Internal control present
a person’s believe about his ability to manage
different situation and external control as opposed
states people faith to external rationales for failures
like destiny and chance (Tella and Adika, 2008). The
learners who know external factors effective in
their own achievement or failure believe in chance
or difficulty of their courses and should be
encouraged by their trainers or teachers (Schwartz,
2002) but those with internal LOC regularly have a
learning plan and are self directed.

Researches in cognitive psychology show
that study and learning methods improve student’s
educational performance (Mohammadpour and
Matlabi, 2002). Schwartz showed that student’s
attendance in academic conferences related to
learning skills will help them in best memorizing of
the scientific issues (Starke, 1994). In addition,
different studies manifest that collapse in learning
skills can negatively impact advantages of an
optimal educational circumstance and even personal intellectual capabilities. In contrast, if an
efficient milieu exists, it can compensates failures
in learning circumstances, educational inspiration
and physical and mental health which are very
effective in academic performance (Koushan M,
2007).

Since students are enlightened as
proficient and prospective generation of every
country and also human resources and essence of
development; educational achievement and progress in academic function is a major goal in
every institute (Tavakol et al., 2009). Thus, this study
designed to assess relationship among control
resource and studying habit with educational
achievement in Jiroft Azad University.

METHOD

Design and participant
A cross sectional descriptive-correlative
study was approached in first term 2013. Research
population includes all students trained for bachelor
degree in Jiroft Azad University. First of all two
faculties were chosen among all departments
(Agriculture, sociology, sport and technology).
Agriculture and faculty were chosen with accidental-stratified method. Justice, literature and
theology from department and cultivate, gardening
and biology form agriculture were chosen. Then
one entry was selected accidentally and all of
students were assessed.

Tools
Demographic checklist consists of age,
genders, subject, marital status, native status, birth
order, parent’s educational level and previous term
mean average.

Living habit questionnaire named PSSHI:
this scale is consist of eight dimensions: time
management, physical status, reading ability, taking
notes, learning provocation, memory, examining
and health. Scoring is via Likert scale (0-4). It scores
from zero to ninety. Higher scores indicate better
studying habit. Total SH score is divided into three
sections. Inappropriate study habit was scored less
than 30, partial optimal was 31-60 and finally scores
over 61 were categorized as desirable situation.
Reliability of the questionnaire was estimated 88%
and internal stability 65% by split-halve method.
Validity reported 74% by Bagherzadeh et al
(Bagherzadeh R, 2010).

Roter locus of control questionnaire: This
29 item questionnaire tests LOC in 23 items and 6
others confuse tester in recognizing the aim of the
study. Cut off point is 12. Scores above 12 indicate
people with external LOC and scores below 12
expressing internal LOC. Validity and reliability
of this test estimated 81% using split-halves method.

Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using SPSS V.21 and
tests like t and Pearson correlation. Significant level
considered scores below 0.05.

