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A Descriptive Survey on the Academic Motivation of the Female Learners

Social Science

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ABSTRACT

Academic motivation is defined by a student's desire (as reflected in approach, persistence and level of interest) regarding academic subjects when the student's competence is judged against a standard of performance or excellence. The present study was designed to assess the academic motivation of the female learners of our country. Data were collected by administering Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) on randomly selected 447 female learners of class IX and X. It was observed that the female learners of our country perceived competence and confidence in performance of class work (self-efficacy) was high; intrinsic interest in and perceived importance of class work as well as performance for challenge and mastery goals (intrinsic value) was high; concerning worries about and cognitive interference on tests and examinations (test anxiety) was low; the use of rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies such as summarizing and paraphrasing and organizational strategies (cognitive strategy use) was high; meta-cognitive strategies, such as planning, skimming, and comprehension monitoring and effort management strategies, such as, persistence at difficult or boring tasks and working diligently (self- regulation) were high; and academic motivation score in totality reflecting the high motivation.

KEYWORDS

Academic Motivation, MSLQ, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation

1. Academic Motivation

Motivation refers to reasons that underlie behaviour that is characterized by willingness and volition. Intrinsic motivation is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, or pleasure, whereas extrinsic motivation is governed by reinforcement contingencies. Motivation involves a constellation of closely related beliefs, perceptions, values, interests, and actions. Motivation within individuals tends to vary across subject areas, and this domain specificity increases with age. Motivation in children predicts motivation later in life, and the stability of this relationship strengthens with age. Traditionally, educators consider intrinsic motivation to be more desirable and to result in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation. In general, children appear to enter school with high levels of intrinsic motivation, although motivation tends to decline as children progress through school. Research suggests that motivation can be manipulated through certain instructional practices, although studies demonstrate both positive and negative effects. The use of rewards may either encourage or diminish motivation, depending on the type of rewards and the context in which they are given. Teachers should attempt to give students more autonomy or control over their own learning by allowing them to make choices and use collaborative or cooperative learning approaches. In addition, teachers should create a supportive classroom environment with respect to goal structures, attributions, and external evaluation. There are several challenges to assessing motivation, especially in children. Recommendations for eliciting evidence of motivation for assessment purposes are made.

Extrinsically motivated behaviours are the results of the attainment of externally administered rewards, including pay, material possessions, prestige, and positive evaluations from others. Extrinsic motivation is defined as the performance of an activity because it is perceived to be instrumental in achieving valued outcomes that are distinct from the activity itself (***Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985, Ji-Won Moon & Young-Gul Kim, 2001***). Perceived usefulness is described as a form of extrinsic motivation (***Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985***).

In contrast to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation is said to exist when behaviour is performed for its own sake rather than to obtain material or social reinforcements. Intrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity for no apparent reinforcement other than the activity per se (***Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ji-Won Moon & Young-Gul Kim, 2001***). Perceived ease of use is a form of intrinsic motivation (***Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985***). Perceived ease of use has also been found to influence usage indirectly through perceived usefulness (***Davis, 1986, 1989***) and perceived enjoyment (***Igbaria et al., 1995***).

More recently in the literature of psychology, intrinsically motivated behaviour is alleged to derive from and satisfy innate psychological needs, including needs for competence and autonomy (***Deci & Ryan, 1985; Kasser & Ryan, 1996***). According to ***Deci (1980)***, perceptions of personal (as opposed to external) control satisfy these needs, and constitute the fundamental feature distinguishing intrinsically motivated behaviour from extrinsically motivated behaviour. The concept of intrinsic motivation evolved independently of and subsequent to the behaviourist tradition of extrinsic contingencies. But the two met with a bang when ***Deci (1971)*** argued based on his laboratory results not only that extrinsic reinforcement is not needed for motivation, but also that tangible rewards actually undermine intrinsic motivation for interesting activities. Since this publication, the use of extrinsic rewards to alter human behaviour has been challenged in literature reviews, textbooks, and the popular media. ***Deci (1980)*** elaborated his original findings via his cognitive evaluation theory, which held that the impact of extrinsic rewards on motivation depends on the receiver's interpretation of the rewards. In accordance with the self-perception theory and the over justification effect (***Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973***), when people attribute their behaviours to external rewards they discount interest as causes of their behaviours and consequently intrinsic motivation becomes lower. Extrinsic rewards, particularly highly contingent rewards, are said to be salient to people and likely to generate external attributions, perceptions that they are responding to environmental control rather than autonomously and lower intrinsic motivation. A number of scholars and theoretical perspectives have maintained that the effects of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are not interactive, but generally additive (***Porter & Lawler, 1968; Staw, 1979; Mawhinney, 1990***), rewards generally increase perceived self-determination. As with other aspects of human behaviour, to understand intrinsic and extrinsic motivation the person and the environment must be considered jointly.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to know the present state of affairs of the different dimensions of the academic motivation of the female learners of our country.

2. Methods

The present study was carried out through descriptive survey method. The details regarding sample, tool, procedure of data collection and statistical technique were reported hereunder.

