Athens Journal of Education

Front Pages

Athens Journal of Education

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The ***Athens Journal of Education (AJE)*** is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of history. Many of the papers published in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored by the Education Unit of the Athens Institute for Education and Research (ATINER). All papers are subject to ATINER's Publication Ethical Policy and Statement.

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The current issue is the fourth of the ninth volume of the *Athens Journal of Education (AJE), published by the Education Unit of ATINER.*

Gregory T. Papanikos
President
ATINER

Athens Institute for Education and Research
A World Association of Academics and Researchers

25th Annual International Conference on Education
15-18 May 2023, Athens, Greece

The Education Unit of ATINER organizes its **25th Annual International Conference on Education, 15-18 May 2023, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the Athens Journal of Education. The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of education and other related disciplines. You may participate as **stream leader**, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Papers (in English) from all areas of education are welcome. Please submit a proposal using the form available (https://www.atiner.gr/2023/FORM-EDU.doc).

Academic Members Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, ATINER.
- **Dr. David Philip Wick**, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, ATINER & Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.
- **Dr. Nick Linardopoulos**, Head, Education Unit, ATINER & Associate Teaching Professor & Public Speaking Course Coordinator, Rutgers University, USA.
- **Dr. John Spiridakis**, Co-Editor, Athens Journal of Education & Professor, St. John University, USA.

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **17 October 2022**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **17 April 2023**

Social and Educational Program

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Atiner.
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- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
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Athens Institute for Education and Research
A World Association of Academics and Researchers

7ᵗʰ Annual International Symposium on "Higher Education in a Global World", 3-6 July 2023, Athens, Greece

The Education Unit of ATINER is organizing the **7ᵗʰ Annual International Symposium on "Higher Education in a Global World", 3-6July 2023, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the Athens Journal of Education. The aim of the symposium is to examine educational developments throughout the world in universities, polytechnics, colleges, and vocational and education institutions. Academics and researchers from all areas of education are welcomed. You may participate as stream organizer, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (https://www.atiner.gr/2023/FORM-COLEDU.doc).

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **5 December 2022**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **5 June 2023**

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- **Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos**, President, ATINER.
- **Dr. Sharon Claire Bolton**, Vice President of Research, ATINER & Professor, The Management School, University of Stirling, Scotland.
- **Dr. David Philip Wick**, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, ATINER & Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.
- **Dr. John Spiridakis**, Co-Editor, Athens Journal of Education & Professor, St. John University, USA.
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Online Surveillance and Education for Digital Competence

By Lars Samuelsson[*] & Niclas Lindström[±]

Digital competence has become increasingly important in modern societies and is today central to the possibility of participating on equal terms as a citizen in a contemporary democracy. Thus, it is now stressed as a crucial learning objective, nationally as well as internationally. One pervasive consequence of the digitalization of society is the facilitation of intrusive online surveillance: when we are online, we leave traces that provide useful information to companies, organizations, and individuals, who can collect, process, use, and share this information. The purpose of this article is to reveal the need for an increased awareness of the surveillance aspect of digitalization in teacher education and schools. The argument is partly based on a questionnaire survey with 560 current and former Swedish student teachers, about online behavior and privacy. The results indicate that Swedish teachers in general need to further their digital competence in order to be able to appropriately aid their pupils in developing digital literacy. Given that Swedish student teachers can be expected to possess a comparatively very high level of digital competence, we think it is safe to generalize this point to comprise teachers in many other countries as well. We argue that an awareness of the surveillance aspect of digitalization is crucial to being a cognizant citizen in a democratic society, and that it should therefore constitute a natural part of education for digital competence.

Keywords: education for digital competence, digital competence, education for digital literacy, digital literacy, digitalization, online surveillance, soft surveillance, surveillance, surveillance culture, privacy

Introduction

Digital competence has become increasingly important in modern societies. Such competence is central to the possibility of participating on equal terms as a citizen in a contemporary democracy. Thus, it is nowadays stressed as a crucial learning objective, nationally as well as internationally. For example, it is one of the eight key competences for lifelong learning identified by The European Parliament and The Council of the European Union (European Union, 2006), and digitalization is one of the aspects covered by the UN sustainable development goal that concerns education (United Nations, 2021, SDG-4; see Indicator 4.a.1 and Target 4.b).

Navigating in a digital world requires competences such as the ability to find relevant information through search engines and databases, but also to practice criticism of the sources – consider, for instance, the current discussions about misinformation and fake news. These competences – sometimes referred to as

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different aspects of *digital literacy* (American Library Association, 2021) – receive increasing attention in schools. However, digitalization comes with potential downsides, one of them being the facilitation of intrusive online surveillance. When we are online, we leave traces that provide useful information to companies, organizations, and individuals, who can harvest our data for various purposes.

While knowledge of this fact has become more widespread, it does not seem to get the attention that it arguably deserves in schools and teacher education. In Swedish teacher education, where we operate, surveillance issues in relation to online activities have not found a pronounced place in the curriculum. Yet, having knowledge in this area is important for making deliberate choices regarding one's online behavior – what information do I want to share, and with whom? For instance, is it worth giving away some of my personal information to get access to a certain social media platform?

There are some related issues regarding digitalization that do receive increasing attention in schools and teacher education (in Sweden as well as elsewhere): One concerns the risks of being more directly harmed in various ways in relation to the use of digital technologies – online bullying, or cyberbullying, is an important example of this (UNICEF, 2021), as are the risks involved in digitally sharing sensitive personal information or photos, and the risks of coming in contact with the wrong people (people with bad intentions) on the internet. Another issue concerns the high speed with which pictures and information can spread on the internet, the difficulty of removing them once they are out there, and the risk that they get distorted on their way through cyberspace. A third issue is that posting pictures on social media platforms may mean that you transfer legal rights to them to the companies running these platforms. These issues are all important, and it is a good thing that they receive more attention in schools and society at large. In this article, however, we are interested in the more subtle issue of online surveillance, which has not yet received as much attention in schools and teacher education, and whose effects are less direct or detectable:

Nowadays, data flow, largely unregulated, between different actors – companies, organizations, welfare institutions, private users, etc. These actors can take part of, and use, information about one another, for example via the digital traces that people leave when they use social media, do online shopping, search on Google, or use various games and other apps on their mobile devices. In addition, many of the online activities that are important to people require that they give away their data for others to collect, use, process, and share. For instance, when you sign up for Facebook, you agree to the following:

> We collect information about the people, Pages, accounts, hashtags and groups you are connected to and how you interact with them across our Products, such as people you communicate with the most or groups you are part of. […] We use the information we have (including your activity off our Products, such as the websites you visit and ads you see) to help advertisers and other partners... (Facebook, 2021)

Other services use similar terms of agreement; terms that we rarely read, or, in case we do, typically comply with simply because we deem the services in question so important to us. Many people are unaware of the extent to which using

such online services requires them to give away their data. We cannot expect young pupils – children – to acquire this awareness by themselves. And typically, we cannot expect their parents to have it either. Yet, as we will argue, such awareness is important to be able to make informed autonomous decisions regarding one's online behavior. At least to the extent that schools embrace digitalization, they arguably also have a responsibility to help pupils acquire such an awareness. (As we will elaborate below, this responsibility is plausibly also motivated by the democracy mission of school.) It is important to know what can and cannot be done to protect one's data. What risks, losses and gains are involved in various options? In the discussion section, we will return in more detail to why we think such an awareness is important, and why it is important that it is treated in school.

One key to acquire an autonomous and critical stance to one's own online behavior, is an understanding of how people generally behave in relation to privacy and sharing information online. Quite extensive research has shown that people tend to behave in ways that do not mirror their own privacy concerns. While they report strong concern for their privacy, they behave online as if their privacy were not very important to them at all. This has become known as the "privacy paradox": the "discrepancy between individuals' intentions to protect their own privacy and how they behave in the marketplace" (Norberg, Home, & Home, 2007, p. 101; for an overview, see, e.g., Kokolakis, 2017; Gerber, Gerber, & Volkamer 2018).

Within the framework of the research project "iAccept: Soft surveillance – between acceptance and resistance" (in which one of us is a participating researcher), a questionnaire survey was conducted with 560 current and former Swedish student teachers, about online behavior and privacy. At large, the responses are in line with the privacy paradox. Partly based on this survey, the present article aims to draw attention to the importance of raising awareness of the surveillance aspect of digitalization in teacher education and schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this article is to reveal the need for an increased awareness of the surveillance aspect of digitalization in teacher education and schools. We argue that an awareness of this aspect is crucial to being a cognizant citizen in a democratic society, and that it should therefore constitute a natural part of education for digital competence – or, differently put, that it should be seen as an important ingredient of digital literacy.