RESULT

Finding show that 37.3 percent students
were female and 62.7% others were male. 60.9%
were single and 39.1% were married. Population’s
mean age score were 29.35% (SD=8.18) ranging
from 18 to 59. Mean average score were 15.28 (from
20) ranging from 11 to 19. Mean and SD of average,
LOC and SH score is shown in table 4, detailed
with dimensions. 10.4% of students had optimal,
Table 1: Mean and SD for LOC*, SH and its dimensions in students of different subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students- Field of Study</th>
<th>Total Students</th>
<th>Biology (horticulture)</th>
<th>Agriculture (crops)</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Theology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>15.28±1.81</td>
<td>15.79±2.23</td>
<td>15.10±1.89</td>
<td>15.21±2.35</td>
<td>15.21±1.64</td>
<td>15.02±2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total study habits scores</td>
<td>50.06±7.97</td>
<td>47.86±4.37</td>
<td>52.09±6.27</td>
<td>49.15±6.78</td>
<td>50.11±8.18</td>
<td>51.76±8.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting Time</td>
<td>5.89±1.66</td>
<td>6.00±1.13</td>
<td>6.09±1.86</td>
<td>6.00±1.77</td>
<td>5.78±1.87</td>
<td>6.10±1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conditions for study</td>
<td>6.39±1.74</td>
<td>5.60±2.06</td>
<td>6.54±1.71</td>
<td>5.65±1.18</td>
<td>6.47±1.75</td>
<td>6.86±1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ability</td>
<td>8.73±2.07</td>
<td>8.93±1.27</td>
<td>8.63±1.91</td>
<td>9.05±2.28</td>
<td>8.76±2.06</td>
<td>8.90±2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Taking</td>
<td>3.73±1.44</td>
<td>3.20±1.08</td>
<td>3.86±1.20</td>
<td>3.20±1.64</td>
<td>3.32±1.38</td>
<td>3.83±1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors in Learning Motivation</td>
<td>7.88±2.11</td>
<td>7.06±2.15</td>
<td>8.36±2.30</td>
<td>7.50±1.63</td>
<td>7.87±2.17</td>
<td>8.36±2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>4.40±1.57</td>
<td>4.13±1.50</td>
<td>4.72±1.24</td>
<td>4.60±1.84</td>
<td>4.41±1.64</td>
<td>4.26±1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Examination</td>
<td>10.18±2.29</td>
<td>9.46±2.13</td>
<td>10.72±2.39</td>
<td>9.80±2.04</td>
<td>10.13±2.32</td>
<td>10.40±2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>3.15±1.39</td>
<td>3.46±1.06</td>
<td>2.86±1.42</td>
<td>3.35±1.72</td>
<td>3.11±1.35</td>
<td>3.16±1.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* LOC = Locus of control, SH = study habit

More over results demonstrate that score related to the dimensions of study habit were: 5.89 (from 10) time management, 6.39 (from 12) reading ability, 3.73 (from 6) taking note, 7.88 (from 12) learning ability, 3.15 (from 6) examination, and 3.15 (from 6) health dimensions. There was a positive correlation between total studying habit and 3.15 (from 6) health dimensions. The correlation coefficient between the total studying habit and mean average score was 0.148 (p=0.009). There were 71.2% of all female students who scored above 12 while 28.8% of male students scored below this level (p=0.045). No significant difference was found between students in different subject and average score (p=0.907). The difference was evident (p=0.045).

There was a positive correlation between total studying habit and mean average score (r=0.175, p=0.009). It means that the more desirable studying habit the higher was the average marks. There was a significant negative relationship between age and mean average score (p=0.002, r=-0.206). The older the students the lower was the average marks. Morever results show that there was a meaningful inverse ratio between locus of control score and mean average score in students with external LOC were 14.80 ± 1.7 against 15.49 ± 1.8. The difference were meaningful through t-test (p=0.003). 66 (30%) students scored above 12 for LOC and 154 (70%) other were scored less than 12. Mean and standard deviation for studying habit and its dimensions and source of control is indicated in table (2). 71.2% of all female students scored above 12 whereas 28.8% males had the identical score. The difference was evident (p=0.045). Mean score in dimensions like time management (p=0.035), memory (p=0.034) and health (p=0.034) for students with internal LOC were higher than externals but there was no difference in other dimensions. The test indicate that final term average score in female student were 15.89 ± 1.80 and 14.92 ± 1.72 in male (p=0.00).
the dimension of taking note. Actually students of humanities department wrote down more notes during the study \((r=0.139, p=0.039)\). There was also a significant correlation between memory and gender \((r=0.139, p=0.039)\). Female students score in term of memory were higher \((p=0.043, r=-0.136)\).

Finally no interdependent was seen between average score and other demographic factors. There was also a negative correlation between mean SH score and mean IOC score \((r=-0.348, p=0.000)\); IOC score decrease when study habit score were increased.