2.1 Sample

For the sake of the research the respondents of the study were randomly selected from 10 schools of 8 districts of West Bengal, India. Finally, 447 female learners were selected to participate to the study.

2.2 Tool Used

To assess students' motivational orientations and their use of learning strategies **Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990)** was used as research tool in the present study. In this test there are 44 statements and with each statement a 7 point Likert type scale is attached. The manual of the test reports that the analysis of the motivational items revealed three distinct motivational factors – ***self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety***. Again on the basis of the results of the factor analysis, two cognitive scales were constructed – ***cognitive strategy use*** and ***self-regulation***.

I) The **Self-Efficacy scale** consisted of nine items regarding perceived competence and confidence in performance of class work (***Eccles, 1983; Schunk, 1981***).

ii) The **Intrinsic Value scale** was constructed by taking the mean score of the student's response to nine items concerning intrinsic interest in and perceived importance of course work (***Eccles, 1983***) as well as preference for challenge and mastery goals (***Harter, 1981***).

iii) Four items (***Liebert & Morris, 1967***) concerning worry about and cognitive interference on tests was used in the **Test Anxiety scale**.

iv) The ***Cognitive Strategy Use scale*** consisted of **13 items** pertaining to the use of rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies such as summarizing and paraphrasing, and organizational strategies **(Weinstein et al., 1987)**.

v) The scale, labelled ***Self-Regulation*** consisted of **9 items**, was constructed from meta-cognitive and effort management items. The items on meta-cognitive strategies, such as planning, skimming, and comprehension monitoring were adapted from **Weinstein et al. (1987)** and **Zimmerman and Pons (1986)**. Effort management strategies were adapted from **Zimmerman and Pons (1986)** and included students' persistence at difficult or boring tasks and working diligently.

Clearly the domains of this test consist of unequal number of items. The domain and total scores of each domain were made comparable by summing the item responses in a domain and dividing it by the number of total items of the domain. Then therefore, for each domain the maximum average score is 7, the minimum is 1 and the mid value is 4.

2.4 Procedure for Data Collection

The heads of the institutes were contracted for his/her permission to allow collecting the data. The relevant data on different constructs were collected by administering the above-mentioned tool on the subjects under study in accordance with the directions provided in the manual of the tool.

2.5 Statistical Techniques

Verification of group differences with respect to each aspect between the two groups under study was done by the independent samples "t"–test with the help of SPSS 20.0.

3. Result: Academic Motivation Facets: Different Facets of Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) Scores.

Here the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by the female learners in **Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)** are presented in table-3.1. and figure-3.1.

Table-3.1 Descriptive Statistics of Scores of Different Facets of Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) of the Female Students

Academic Motivation	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Efficacy	447	3.60	3.10	6.80	5.21	0.61
Intrinsic Value	447	4.00	3.00	7.00	5.28	0.77
Test Anxiety	447	3.72	1.88	5.59	3.84	0.68
Cognitive Strategy Use	447	4.25	2.75	7.00	5.62	0.69
Self-Regulation	447	3.86	3.14	7.00	5.50	0.73
MSLQ	447	3.04	3.38	6.43	5.09	0.56

Table-3.1 depicts the descriptive statistics of the different facets and sum total of all of the facets of ***Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*** scores of the female students of both Study Group (i.e. KGBV) and Reference Group (RG) as a whole. In case of the Self-Efficacy "minimum" of the scores was 3.10 and the "maximum" of those was 6.80 and the range was 3.60; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 5.21 and 0.61 respectively. Then in case of Intrinsic Value the "minimum" of the scores was 3.00 and the "maximum" of those was 7.00 and the range was 4.00; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 5.28 and 0.77 respectively. Next, in case of Test Anxiety the "minimum" of the scores was 1.88 and the "maximum" of those was 5.59 and the range was 3.72; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 3.84 and 0.68 respectively. In case of Cognitive Strategy Use the "minimum" of the scores was 2.75 and the "maximum" of those was 7.00 and the range was 4.25; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 5.62 and 0.69 respectively. In Self-Regulation the "minimum" of the scores was 3.14 and the "maximum" of those was 7.00 and the range was 3.86; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 5.50 and 0.73 respectively. In MSLQ the "minimum" of the scores was 3.38 and the "maximum" of those was 6.43and the range was 3.04; the "mean" and "standard deviation" of the said distribution were 5.09 and 0.56 respectively.

From the figure-3.1, it is observed that all of the distributions of ***Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*** scores were near to ***Normal Probability Curve***.

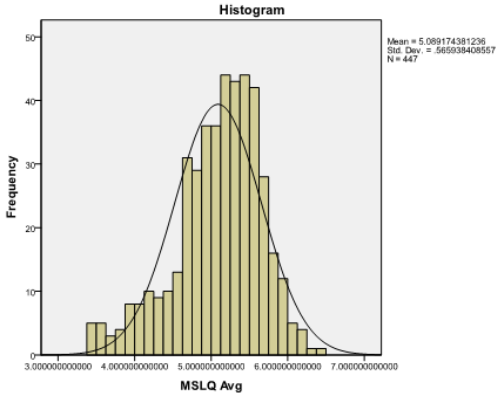

Figure 3.1: Histogram with Normal Probability Curve of Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) Scores of the Female Students

4. Discussion

In Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) there are 44 statements and with each statement a 7 point Likert type scale is attached. An individual has to mark how much s/he agrees with the statement on the 1 to 7.