Outline

In the next section, we provide some background to our investigation: a brief account of surveillance and of the democracy mission of school. The subsequent section presents our method and research procedure and is followed by a presentation of our findings. We end the article with a discussion partly based on these findings, followed by a short concluding remark.

Background

Surveillance – From State Surveillance to Surveillance Culture

Surveillance was long seen as a top-down affair, the typical case being that of a state surveilling its citizens. Indeed, for long the state was the only actor with the kind of resources and power required to practice large-scale surveillance, and arguably the only actor with an incentive to do so. The potential horrors of state surveillance were famously brought to public attention in George Orwell's novel *1984*, and in the seventies, Michel Foucault influentially revived the Benthamian notion of the panopticon, again putting the spotlight on top-down surveillance (see Foucault, 2009).

With the ongoing rapid digital transformation of society, this picture has changed dramatically. Nowadays, it is possible for anyone with access to a computer and the internet, and with sufficient knowledge, to surveil many other people to some extent. To describe the situation emerging from this development, David Lyon has coined the expression "surveillance culture", or "culture of surveillance", indicating that surveillance is something that we live in, that surrounds us, and that we have to relate to in one way or another:

> Once thought of mainly as the world of private investigators, police and security agencies, the means of surveillance now also flow freely through many media into the hands of the general public. This has helped to create an emerging surveillance culture – the everyday webs of social relations, including shared assumptions and behaviours, existing among all actors and agencies associated with surveillance. (Lyon, 2018, p. 30)

Rather than an exclusively top-down phenomenon, surveillance is here depicted as something more horizontal and reciprocal, where citizens also have the means to surveil each other. In addition, large companies and various organizations – political but also more shady ones (which – we have seen – may also be political (e.g., Colaresi, 2020)) – now have much to gain from collecting information about people in general. For instance, people (or small groups) can be individually and directly targeted with advertisements for various products, and with opinions wrapped in a way that suits the receiver (so called micro-targeting). As a more extreme example, people can get blackmailed as a result of their sensitive information ending up in the wrong hands.

Information – or data – has become a valuable currency. When we use for instance Facebook and Instagram, we do not pay with money, but with personal information (compare with Zuboff's (2019) notion of "surveillance capitalism"). It is easy to get the impression that the use of these platforms is free, but for most users it is not. All of us who use such platforms for personal communication, where the whole purpose of using them would be undermined by anonymization, pay with valuable information that these companies can in turn trade for money with other companies who can use this information in various ways (see, for instance, the quote from Facebook above). We will return to this fact, and its significance for the present article, in the discussion section.

Another way in which the distinction between the earlier prevailing form of top-down surveillance, and the current forms of more horizontal surveillance, has been coined, is in terms of "hard surveillance" vs. "soft surveillance" (Marx, 2005) – the latter being the kind of online-surveillance (conducted primarily by commercial and noncommercial actors, such as businesses, NGOs, interest groups, researchers, political parties, and fellow citizens) that is based on us seemingly voluntarily giving away information through our usage of various products and platforms. However, the distinction is a fluid one, since governmental organizations can also make use of soft surveillance.

It is in light of the surveillance culture, and the practices of soft surveillance, that the current investigation takes place. We are interested in the awareness, or lack thereof, in educational contexts, of the consequences for ordinary people of living in the midst of the emerging culture of surveillance.

Democracy and Education

In this article we want to draw attention to the importance of possessing digital competence as an inhabitant of the culture of surveillance. Such competence, we will argue, is crucial to being a cognizant citizen in a modern democratic society, permeated by this culture. This is one main reason why this competence is something that should be furthered in schools. Apart from the fact that school is the place where we expect that our children get to learn about important societal matters, schools are nowadays generally considered to have a particular democracy mission – a special responsibility to foster democratic citizens, where this includes being competent in navigating within a democratic society.

Internationally, this aspect of education is stressed in, e.g., UNESCO's approach to Global Citizenship Education (GCED), including "[t]o acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations" (UNESCO, 2015, p. 15). Arguably, this involves knowledge and understanding of the ongoing digitalization of society, the interconnectedness involved in it, and what it means to be a citizen of a digitalized society. The Council of Europe explicitly uses the term "Education for democratic citizenship", meaning:

> education, training, dissemination, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and moulding their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law. (Council of Europe, 2021)

In the Swedish curricula for the various school forms (from pre-school to upper secondary school) the democracy mission is very pronounced. For instance, the curriculum for the upper secondary school states that:

> It is not in itself sufficient that education imparts knowledge of fundamental democratic values. It must also be carried out using democratic working methods and develop the students' ability and willingness to take personal responsibility and participate actively in societal life. (Skolverket, 2013, p. 5)

This ability, we will argue, requires digital competence also regarding the surveillance aspect of the digitalization of society.

Method and Research Procedure

To a large extent, this is an argumentative article. It aims to draw attention to the importance of acknowledging the surveillance aspect of digitalization in educational contexts – with a particular focus on the democracy mission of school. However, it does so partly against the background of the results of a questionnaire survey that was distributed to various groups of current and former Swedish student teachers, at Umeå University, between November 2019 and May 2020. 560 current and former students answered the questionnaire, which contained various questions about online behavior and privacy, some of which are accounted for in the Findings section below. The study presented in this article is one of several part-studies of a larger project ("iAccept: Soft surveillance – between acceptance and resistance"). Hence, the questionnaire contained questions relevant to other part-studies as well, but here we only bring up the questions that are relevant to this part-study.

For the substantive questions in the questionnaire, we used an 11-point scale (ranging from 0 to 10), on which the respondents made their assessments or expressed their views (where 0 represented the lowest possible value and 10 the highest possible value, with 5 being in the middle). Presumably, such a scale allows fairly fine-grained assessments by the respondents without being too extensive. The survey was also aligned with previous studies in other European contexts, using partly similar questions and the same 11-point scale for assessments (see, e.g., Svenonius & Björklund, 2018; Sønderskov & Dinesen, 2016).

The current and former students who took part in the survey were invited to participate voluntarily under the condition that they could withdraw at any time. They were informed that their answers would be anonymized and treated as confidential. No personal data were stored. In this way, compliance to the general research ethical principles of informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and precautious use of collected information were ensured.

The survey was carried out through a web form distributed via the students' web-based learning platforms and in one case directly in the classroom. The invitation to participate in the survey was sent out to all students who entered teacher education at Umeå University between autumn 2012 and autumn 2019. This procedure gave us a low (and unknown) response rate, but a fairly high total number of respondents. This suits the purpose of this study, in which we aim to track tendencies and reveal the need to raise awareness among teachers about certain aspects of digitalization, rather than to pursue statistical analysis. For this aim, a large number of responses – many representative voices – is more

interesting than a high response rate. Even if the results of the survey would have looked somewhat different with a different selection procedure, what is important in relation to the points we want to make in this article is that so many student teachers answer the way they do.

Although we have a fairly high total number of responses, it is important to remember that we are considering the views of a limited number of current and former students from one university only, namely Umeå University in Sweden, and that the response rate is relatively low (as a result of how the survey was distributed). In other words, we are dealing with a so-called nonprobability sample (see Bryman, 2008, p. 183). In relation to this point we want to emphasize that the purpose of our investigation is not to draw precise conclusions about the percentage of Swedish student teachers holding certain views, but to track tendencies among this group and put them in relation to the issue we aim to draw attention to in this article. The results are not treated statistically, and we do not aim for a statistical analysis.

There are several reasons why we consider the surveyed group particularly interesting. One reason, of course, is that they plan to become teachers (some of them are already teachers). They are the ones who are supposed to help future pupils acquire digital competence, or digital literacy. And since they are not themselves likely to encounter the surveillance aspects of digital competence in teacher education to any significant degree (as noted above – this issue has not yet found a pronounced place in the curriculum for the Swedish teacher education), the views they express now are likely to be roughly the views they have when they meet their pupils. Secondly, this group is relatively well educated, as all of them are attending or have completed higher education, and they are familiar with computers, the internet, and social media; within the framework of their education, they have all been assigned to an online learning platform.

This background of our participants implies that – from a global and even a national perspective – they can be expected to possess a comparatively high degree of digital competence (even more so, probably, given our chosen selection procedure; it is likely that people who are interested in questions concerning various aspects of digitalization were more likely to choose to answer the questionnaire). Hence, if these respondents find various aspects of digitalization difficult or complicated, or if there are gaps in their digital competence, we should expect even more of this among people in general. Actually, in this respect Swedes in general constitute an interesting group in the present context, since the use of both the internet and social media is comparatively very high in Sweden (see DataReportal, 2020).

