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Extended Abstract

Relationship between Quality of Learning Experiences and Academic Amotivation in Graduate Students of Shahid Chamran University

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Introduction

This study was conducted to determine the relationship between quality of learning experience and academic amotivation. Motivation to achieve academically is necessary for the acquisition of knowledge, a meaningful school career, and a positive sense of self (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). A great deal is known about academic motivation, its origins, types, and value (Attaway, 2004). On the other hand, educators and behavioral scientists know little about the contributing factors to its counterpart, academic amotivation, which signifies a lack of impetus to perform in a classroom setting (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006). It is documented that many individuals, who are academically amotivated experience a variety of consequential, negative outcomes (Daly, 2007). Academic amotivation is a noteworthy and widespread problem that can contribute to adverse educational results such as dropping out, maladaptive behaviors, negative self-image, poor physical health, or unfavorable career outcomes (Bandura & Lock, 2003). According to Legault et al. (2006) academic amotivation has four dimensions:

Ability beliefs: represent individual's self-appraisal of their ability to carry out a task.

Effort beliefs: represent individual's wishes and perceived ability to invest the time and energy that a particular behavior demands.

Value placed on task: amotivation can derive from individual's inability to find importance or relevance in the performance of a required task.

Characteristics of the task: behaviors that are routine, boring, or laborious may lead to amotivation culminating in activities being abandoned or neglected.

The quality of learning experience defined as student's perceptions of the direct and indirect inputs that they receive from their college. By direct inputs, I mean investments in the educational program in terms of content, resources and flexibility, whereas indirect inputs consist of the processes by which colleges attempt to enhance learning, for example, students-faculty contact in academic programs. The main theoretical assumption of this study is that student's academic amotivation may result from learning conditions.

Quality of learning has four dimensions:

Resources: represent the quality of the library and the quality of computer facilities.

Content: represents quality of teaching, the quality of academic advising and the value of required and elective courses.

Learning flexibility: represents the opportunity to developed self-directed learning, the main different points of view in courses, and the opportunity to raise critical questions in class.

Student-faculty contact: represents the helpfulness of faculty members, the accessibility of faculty members, the contact with faculty members outside class, and the concern for students and their problems by faculty.

Research Questions

The researcher has formulated four hypotheses to respond to corresponding research questions as follows:

1- There is a negative correlation between the quality of learning experience components and ability beliefs.

2- There is a negative correlation between the quality of learning experience components and effort beliefs.

3- There is a negative correlation between the quality of learning experience components and value placed on task.

4- There is a negative correlation between the quality of learning experience components and characteristics of tasks.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 150 graduate students of Shahid Chamran University who were selected through a simple random method and answered to AAQ and Q ELQ.

Instruments

The academic amotivation questionnaire (AAQ, Legault et al., 2006) was used to assess academic amotivation. The AAQ is a scale of 16 items that consist of four components: ability beliefs, effort beliefs, value placed on task, and characteristics of the task. The AAQ rates each item based on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The Quality of Experience Learning Questionnaire (Q ELQ, Newman, 1990) was used to assess quality of experience learning. The Q ELQ is a scale of 15 items that consists of four components: resources, content, learning flexibility and student-faculty contact. The QELQ rates each item based on a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Results

The results of Pearson correlation coefficient showed that:

1- There is a negative correlation between effort belief and resources (-0.43, $p<0.001$), content (-0.42, $p<0.001$), learning flexibility (-0.34, $p<0.001$) and student-faculty contact (-0.42, $p<0.001$).

2- There is a negative correlation between effort believe and resources (-0.41, $p<0.001$), content (-0/39, $p<0.001$), learning

flexibility (-0.25, p<0.001) and student-faculty contact (-0.40, p<0.001).

3- There is a negative correlation between value placed on task and resources (-0.20, p<0/001), content (-0.46, p<0.001), learning flexibility (-0.49, p<0.001) and student-faculty contact (-0.46, p<0.001).

4- There is a negative correlation between characteristics of tasks and resources (-0.28), content (-0.36), learning flexibility (-0.28) and student-faculty contact (-0.28).

These results confirm the hypothesis of this study. In addition the results analysis of stepwise regression showed that among quality of learning experiences components, content is the best prediction of academic amotivation.

Conclusion

The result showed that there are negative relationships between dimensions of quality of learning experiences (resources, content, learning flexibility, student-faculty contact) and facets of academic amotivation (ability believe, effort believe, value placed on task and characteristics of tasks). In addition the results showed that content is the best prediction of academic amotivation.

The results found in this study agree with the previous studies on academic amotivation. In fact, these results were associated with studies of Daly (2007), Bandura & Lock (2003) and Legault et al. (2006).

The professional implications of this study call for the development of learning environments that improve learning flexibility and student's involvement. Faculty and administrators alike ought to explore means of strengthening academic program's flexibility through emphasizing electives, self-directed learning, independent study, and courses concerned with critical questions, while replacing as much as possible large lecture-format courses.

The second key for reducing student's academic amotivation and its negative consequences is for faculty and administrators to expand the opportunities for students to be involve in interesting activities in

their own programs, for example, seminars, and special events. Consequently, students may feel they are a real part of their academic programs, and their levels of involvement will increase. These strategies will lead to reduced academic amotivation.

Keywords: Quality of learning experience, Academic amotivation.