The manual of the test says that the analysis of the motivational items revealed ***three distinct motivational factors*** – ***self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and test anxiety***. Again on the basis of the results of the factor analysis, ***two cognitive scales*** were constructed – ***cognitive strategy use*** and ***self-regulation***.

The domains of this test consist of unequal number of items. The domain and total scores of each domain were made comparable by summing the item responses in a domain and dividing it by the number of total items of the domain. Then therefore, for each domain the maximum average score is 7, the minimum is 1 and the mid value is 4.

Table-3.1 depicts the descriptive statistics of the different facets and sum total of all of the facets of ***Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*** scores of the female students. In case of the ***Self-Efficacy*** the mean was ***5.21***; in case of ***Intrinsic Value*** the mean was ***5.28***; in case of ***Test Anxiety*** the mean was ***3.84***; in case of ***Cognitive Strategy Use*** the mean was ***5.62***; in ***Self-Regulation*** the mean was ***5.50***; and finally, in ***MSLQ in totality*** the was mean was ***5.09***.

a) According to **Eccles (1983) and Schunk (1981)** the ***Self-Efficacy***

scale is concerned with the perceived competence and confidence in performance of class work. In case of the ***Self-Efficacy*** the mean value was ***5.21.*** Therefore, the female learners irrespective of Study Group and Reference Group on an average expressed their high motivation in this domain (mean scores were higher than the mid value, i.e., 4). This reflects that the perceived competence and confidence in performance of class work was high.

b) According to **Eccles (1983) and Harter (1981)** the ***Intrinsic Value*** scale consists of the items concerning intrinsic interest in and perceived importance of course work as well as preference for challenge and mastery goals. In case of the ***Intrinsic Value*** the mean value was ***5.28*** .Therefore, the female learners irrespective of Study Group and Reference Group on an average expressed their high motivation in this domain (mean scores were higher than the mid value, i.e., 4). This reflects that the intrinsic interest in and perceived importance of course work as well as preference for challenge and mastery goals was high in the female learners.

c) According to **Liebert and Morris (1967)** concerning worry about and cognitive interference on tests was used in the ***Test Anxiety*** scale. In the ***Test Anxiety*** the mean value was ***3.84.*** Therefore, the female learners irrespective of Study Group and Reference Group on an average expressed their moderate motivation in this domain (mean scores were near to the mid value, i.e., 4). This reflects that the concerning worries about and cognitive interference on tests and examinations were moderate in the female learners.

d) According to **Weinstein et al. (1987)** the ***Cognitive Strategy Use*** scale consisted of items pertaining to the use of rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies such as summarizing and paraphrasing, and organizational strategies. In the ***Cognitive Strategy Use*** the mean value ws ***5.62.*** Therefore, the female learners irrespective of Study Group and Reference Group on an average expressed their high motivation in this domain (mean scores were higher than the mid value, i.e., 4). This reflects that the use of rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies such as summarizing and paraphrasing, and organizational strategies was high in the female learners.

e) According to **Weinstein et al. (1987)** and **Zimmerman and Pons (1986)** the scale, labelled ***Self-Regulation***, has been constructed from meta-cognitive and effort management items. The items on meta-cognitive strategies, such as planning, skimming, and comprehension monitoring have been taken and effort management strategies includes students' persistence at difficult or boring tasks and working diligently. In ***Self-Regulation*** the mean value was ***5.50.*** Therefore, the female learners irrespective of Study Group and Reference Group on an average expressed their high motivation in this domain (mean scores were higher than the mid value, i.e., 4). This reflects that the meta-cognitive strategies, such as planning, skimming, and comprehension monitoring and effort management strategies, such as, persistence at difficult or boring tasks and working diligently were high in the female learners.

f) In ***MSLQ in totality*** the mean value was ***5.09.*** Therefore, the female learners irrespective of Study Group and Reference Group on an average expressed their high motivation in MSLQ in totality (mean scores were higher than the mid value, i.e., 4). The mean of the ***Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)*** score in all facets as a whole reflects the high motivation of our female learners.

5. Conclusion

In case of the girl students perceived competence and confidence in performance of class work (***self-efficacy***) was high; intrinsic interest in and perceived importance of course work as well as preference for challenge and mastery goals (***intrinsic value***) was high***;*** concerning worries about and cognitive interference on tests and examinations (***test anxiety***) was low; the use of rehearsal strategies, elaboration strategies such as summarizing and paraphrasing, and organizational strategies (***cognitive strategy use***) was high; meta-cognitive strategies, such as planning, skimming, and comprehension monitoring and effort management strategies, such as, persistence at difficult or boring tasks and working diligently (***self-regulation***) were high; and ***academic motivation*** score in totality reflecting the high motivation.

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