In the Findings section below, only a restricted number of the total findings from the survey are presented, namely those that are most relevant to the study presented in this article. For a more comprehensive account of the survey and its results, see Cocq, Gelfgren, Samuelsson, and Enbom (2020).

Results

We begin by providing some background data from the survey to put the results we want to focus on in context. Of the 560 respondents, 70% report that

they identify themselves as women (29% as men). As is to be expected given the group that was surveyed, the respondents are quite young: 66% are under 30 years old, and only 16% are over 40 years old. 39% report that they had a university degree of at least three years at the time of answering the questionnaire. 58% were studying and 38% were working. Their age and level of education further accentuate the point stressed above, that we can expect the members of this group to have a comparatively high level of digital competence.

Furthermore, the respondents report a high degree of social media usage. For instance, 82% state that they use Facebook at least a few times a week (65% claim to use it daily), and 89% state that they use Messenger at least a few times a week (69% claim to use it daily). However, they do not take measures to hide their data to any high degree. Only 21% report that they sometimes use a VPN service; 8% report that they use web browsers that do not store search results; and 36% report that they sometimes cover their computer camera. As many as 42% state that they sometimes use private mode in their web browser, but that privacy measure only conceals data locally.

At the same time – in line with the privacy paradox mentioned in the introduction – online privacy is important to most of the respondents (see Table 1). So, perhaps one should have expected them to be more cautious with their data. On the other hand, many respondents state that they find the issue of protecting their data complicated. Of the respondents who reported an opinion on the question of whether they think it is too complicated to care about the collection of their data, about half (267 out of 505 respondents, or 53%) responded more or less affirmatively (i.e., they marked some of the alternatives 5-10 on a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 was the most affirmative answer) (55 respondents did not report any opinion on this question) (see further Table 1). This may provide part of the explanation of the discrepancy between the respondents' reported behavior and their attitudes to their own online privacy.

Table 1. Views on Data Collection

Claim	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	-
To what extent do you agree with the following claims about data collection? [where 0 represents "not at all" and 10 represents "to 100 %"] The respondents had four claims to consider. For each claim, the table shows the percentage (rounded to the nearest integer) of respondents who marked the respective alternatives 0-10 and "no opinion"/"no answer" (-). (N=560)												
It is important to me to be private/anonymous online.	1	1	4	6	7	21	9	14	14	7	13	2
I have nothing to hide, so I do not care.	10	3	6	8	7	19	7	10	13	6	6	4
It is too complicated to care.	15	5	9	6	7	14	9	9	8	3	4	10
I have good knowledge about how information about me is stored and transmitted when I use various services online.	8	9	11	14	9	11	8	10	9	4	3	2

Source: Survey conducted with student teachers at Umeå University, Sweden, between November 2019 and May 2020.

As Table 1 shows, the respondents do not generally consider themselves to have very good knowledge about how information about them is stored and transmitted when they use various services online – despite belonging to a group

of which we can expect the members to have better knowledge about this than most people in the world. We will now discuss these results in some more detail in relation to digital competence, online surveillance, and the democracy mission of school.

Discussion

Our findings show that the student teachers we have surveyed largely display the familiar pattern which has come to be known as the privacy paradox (e.g., Gerber, Gerber, & Volkamer, 2018). They generally report that they care about their privacy, but at the same time they do not do much to protect that privacy when they are online. As noted above, our results indicate that one explanation of this (among our respondents) may be that many of them find the issue complicated and lack much knowledge about it. Yet, they are the ones who are supposed to help future pupils acquire digital competence. Now, why is this circumstance important? There are several reasons why we think it is, and here we want to highlight the ones that we initially have found most crucial.

Our general point is that an awareness of the "surveillance aspect" of digitalization is important to be able to make informed autonomous choices regarding one's online behavior. If we do not know that we are – or to what extent we are – being influenced and targeted for various purposes (based on the information that is continuously collected about us), we cannot consider if, and to what extent, we want to ward off this influence. This, in turn, risks to decrease our room for autonomous decision-making. Even if we are not aware of it, decisions may be – in a sense – partly made for us (namely, to the extent that the influencing or targeting succeeds in altering our preferences or behavior, without our knowing or welcoming it). That is to say, we are not in full control of our own choices. Even if one believes that our opinions and choices are always a result of factors that lie outside of our control, it is usually thought to make a crucial difference, with respect to autonomy, whether we are aware of these factors and can consciously reflect on them and relate to them.

The potential lack of autonomy in decision-making may be considered particularly serious – from a democracy perspective – when the choices are of a political, evaluative, or ideological nature, i.e., when they concern our opinions on important matters (see Colaresi, 2020, for an extended discussion about digitalization and the threat to democracy).

There are several topical examples of large-scale political influencing and surveillance schemes utilizing digital technologies, the most well-known arguably being those associated with "the Snowden affair" (see, e.g., Burrough, Ellison, & Andrews, 2014) and "the Cambridge Analytica scandal" (the latter with connections to both the Trump 2016 election campaign and the pro-Brexit campaign; see, e.g., DCMS, 2018). By means of collected aggregated data, political (and other) actors can nowadays target specific groups iteratively with messages on a scale not seen before (e.g., Colaresi, 2020). Kenneth King explicitly addresses the issue of digital literacy and democracy in relation to Brexit, providing examples of such micro-

targeted (mis)information aimed at specific groups in the UK (King, 2019). King draws on an investigation of disinformation conducted by the UK's cross-party Committee on Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), which in its reports directly addresses the need for educational measures to tackle what is perceived as a huge democracy problem:

> In this rapidly changing digital world, our existing legal framework is no longer fit for purpose… We have highlighted significant concerns, following recent revelations regarding, in particular, political manipulation and set we out [sic!] areas where urgent action needs to be taken by the Government and other regulatory agencies to build resilience against misinformation and disinformation into our democratic system. Our democracy is at risk, and now is the time to act, to protect our shared values and the integrity of our democratic institutions. (DCMS, 2018, p. 3)

Based on its investigation, the DCMS committee concludes that "digital literacy should be the fourth pillar of education, alongside reading, writing and maths" (DCMS, 2018, p. 63; DCMS, 2019, p. 87).

In this article, we have aimed to emphasize the critical aspect of digital literacy that the DCMS committee (and King) draws attention to here. It is important to know and understand how one's data can be collected and used when being online – i.e., that it can be used by organizations and companies to expose one to tailored messages – as well as what can and cannot be done to protect one's data. What risks, losses and gains are involved in various options? As the examples of political micro-targeting and misinformation reveal, such knowledge is crucial to being a cognizant citizen in a modern democratic society. In light of the generally assumed democracy mission of school, we contend that this aspect of digital literacy should therefore have a pronounced place in both schools and teacher education.

The results from our survey indicate that Swedish teachers in general need to further their digital competence in order to be able to appropriately aid their pupils in developing digital literacy. Given that Swedish student teachers can be expected to possess a comparatively very high level of digital competence, we think it is safe to generalize this point to comprise teachers in many other countries as well.

It is not only the political aspects of online surveillance discussed above that need to be considered in an educational context. Since the digital transformation of society also permeates its educational institutions, and more and more schoolwork is carried out using digital means, an awareness of the surveillance aspect of digitalization should be present in all schoolwork that makes use of online resources. For example, how many teachers reflect over the fact that when they ask pupils to search on Google, they simultaneously ask them to provide the company Google with information? It is easy to get the impression that platforms like Google are "just out there", completely free for us to use. But, as noted in the background section, that is not the case. To the contrary, these services are built on a business idea in which the basic commodity is our personal information (See Zuboff, 2019).

Perhaps most school assignments that require online activities are done on school computers (or other digital devices owned by the school), which may

mitigate this kind of worry. However, there may be notable exceptions. During the ongoing pandemic, for instance, many pupils around the world have been educated online, from home, and perhaps used a personal computer with an IP address associated with themselves or their family. Even if the example of a school assignment requiring pupils to do Google searches from home may still be considered a rather innocent case, it illustrates the importance of knowing what one is doing when performing various online activities.

When pupils have been introduced to Google and other commercial online services in school, they will likely start to use them for purposes outside their educational sphere and begin to build their own personal data footprint for companies like Google to use and profit from. A person may be perfectly fine with this, and even regard it as something they want to be a part of – perhaps they like getting customized advertisements and do not see any considerably negative consequences for themselves of leaving digital footprints – but the point is that this should be an informed autonomous decision and not something that happens behind their back and outside of their control. Such control is something that schools should arguably help pupils to gain. For instance, perhaps teachers should provide their pupils with the possibility and knowledge of using a VPN-service when they ask them to do school tasks from home that require online activity. Be that as it may, the main point here is that awareness about these issues is still lacking to a large extent and yet it needs to be transmitted to the pupils.