**DISCUSSION**

Finding showed that the three variable (IOC, SH and AA) in learning issue are correlative. The more SH score the more achievement can be gained in university and colleges. In fact students with SH score more than 60 had a greater mean average score. Drossis and colleague found that SH and AA are related either (Derossis et al., 2004). Sirohi showed that poor SH was a significant factor in student's educational failing (Sirohi, 2004). Boher also indicated that SH had a meaningful positive relation with AA. Students who used to take notes by their own words had a better function than those who just underlined important parts (Boehler et al., 2001). Funent (De la Fuente and Cardelle-Elawar, 2009), Fereidounimoghadam (Fereidounimoghadam and Cheraghian, 2009) and Khadiv Zadeh (Khadivzadeh et al., 2004) confirmed our result. No doubt, study skills are very important factor on student's academic achievement because people who had better studying skill, active learning and more engagement with subjects would bear far more better memory and recall. On the other hand, this study result show that LOC score is decreasing by progress in academic improvement. Since scores below 12 considered internal LOC; students with those scores had higher AA and vice versa. Karden, Valizadeh and Sheferd (Carden et al., 2004, Valizadeh et al., 2007, Shepherd S, 2006) had identical findings while Heidari, Bagherzadeh and Frary's (Bagherzadeh R, 2010, Heydari and Koushan, 2002, Ferrari JR, 1992) consequences were different. People with internal LOC in spite of those with external LOC have a series of characteristics like higher endurance, independent thinking, self competency perseverance, curiosity, and higher innovation which progress AA (Yazdanpanah et al., 2010) but these divergence in findings can be an outcome of using different research tool or the question that whether average is an appropriate criteria for measuring AA or not.

The majority of male students demonstrated external LOC rather than female. This difference was significant. Mahbob Zadeh and Anderson and colleagues did not find any

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Information</th>
<th>Students with External locus of control</th>
<th>Students with Internal locus of control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Achievement</td>
<td>14.80±1.75</td>
<td>15.49±1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Study Habits scores</td>
<td>47.65±8.70</td>
<td>51.09±7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgeting Time</td>
<td>5.48±1.73</td>
<td>6.06±1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Conditions for study</td>
<td>6.33±1.68</td>
<td>6.41±1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ability</td>
<td>8.86±2.08</td>
<td>8.68±2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note Taking</td>
<td>3.59±1.35</td>
<td>3.79±1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors in Learning Motivation</td>
<td>7.60±2.27</td>
<td>8.00±2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>4.15±1.44</td>
<td>4.51±1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Examination</td>
<td>10.03±2.13</td>
<td>10.24±2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>2.66±1.43</td>
<td>3.37±1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locus of control score</td>
<td>13.74±5.89</td>
<td>8.07±2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable-Relationship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sex</td>
<td>0.127</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Marital</td>
<td>-0.494**</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Father Education</td>
<td>-0.221**</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mother Education</td>
<td>-0.194**</td>
<td>0.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Field of study</td>
<td>-0.036</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Academic Achievement</td>
<td>-0.206**</td>
<td>-0.258**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Total Scores study habits</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Budgeting Time</td>
<td>-0.051</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Physical Conditions</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Reading Ability</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Note Taking</td>
<td>-0.063</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Factors in Learning Motivation</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>-0.048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Memory</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
<td>0.136*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Taking Examination</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Health</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>-0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 locus of control</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dissimilarity between LOC and gender (Anderson et al., 2005). Higher internal LOC in girls who were almost native prove that self stem is growing among female students. Most of all students had desirable or moderate SH. Concerning that SH is a very important point in learning process; this situation is not ideal and students are not well trained study skills. The problem is not only confined in student's of Azad University but in students of other colleges (Khadivzadeh et al., 2004, Fereidounimoghadam and Cheraghi, 2009). Dorak hold a workshop to measure the effect of educating study skills on learning ability and homework affairs in students and found remarkable positive outcome (Durak et al., 2006). In addition, this research reveal that LOC score were decreasing by increase in SH, that may be due to the reason that people who feel higher control over their living issue behave so that lead to more over coming. This study is limmited in term of participants and assessed items fitted in our research tool. We suggest that future studies extract optimal studying habit using qualitative methodologies.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that planning to teach learning skill is necessary; regarding that SH and LOC variable are very important factors in students educational function. As researcher says study skills and habit are learnable; thus it is suggested that study skill lessons incorporate in freshman courses.

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