One example of what can be done in teacher education to raise awareness of the surveillance aspect of digitalization, is to bring the privacy paradox to the students' attention and have them reflect on it. To become aware of this more or less unconscious, but to a large extent general behavioral pattern, may be a good way to start the journey towards more conscious online behavior, which hopefully can lead to better preconditions for supporting one's future pupils in their development of digital literacy.

Conclusions

In this article we have discussed the need for raising awareness – in schools and teacher education – about the surveillance aspect of digitalization. We have done this against the background of survey results from former and current Swedish student teachers at Umeå University. We have argued that an awareness of this aspect is important to make autonomous informed decisions regarding one's online behavior, which in turn is crucial to being a cognizant citizen in a modern democratic society. Apart from the fact that school is the place where we expect that our children get to learn about important societal matters, the generally assumed democracy mission of school further accentuates the importance of making the surveillance aspect of digitalization a natural part of education for digital competence – or, differently put, to make sure that it is seen as a crucial ingredient of digital literacy. We hence want to encourage teachers in schools and teacher education to further educate themselves about these issues in order to be

able to assist their pupils or students in developing this aspect of their digital competence.

Acknowledgments

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The Role of Self-Efficacy and Educational Beliefs in Democratic Values: The Case of Turkish Pre-Service Teachers

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The purpose of this study is to examine the role of self-efficacy and educational beliefs in relation to democratic values, while focusing on Turkish pre-service teachers. 382 pre-service teachers from a public university in Turkey have voluntarily participated in this study and responded to a series of research instruments provided by the Educational Belief, Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy and Democratic Values Scales. The results revealed that higher self-efficacy belief is positively associated with higher democratic values among pre-service teachers who endorse contemporary philosophical approaches to education.

Keywords: higher education, democracy, philosophy of education, teacher education

Introduction

In recent years, there is a growing concern that there has been a gradual decline in the quality of democracy around the world (Skaaning, 2020; Mechkova, Lührmann, & Lindberg, 2017). Democracy should not be considered as just a political system, it also refers to a way of life managed by the belief that all people are equal and can work together, despite political, racial, religious or class differences (Dewey, 1940; 2007). From this perspective, the emergence and survival of a democratic society is only possible with the presence of citizens who have internalized democratic values, and this is the responsibility of educational institutions. Accordingly, in a democratic society, it is expected to have an education system that consists of educational environments in which democracy is experienced by all the participants, teachers who manages the classroom and educational processes in line with democratic values, and students who supposedly develop and realize democratic values in their actions. Considering the central role of teachers in education, it is also important to emphasize that they have influences not only on students' academic knowledge and skills but also on their attitudes and ways of human interactions in social settings. If an educational environment is organized and run by democratic values, it becomes possible to develop democratic minded individuals. For this reason, a teacher who intends to create a democratic classroom environment needs to give priority to democratic values in the way the teacher manages the classroom. Democratic values such as freedom, equality, respect and justice are to be embraced and put into practice by teachers in an educational democratic environment (Büyükdüvenci, 1990; Çelik, 2016; Kesici,

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2008; Kıncal & Işık, 2003; Parker, Barnhardt, Pascarella, & McCowin, 2016; Shechtman, 2002; Selvi, 2006). Therefore, it is important to examine the democratic values of pre-service teachers themselves and the factors affecting them, as they have the potential to influence their future practices. Regarding this current study, focusing on democratic educational environments and teacher characteristics, it is assumed that there may be a reliable relationship between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, their attitudes toward democratic values and the philosophical approach to education that they embrace. In this regard, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature by analyzing the relationship between pre-service teachers' democratic attitudes, their perceptions of self-efficacy and their beliefs about and tendencies toward educational philosophies.

Literature Review

Teachers' Educational Beliefs

Teachers are centrally important for an education system to be put effectively into practice in accordance with the underlying philosophy of education that frames its aims, contents, processes as well as the way how it conceptualizes the school, teacher, student and educated person. As Smith (1962) highlights, to be a qualified teacher one needs to be capable of making philosophical analyses as well as being able to interpret philosophical approaches to education. Developing a teaching philosophy may not be an easy task, however, it can be regarded as a must for an effective teacher (Ozmon & Craver, 1981). Teachers may embrace different philosophical approaches to education. Doubtless, without democratic minded teachers who reflect democratic values in their actions, it is less likely to educate democratic minded students. Therefore, educating capable teachers is a must for a society and its education system in order to advance its democratic social order. In other words, a democratic education system needs teachers that are capable of acquiring the fundamental philosophy of the education system and acknowledge its aims and purposes as well as the ways how it operates with respect to classrooms, schools and the society. Previous studies on prospective and pre-service teachers' educational beliefs and philosophical approaches showed that there is a general tendency toward more democratic and student-centered approaches to education in line with progressive and existential educational approaches (e.g., Çalışkan, 2013; Kanatlı & Schreglman, 2014; Weshah, 2013). Campbell and Horowitz (2016), for example, found that completion of college positively affects students' democratic attitudes, such as support for civil liberties and beliefs about gender egalitarianism. In addition, as Simmie and Edling (2018) provides, democracy oriented education policies encourage teachers to implement classroom practices that are more related to progressive and reconstructionist educational philosophies. Moreover, as shown by Telese (1996), as teachers become familiar and engaged with more student-centered educational practices, their philosophical perspective and educational beliefs become more progressive. Furthermore, as pre-service teachers' field experiences broaden their beliefs about

teaching philosophy show changes from essentialism to progressivism (Weshah, 2013).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" Bandura (1986 p. 391) is grounded in social-cognitive theory. Social cognitive theory emphasizes the decisive role of personal evaluations about capabilities on emotions, thoughts, and actions. Therefore, efficacy beliefs play crucial role in human functioning by providing a foundation for motivation and success (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (2012) conceptualizes self-efficacy as a multidimensional structure that includes wide variety task-specific efficacy beliefs. Accordingly, teacher self-efficacy is framed as "a teacher's belief in his or her ability to complete the steps required to accomplish a particular teaching task in a given context" (Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012). A capable teacher, as stressed here, is supposed to teach effectively while expressing democratic values in his/her actions confidently, such as being tolerant, informative, respectful and encouraging. In other words, a capable teacher in a democratic environment is expected to have high self-efficacy beliefs.

It is primarily because, an individual can develop a more general self-efficacy belief based on his/her self-efficacy beliefs developed in different subjects and can assess his/her efficacy in another subject accordingly (Zimmerman, 2000). In this sense, a qualified teacher capable of making philosophical analyses and interpreting philosophical approaches to education, as mentioned, must have intellectual skills that allow him/her to analyze, understand and realize what a democratic philosophy of education requires him/her to put into practice in educational environments. Also, those skills must lead him/her to help children to do better both in academically and morally, because other than being a static or unchangeable personal trait, self-efficacy is a multidimensional, improvable, generalizable and transferable set of beliefs (Bandura, 1997, 2006). Similarly, even among individuals who have similar levels of professional skills, belief in one's self-efficacy plays an important role in one's success that differentiates him/her from others (Bandura, 1997; Driscall, 2000). In fact, when individuals believe that they can reach desired outcomes, they become more intrinsically motivated and put more effort to reach the outcomes (Bandura, 1997; Siwatu, 2007). It is also important in the sense that a teacher with a higher self-efficacy belief can not only set higher educational goals both for himself/herself and students, but also work harder to achieve those goals regardless of any obstacles (Ross, 1994). Accordingly, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs play important roles in students' educational achievements (Brownell & Pajares, 1996; Gavora, 2010; Guo et al., 2009; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012). For example, self-efficacy is strongly associated with productive teaching (Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh & Khalaileh, 2011) and teachers' high self-efficacy beliefs contribute to students' motivation and academic achievements (Cheung, Richler, Palmeri, & Gauthier, 2008). Also, Ilgaz, Bülbül and Çuhadar (2013) found that there is a positive relation between pre-service teachers' perception on personal endeavors and educational beliefs associated with contemporary approaches to education. A

capable teacher as framed here, therefore, should also have higher self-efficacy beliefs.

Overall, it is argued that a capable teacher in a democratic society is to (1) have high self-efficacy, (2) adopts a philosophical approach to education more compatible with democratic values other than alternatives and (3) shows positive attitudes toward democratic values. In this regard, this study examines the relationship between these three aspects of teacher candidates and provides, in accordance with the results, a discussion on and some suggestions for the teacher training programs. It may be important to note that some studies have been conducted on these aspects separately or one with another aspect while focusing on different variables (e.g., Aydın & Boz, 2010; Black, 2015; Çalışkan 2013; Kanatlı, & Schreglman, 2014; Smothers, Colson, & Keown, 2020). However, and different from previous studies, this current study bears an importance since it takes all these three aspects (self-efficacy beliefs, democratic values, and educational beliefs derived from philosophical approaches to education) altogether into consideration and provides an analysis on them.

The Purpose of Study

With increasing empirical attention in teacher training programs, teacher self-efficacy and educational belief has been documented as a critical factor on the formation of democratic classroom environment (e.g., Aydın & Boz, 2010; Ilgaz, Bülbül & Çuhadar, 2013; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012). Previous studies indicate that teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs are more successful to build warm, close, and democratic teaching and learning settings so to increase students' academic achievement (e.g., Bandura, 1997; Siwatu, 2007; Topkaya & Yavuz, 2011). Accordingly, it may be argued that training highly efficacious teachers may lead to successful classroom management skills, low student disruptive behaviors, and positive attitudes toward democratic values (Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh & Khalaileh, 2011; Cheung, Richler, Palmeri, & Gauthier, 2008; Kelly, 2002). Therefore, there is a need to document and understand the role of teachers' self-efficacy and educational beliefs in the development of democratic values. In this sense, the hypotheses of the current research can be stated as follows:

H1. There are significant difference between democratic value groups as defined below (i.e., low, moderate, high) in terms of pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy and educational beliefs.
H2. There are significant relationships between pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy beliefs, democratic values, and educational beliefs.
H3. Pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy and educational beliefs are significant predictors in their democratic values.

Methodology

Participants and Sampling

The sample consisted of 382 pre-service teachers (70.9% female, 29.1% male), who are enrolled in teacher education programs (i.e., Preschool, Mathematics, Science and Physical Education programs) at a large public university in Turkey. The study used the convenience sampling method to gather participants (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In other words, the researchers used a non-probability sampling technique where participants were selected because of their convenient accessibility. However, Karadeniz Technical University has the largest teacher training programs in the region. Therefore, this university has very diverse student population. In this sense, the participants' age ranged from 19 to 26 (M=22.03, Sd=4.73). Also, their years of teaching experience demonstrated that 43.4 % had between 5 and 7 weeks of experience, 36.5% had 8 and 24 weeks of experience, and 20.1 % had more than 24 weeks of experience.

Procedures

Before conducting the study, the researchers contacted the university and permission was granted for the current research. Then, pre-service teachers were informed about the purpose of the study, duration of participation, potential risk and benefits, and recruitment procedures. Once the participants consented to allowing the researchers to collect the data via paper and pencil surveys, the researchers gave the survey package to the volunteers. Pre-service teachers completed the study measures in their scheduled class period and returned the forms to the researchers.

Instruments

The participants responded to a series of items in the research tools. The Democratic Values Scale (DVS) was designed to measure the degree of teacher candidates' democratic values on issues related to educational life (Selvi, 2006). The instrument is a 24-item measure that comprises three subscales related to democratic values (educational rights, solidarity, freedom). The educational rights subscale consisted of nine items (e.g., "The ways of accessing knowledge should be taught to students"). The solidarity subscale contained nine items all characterized by solidarity (e.g., "The teacher should cooperate with students while solving problems"). Finally, the freedom subscale consisted of six items (e.g., "Students should have examinations whenever they feel they are ready"). The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating format that ranges from "definitely does not agree" (1) to "definitely agree" (5). Internal consistency reliabilities for the Democratic Values Scale total score is 0.87. For the subscales, 0.84 for the Educational Rights, 0.82 for the Solidarity, and 0.70 for the freedom. Inter-item correlation coefficients were acceptable.

The Educational Belief Scale (EBS) was developed by Yılmaz, Altınkurt, and Çokluk (2011) and designed to measure the prospective teachers' educational beliefs. The scale consists of five-factors (perennialism, essentialism, progressivism, reconstructionism, existentialism) and 40 items (8, 5, 13, 7, and 7 items under the factors respectively). Items include, for example, "Education should be student centered", "School is to be life itself, rather than a place where the young is prepared for life", and "Education should be in accordance with universal and unchanging truth". The scale uses a 5-point Likert-type rating format that ranges from "definitely does not agree" (1) to "definitely agree" (5). By the use of the scale, participants' educational beliefs are associated with the educational philosophies framed by the five factors on which more information is provided in the discussion section. Internal consistency reliabilities for the subscales were ranged 0.70 to 0.91. The computed internal consistency coefficients of the scale are acceptable.

The last scale focusing on self-efficacy assesses teachers' judgment of capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among the students who be problematic or unmotivated (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). The adapted Turkish version of Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Scale (TSSES) was developed by Çapa, Çakıroğlu, and Sarıkaya (2005). This measure contains three subscales: (1) efficacy for instructional strategies (e.g., To what extent can you use a variety of assessment strategies?), (2) efficacy for classroom management (e.g., how much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?), and (3) efficacy for student engagement (e.g., how much can you do to help your students value learning?). Total score ranges from 24 to 216. High scores mean that the teachers are highly confident to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning. Items are rated on a response scale from 1 (nothing) to 9 (a great deal). Internal consistencies for these subscales ranged from 0.78 and 0.93. The adapted Turkish version of Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy scales is most extensively validated with pre-service teacher samples (e.g., Cerit, 2010; Çocuk, Alıcı, & Çakır, 2015; Özder, 2011). Validity studies showed that there is a predictable and significant correlation between the scale and concurrent measures of teachers' classroom management skills, their context knowledge, and student academic achievements (Cerit, 2010; Çocuk, Alıcı, & Çakır, 2015; Özder, 2011).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were computed. To examine whether the pre-service teachers' educational and their sense of self-efficacy beliefs differ significantly for each democratic value groups, ANOVA was conducted. To examine the relationship between the study variables, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients for the dimensions of educational beliefs and teacher sense of self-efficacy beliefs were examined along with the pre-service teachers' democratic value scores. Next, the researchers also conducted multiple regression to test the predictive role of teacher self-efficacy belief and educational beliefs in the participants' democratic value scores.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There are significant differences between democratic values groups (i.e., low, moderate, high) in terms of pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy and educational beliefs

Prior to examining the connections between the dimensions of teacher candidates' democratic values, their self-efficacy, and educational beliefs, data were checked for outliers. No threat was found. As presented Table 1, the ANOVA results supported the hypothesis 1. The findings showed that there were significant differences in educational beliefs and teacher self-efficacy belief between democratic value groups (i.e., low, moderate, high).

Specifically, the current findings showed that high democratic value group (M=148.46, Sd=26.25) is statistically and significantly different from moderate (M=125.66, Sd=27.36) and low (M=124.75, Sd=29.35) groups in terms of teacher self-efficacy belief scores, $(F_{(2,\ 377)}=19.61, p<0.01)$. For educational beliefs, the study results showed that progressivism $(F_{(2,\ 377)}=59.68, p<0.01)$, existentialism $(F_{(2,\ 377)}=57.99, p<0.01)$, reconstructionism $(F_{(2,\ 377)}=21.82, p<0.01)$, perennialism $(F_{(2,\ 377)}=18.23, p<0.01)$, and essentialism $(F_{(2,377)}=4.63, p<0.01)$ were statistically and significantly varied by each democratic value group. Furthermore, the source of group differences was examined further through Tukey Post-Hoc test and indicated that high democratic belief group had largest mean scores as compared to low and moderate ones, however, there was not statistically significant difference between low and moderate groups for educational beliefs and teacher self-efficacy scores.

Table 1. ANOVA Results for the Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Efficacy (TSE) and Educational Beliefs by Democratic Value

		M	**Sd**	**F**	**p**
TSE (total)	Low	124.75	29.35	19.61	0.00
	Moderate	125.66	27.36		
	High	148.46	26.25		
Progressivism	Low	3.19	1.62	59.68	0.00
	Moderate	3.60	0.65		
	High	4.32	0.45		
Existentialism	Low	3.21	1.71	57.99	0.00
	Moderate	3.60	0.68		
	High	4.53	0.62		
Reconstructionism	Low	3.11	1.44	21.82	0.00
	Moderate	3.54	0.65		
	High	4.13	0.69		
Perennialism	Low	2.69	1.27	18.23	0.00
	Moderate	3.57	0.95		
	High	3.99	0.55		
Essentialism	Low	2.40	1.15	4.63	0.01
	Moderate	3.31	0.76		
	High	2.91	1.02		

Hypothesis 2: There are significant relationship between the pre-service teachers' democratic values, sense of self-efficacy, and educational beliefs

As demonstrated in Table 2, results of Pearson correlation indicated that there was a significant positive association between democratic values and teacher self-efficacy belief total score (r=0.34, p<0.01). Specifically, student management (r=0.33, p<0.01), instructional strategies (r=0.33, p<0.01) classroom management (r=0.30, p<0.01), are significantly and positively related to democratic values. In addition, the democratic value is positively and significantly associated with progressivism (r=0.57, p<0.01), existentialism (r=0.52, p<0.01), and reconstructionism (r=0.40, p<0.01). However, democratic value is negatively and significantly correlated with perennialism (r=-0.33, p<0.01) and essentialism (r=-0.14, p<0.05). Teacher self-efficacy belief is positively and significantly linked with progressivism (r=0.27, p<0.01), existentialism (r=0.28, p<0.01), and reconstructionism (r=0.28, p<0.01). Although teacher self-efficacy belief and perennialism is negatively and significantly associated with each other (r=-0.26, p<0.01), there is negative, but not significant relation between teacher self-efficacy and essentialism (r=-0.03, p>0.05). Therefore, the hypothesis 2 was supported.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Results Between the Study Variables (N=382)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
1.Democratic Value	-									
2.TSE Total	0.34**	-								
3.Student Engagement	0.33**	0.94**	-							
4.Instructional Strategies	0.33**	0.95**	0.84**	-						
5.Classroom Management	0.30**	0.94**	0.82**	0.84**	-					
6.Progressivism	0.57**	0.27**	0.26**	0.26**	0.23**	-				
7.Existentialism	0.52**	0.28**	0.29**	0.25**	0.24**	0.74**	-			
8.Reconstructionism	0.40**	0.28**	0.26**	0.28**	0.24**	0.57**	0.49**	-		
9.Perennialism	-0.33**	-0.26**	0.22**	0.28**	0.22**	0.57**	0.49**	0.58**	-	
10.Essentialism	-0.14*	-0.03	-0.03	0.07	0.06**	-0.04	-0.16**	0.24**	0.29**	-

p<0.05* p<0.01**

Hypothesis 3: Teachers' sense of self-efficacy and educational beliefs are significant predictors in their democratic values

As detailed in Table 3, results of multiple linear regression indicated that there was a collective significant effect between teacher self-efficacy belief (M=144.8, Sd=27.7), progressivism (M=4.2, Sd=0.57), existentialism (M=4.4, Sd=73), reconstructionism (M=4.03, Sd=0.73), perennialism (M=3.91, Sd=0.66), essentialism (M=2.96, Sd=0.99), and democratic belief (M=97.84, Sd=13.1), ($F_{(6, 381)}$=41.81, p<0.01, r^2=0.40). The individual predictors were examined further and indicated that teacher self-efficacy (β=0.18, p<0.01), progressivism (β=0.36, p<0.01), existentialism (β=0.13, p<0.05), reconstructionism (β=0.12, p<0.05), and essentialism (β=-0.14, p<0.01) were statistically significant predictors in the model, except perennialism (β=-0.01, p>0.05). In other words, all directions for

the predictors are in expected way and the most impactful predictor was progressivism, as proposed in the hypothesis 3.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Results

Variables	B	β	SE	t	p
TSE TOTAL	0.09	0.02	0.18	4.24	0.00
Progressivism	8.35	1.51	0.36	5.53	0.00
Existentialism	2.36	1.13	0.13	2.08	0.04
Reconstructionism	2.16	0.99	0.12	2.19	0.03
Perennialism	-0.27	1.11	-0.01	-0.24	0.81
Essentialism	-1.81	0.61	-0.14	-2.96	0.00
R^2 0.40					
$F_{(6, 375)}$ 41.81					

DV=Democratic Values; IDV=Teacher Sense of Self-Efficacy Belief and Educational Beliefs
$p < 0.05$

Discussion

This study, as stressed above, while limiting its scope within the context of teacher training system in Turkey, expected that higher self-efficacy may significantly be associated with democratic values of teachers who tend to endorse philosophical approaches to education that are derived from or related to democratic theory. Speaking of philosophical approaches to education, educational beliefs of teachers were examined through five common approaches. Essentialism and perennialism represent traditional approaches derived fundamentally from idealism and realism, while the others characterize modern approaches that take their roots from contemporary philosophies including pragmatism and existentialism. Basically, perennialism adopts the perspective that the great ideas and theories are originated from unchangeable truths and they are applicable in any era regardless of social conditions. In this sense, this educational approach argues for developing students' rational skills that enable them to acquire universal truths and principles, by following an unchangeable curriculum and using great books of the human history under strict control of teachers. Essentialism, in this regard, also stresses the role of teachers in gaining knowledge. For this approach, teachers are supposed to instill essential knowledge and skills into student through a core curriculum. Although an essentialist approach may allow changes in the curriculum, the both are conservative approaches that argue for instilling some common knowledge into students without appealing to their own intellectual capacities and for exercising harsh discipline and making them respectful for authority. In contrast, the other three are more student centered approaches that take students active learners rather than passive receivers. For example, progressive approach takes students as active learners who appeal to their own intellectual capacities and construct knowledge through their own experiences. In this regard, a progressive teacher tries to guide students in order for them to acquire knowledge by their hands-on life experiences, rather than trying to be a figure of authority. It also provides cooperative learning environments in which students are encouraged to develop social skills suitable for a democratic life. In addition to

these, existential approach mainly focuses on developing more responsible and free members of a society, while reconstructionist approach highlights the importance of social change through educated individuals. In short, traditional approaches operates under a strict sense of authority, the contemporary ones embraces and promotes democratic principles in education as well as in the wider society.

Accordingly, this study assumed that educational beliefs associated with contemporary philosophical approaches to education may have a significant relation to democratic values. On the one hand, as supported by the results, the participants showed highest tendency to existentialism. Progressivism takes the second place and reconstructionism comes as the third. The lowest two approaches endorsed among the participants appear to be perennialism and essentialism, the latter is being the lowest. These results, in addition, show similarities with the results of previous studies. For example, some previous studies also showed that existentialism is the most preferable approach while essentialism is the least (Altınkurt, Yılmaz, & Oğuz, 2012; Çelik, & Orçan, 2016; Ilgaz, Bülbül, & Çuhadar, 2013). On the other hand, the study revealed that democratic values are positively and significantly associated with existentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism, while being negatively and significantly correlated with perennialism and essentialism. In other words, as expected, the participants endorsing democratic contemporary educational approaches have high democratic values regarding educational rights, solidarity and freedom. These results can be interpreted as in accordance with the results provided by some previous studies. For example, Yazıcı (2011), Akın & Özdemir (2009) and Oğuz (2009) showed that prospective teachers hold in general high democratic values. As they become more familiar with student-centered educational approaches and broaden their field experiences, pre-service teachers' educational beliefs are shaped more by progressive educational philosophy (Telese, 1996; Weshah, 2013). Considering these with the finding that contemporary democratic educational approaches are more embraced by teacher candidates than traditional approaches (Çelik & Orçan, 2016; Simmie & Edling, 2018), the results provided in this current study appear to have furthered the research done in these aspects of teacher education.

In addition, the study shows that there is a positive and significant relation between teacher self-efficacy and preferences of educational approaches. As the results support, higher teacher self-efficacy is positively and significantly associated with existential, progressive and reconstructionist educational approaches. In other words, pre-service teachers who endorse educational beliefs associated with existentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism have higher self-efficacy beliefs. In contrast, teacher self-efficacy is negatively linked with traditional educational approaches. Pre-service teachers who hold educational beliefs derived from perennialism and essentialism have lower self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, some previous studies have examined prospective teachers' self-efficacy (e.g., Savran & Çakıroğlu, 2001; Ülper & Bağcı, 2012). Similar results to those revealed in this current study have also been supported by some previous studies, suggesting that there is a positive relation between contemporary educational approaches and teacher self-efficacy (Ilgaz, Bülbül, & Çuhadar, 2013). In a similar vein, a previous

study showed that there is a positive correlation between teachers' efficacy beliefs and constructivist, rather than didactic, instruction strategy (Nie et al., 2013). It is also important to note that teachers with high level of self-efficacy are expected to work harder to contribute to their students' academic achievement and social development (Guo et al., 2012; Pendergast, Garvis, & Keogh, 2011). Therefore, it is possible to expected that prospective teachers who embrace contemporary student centered educational approaches may have higher self-efficacy beliefs regarding instructional strategies, classroom management and student engagement, as suggested in this study.

Moreover, this study also suggests that there is a significant association between democratic values and teacher self-efficacy. High self-efficacy beliefs regarding instructional strategies, student engagement and classroom management are significantly and positively related to democratic values. In other words, pre-service teachers who have higher self-efficacy beliefs, also have higher democratic values. Previous studies have reported positive relations between teacher self-efficacy and democratic. For example, while a study conducted by Topkaya and Yavuz (2011) revealed that pre-service English language teachers have a high level of democratic values, in another study Almog and Shechtman (2007) found that although there is a gap between teachers' hypothetical knowledge and what they put into practice in classroom, there is a positive relation between teachers' democratic beliefs and self-efficacy. As also shown previously, teachers that have higher efficacy beliefs are open to new ideas and supportive of students' autonomy (Brouwers & Tomic, 2003; Gavora, 2010). Therefore, it appears to be that higher teacher self-efficacy and higher democratic values taken together may have a strong relation to philosophical approaches to education, particularly those that derives from contemporary democratic theories. In fact, a major result of this study is that teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs appear to be an indicator of their democratic values and educational approaches they embrace. In other words, higher teacher self-efficacy is positively associated with higher democratic values and one of the three philosophical approaches to education: existentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, democracy is an issue related to values and culture as well as to social institutions. If foundational democratic values are not reflected through how social institutions operate, then that society may not fully realize a democratic order. Creating democratic minded citizens requires acquiring and realizing democratic values through education, which signifies the importance of both educating new generations and training qualified teachers. Besides, if a society applies only procedural aspects of democracy, then democratic values may not become parts of the culture in that society. In this regard, some societal problems may be observed in the Turkish society. According to Büyükdüvenci (1990), for example, while showing some progress in the procedural aspects of democracy, Turkish society still needs to progress in the way the society internalizes

democratic values. Of course, democratization processes in Turkish society in general and education in particular are discussible. For some, full democratization is to start with the families and schools in a society. Regarding Turkey, in this sense, since neither of them have become democratically administered institutions yet, realizing democratic values in the classroom becomes less likely and as a result teacher candidates' democratic attitudes may not even change during their higher education years, after years of educational experiences in such environments (Kılıç, 2010). This study reveals the importance of structuring teacher training programs in a way that will strengthen pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and enable them to adopt their educational beliefs rooted in educational philosophy and to internalize democratic values reflected in their professional practices. However, considering that democratization process is still in progress in Turkey, it seems crucial to provide more studies that aim to contribute to understand the needs of the education system to become more democratic and provide discussions for the problem of training democratic minded educators. In this regard, this study also appears to bear an important potential for dealing with this problem and for encouraging further studies. After all, creating and sustaining a democratic society is essentially an educational matter (Dewey, 2007).

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Music Class and Abuse

By Banu Özevin[*]

It is important for the teacher, who is one of the main actors in the cognitive, mental and psychological development of their students, to create a safe educational environment. However the state in Turkey has received reports that have found abusive behavior by some teachers. The main objective of this study is to question the existence of abuse by music teachers. The participants of the study consisted of 902 students studying in different Faculty of Education departments in Turkey. The research is a descriptive study and employed a survey model. The data were collected through an "Abuse in Music Class Questionnaire", which was developed by the researcher. The results revealed that more than one-quarter of the responding students experienced emotional abuse and 5 to 10% suffered physical abuse in music classes during middle school and high school. Men reported emotional abuse significantly more than women. This study showed that students may experience abuse in music classes and that emotional abuse is more common than physical abuse. As far as reasons for abuse, classroom management problems, a lack of knowledge about pedagogic principles in the developmental characteristics of children, and teaching methods are highlighted.

Keywords: abuse, music teacher, music class, abuse in music class, classroom management

Introduction

The basis of this research was formed during a lecture with my students, who were candidates to become music teachers. In a lesson in which we examined articles on music and education, one of my students referred to a study on "Corporal Punishment in Middle School" by Mahiroğlu and Buluç (2003). Honestly, I was not interested in it much because I was hoping that we could talk about music education, but the other students were very interested and began to tell their own stories. Some of them had experienced slaps, chalk throwing, ruler hitting, etc., but some suffered more extreme abuse, such as being placed in the trash bin, squeezing spirit (which is used to clean the board) on students' faces, and making students slap each other. Afterwards, I talked to my colleagues about this issue, and the coexistence of music lessons and punishment came up. In my theory, verbal punishment was more common in music class. After listening to the opinion of experts, including a psychologist, I decided to place the theoretical structure of the study on "abuse" because the broad scope of abusive expressions more accurately described what students experience in the classroom, rather than bullying, harassment, or punishment.

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What is Abuse?

The Children's Bureau (2019) defines child abuse and neglect as, "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm." The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that children under 18 years of age "shall be protected against all kinds of bad behavior including physical and emotional violence or abuse, neglect and sexual abuse and shall be protected against violence or other cruel, inhumane, degrading treatment or punishment" (UNICEF & SHCEK, 2010).

Abuse is usually distinguished by four categories: (1) physical abuse: any intentional use of physical force against a child by an adult, such as hitting, punching, slapping, striking, burning, biting, shaking, kicking etc. (Gurhan, Ozbas, & Kabatas, 2012; Kvachadze & Zakareishvili, 2009; Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012; WHO, 2006); (2) sexual abuse: participation of a child in a sexual act for the sexual enjoyment of an adult (Hamarman & Bernet, 2000; Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012); (3) emotional (psychological) abuse: the production of psychological and social deficits in the growth of a child as a result of erroneous behavior such as loud yelling, coarseness, inattention, isolation, terror, harsh criticism, over-pressure, rejection, verbal abuse, the denigration of the child's personality etc. (Hamarman & Bernet, 2000; Kvachadze & Zakareishvili, 2009; Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012). It is said that, "one of the most significant characteristics that distinguish emotional abuse from other abuse types is the fact that it is accepted as 'ordinary' by the social and the cultural environments, which makes it more difficult to perceive it as a kind of abuse" (Ersanlı, Yılmaz, & Özcan, 2013); (4) neglect: a lack of attention from caregivers and a failure to provide relevant and adequate necessities for the child's survival. In such cases, children are deprived of attention, love, and nurturing (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 1997, quoted by Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012).

According to a global status report on violence prevention (WHO, 2014), "studies from several countries in all regions of the world suggest that up to 80 to 98% of children suffer physical punishment in their homes."

As it was stated in the joint report issued by UNICEF and SHCEK (2010, p. 11), "beating is still used in Turkey, where it is perceived as a method of discipline and legitimized both in the family and the public sphere. Moreover, attempts are made to normalize abuse through sayings in Turkish such as 'Roses grow where mother hits' and 'Beating comes from heaven'."

Abuse in School

In addition to their teaching duties, teachers must create a safe learning environment; doing so is fundamental for the educational process. Teachers are the main actors in students' cognitive, psychological and social development, and "have been equated with parental substitutes in schools, as caretakers of classroom environments" (McEachern, Aluede, & Kenny, 2008). They "play perhaps the

strongest role in shaping students' experience, through their direct interactions with the student and indirectly by influencing the nature of peer relationships within the classroom" (Osterman, 2010, quoted by Zerillo & Osterman, 2011); moreover, they are "critical in determining the school climate" (Twemlow et al., 2006, p. 189, quoted by Allen, 2010). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF & SHCEK, 2010) asserts that school discipline shall be given within a framework of human dignity.

Studies show that in many parts of the world, regardless of the West or East, abuse occurs in the school environment—perpetrated by teachers or school staff; such abuse is widespread: African (Tafa, 2002), Australia (Delfabbro et al., 2006), Canada (Hogan, Ricci, & Ryan, 2019), the Caribbean (Baker-Henningham, Meeks-Gardner, Chang, & Walker, 2009), Cyprus (Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012), Egypt (Wasef, 2011), Georgia (Kvachadze & Zakareishvili, 2009), Ghana (Agbenyega, 2006), India (Garg, 2017), Ireland (James et al., 2008, quoted by Allen, 2010), Israel (Benbenishty, Zeiar, & Astor, 2002a; 2002b), Italy (Ferrara, Franceschini, Villani, & Corsello, 2019), Lebanon (El Bcheraoui, Kouriy, & Abid, 2012); Nigeria (Aluede, Ojugo, & Okoza, 2012), Nepal (Khanal & Park, 2016), Pakistan (Arif & Rafi, 2007), Saudi Arabia (Elarousy & Shaqiqi, 2017), Tanzania (Lema & Gwando, 2018), and in 19 U.S. states corporal punishment remains legal (Caron, 2018). Turkey is no exception; students here continue "experiencing physical and emotional abuse by their teachers at school" (UNICEF & SHCEK, 2010, p. 20).

Abuse in Music Class

Little research exists that is focused on abuse in music and art education (Elpus & Carter, 2016). Fernandez-Morante (2018) states that this is owing to the fact that the issue is probably seen as "taboo." Some studies focus on peer bullying in music classes (Carter, 2011; Silveira & Hudson, 2015; Taylor, 2011) or the bullying of students in music ensembles (Elpus & Carter, 2013, 2016; Rawlings, 2015). Only a few studies focus on abuse in professional music education settings, conservatories, or musical ensembles (Baker, 2016; Fernandez-Morante, 2018; Pace, 2015a; 2015b).

The importance of these studies can be understood bilaterally. First, it is important to evaluate abuse in the learning environment, but also to evaluate the qualities of the music teacher as a role model for students who will become the music teachers of the future. In other words, it is critical to understand the teacher's role in potentially abusive environments. In Turkey, formerly, the requirement of becoming a music teacher was having earned a degree from a music education department, but in recent years, graduates of conservatories and musicology departments can also become teachers as long as they complete a one-year course on pedagogical formation (YÖK, 2018). Previous studies are therefore important because they have shown just where today's music teachers have come from.

In the case of people trained as professional musicians having later become teachers, Pace (2013) states that, "many musicians are engaged as teachers primarily on the basis of their achievements as performers, and the result can at worst be disastrous […] Behind sometimes monstrous egos of successful solo

musicians you frequently find common traits of narcissistic self-obsession, narrowness of outlook, ruthless competitiveness, vanity and the insatiable need for reassurance." Although such a pessimistic picture may not always be valid, the conservatories and, quite frankly, all music education institutions are mostly directed to work with "talent." The fact that competition is strong and teacher-student relationships in music are often different than other teacher-training departments may undermine the pedagogical qualities a teacher should have. According to results obtained by Schmidt (1998), student teachers' definition of "good" teaching was influenced—naturally—by their university music education courses. Even though student teachers say that they discovered more effective teaching methods over time, Schmidt's results show how influential the university teacher is as a "model music teacher."

Sun and Leung (2014) conducted a study with 674 students from 29 primary schools in northeastern China, one of the rare studies examining abuse in formal music education. Their results revealed that "all of the music teachers employed corporal punishment (89% of them occasionally and 11% of them often). According to the students, about 30% of the teachers never positively recognized their students during class. As a result, only about 20% of the students 'liked' their music teachers."

Darrow (2017) describes music as, "a powerful instrument for peace and unity" and states that as music educators, "we would be remiss not to use this influential tool, and our personal agency, whenever and wherever we face prejudice and hate." The results obtained by Sun and Leong seem to contradict Darrow's characterization of music as a means of peace and cohesion in general. The fact that the music teacher abuses his or her students physically or verbally is certainly neither a calming nor a unifying effect.

The aim of the research is to seek answers to the following questions: Is there abuse in music lessons in Turkey; which is a kind of abuse, if any; and does exposure to abuse vary by gender? This study is important because it involves an area that has not been thoroughly researched and hopes to contribute to music teacher training. Safe educational environments are required to train healthy individuals. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the teacher's behavior towards their students. Identifying abusive behavior of a teacher may provide opportunities for creating healthier educational settings.

Another feature of the present study is that the study group consists of teacher candidates; their capacity to remember their teacher-student interactions and reflect on them will be a positive contribution to the literature and to their future professional lives.

Materials and Methods

The research is a descriptive study and employed a survey model. The survey model provides a quantitative or numerical description of trends, attitudes or views across the universe through studies on a sample selected from within a universe (Creswell, 2017 p. 155).

Participants

The participants of this study are students of Dokuz Eylul University's Faculty of Education, which is one of the largest faculties in Turkey. Owing to its location and facilities, Dokuz Eylul University is a preferred state university and educates students from all over the country. Such regional diversity lends credence to the research results overall.

A total of 902 students, women (n=654, 72.5%), men (n= 246, 27.3%), and 1 (0.1%) student who wrote "the [gender] options here don't fit me," completed the survey. The distribution of the students came from 15 different departments in the faculty, as follows: Preschool Education (n=176, 19.5%), Elementary Mathematics Teaching (n= 122, 13.5%), Fine Arts Education (n= 97, 10.8%), Music Education (n= 97, 10.8%), Elementary Education (n= 82, 9.1%), German Language Education (n= 67, 7.4%), English Language Education (n= 58, 6.4%), Biology Education (n= 41, 4.5%), Mentally Disabled Children Education (n= 36, 4.0%), Consultant (n= 36, 4.0%), Social Sciences Education (n= 30, 3.3%), Mathematics Teaching (n= 27, 3.0%), Geography Education (n= 18, 2.0%), Turkish Language and Literature Education (n= 8; 0.9%), History Education (n= 7, 0.8%).

For questions regarding high school music classes, a total of 592 students, women (n = 444, 75%), men (n = 147, 24.84%), and 1 (0.16%) student who wrote "the [gender] options here don't fit me," completed the questionnaire.

Materials

The data were collected through an "Abuse in Music Class Questionnaire," which was designed by the researcher and is based on the scale used in the "Corporal Punishment in Middle School" study by Mahiroğlu and Buluç (2003). During the development of the questionnaire, Mahiroğlu and Buluç (2003), who carried out the mentioned study, were contacted for use-permission (which was granted). Questions related to music lessons were added to the general questions regarding abuse. Experts' opinions were consulted and, with the recommendations of a psychologist and two experienced music educators, the final form of the questionnaire took shape. First, fourth-year students in the music education department were asked to complete the questionnaire as a pilot test. Having found no problem with the pilot, research was continued, and the data obtained from this group were included in the data.

The paper-and-pencil questionnaire consists of thirty questions. Eleven of them are demographic in nature (e.g., gender, grade, and department). The second part of the questionnaire consists of multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding abuse in school in general and in the music class. The questions are based on students witnessing rather than experiencing, to be able to access more data. Completion of the questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes.

In Turkey, music is taught as an elective course in high schools. Acknowledging that this situation would create a very limited research group, questions were asked about music lessons in both middle school and high school.

Procedure

Data were collected in November 2018. Appropriate courses were selected for each department and an appointment was made with the teacher of the course. Students who were in the class at the time were included in the research. All participants were informed that this was anonymous and voluntary. The researcher herself carried out all procedures, and the students' questions and comments were recorded as "observation notes" by the researcher.

Data Analyses

Data analyses were carried out using SPSS 15.0. Frequency and percentage were calculated. The t-test was used for independent groups employed to examine the differences between men and women. In addition, answers to open-ended questions were categorized by the researcher.

Results and Discussion

Abuse in School Environment

According to the data analysis, in middle school 623 students (70.2%) witnessed abuse, 267 students (29.5%) did not encounter or remember seeing it. In high school, out of 582 students, 129 (22.2%) witnessed abuse and 452 (77.8%) did not.

In terms of defining what constitutes abuse, this study relies on previous ones, which concluded abuse to be: slapping, kicking, ear or hair pulling, being lined up and beaten in turn, being forced to stand on one foot, caning, forced to kneel, to stand in an uncomfortable position, knocking students' heads against a wall or table, pushing, shaking, throwing items at students, hitting them with objects, cutting their hair, breaking their noses, and insulting them. It is noteworthy that students described abuse with expressions such as, "in front of the school, in front of the class, in front of my friends." These expressions refer to emotional abuse, even as they describe physical abuse at the same time.

According to the t test results obtained for the middle school level, women (n=449, 68.9%) and men (n=184, 74.8%) experienced abuse. At the high school level, women (n=84, 19.3%) and men (n=45, 31.3%) experienced abuse.

Table 1. Gender and Abuse in School

School	Abuse type	Gender	n	x̄	s	df	t	p
Middle School	AS	Women Men	652 246	1.31 1.25	0.463 0.465	896	1.739	0.000*
High School	AS	Women Men	442 147	1.32 1.25	0.466 0.435	587	1.490	0.001*

p<0.01.
AS= Abuse in School.

Table 1 displays that in middle school, witnessing abuse shows a significant difference according to gender (t=1.739, p=0.000 <0.01). Women ($\bar{x}$ =1.31) reported seeing abuse in school more than men ($\bar{x}$=1.25). In high school, witnessing abuse again shows a significant difference according to gender (t=1.490, p=0.001 <0.01). Women ($\bar{x}$ =1.32) reported seeing abuse in school more than men ($\bar{x}$=1.25).

Abuse in Music Class

According to the data analysis, in middle school music classes 98 students (10.9%) reported physical abuse and 804 (89.1%) did not. 290 students (32.2%) reported that they had witnessed emotional abuse and 612 (67.8%) did not. 33 students (5.8%) reported witnessing physical abuse in high school music classes while 539 (94.2%) did not. 146 students (25.6%) witnessed emotional abuse in high school music classes and 424 (74.4%) reported witnessing none.

As is shown in Table 2, in middle school music classes there is a significant difference in the witnessing of emotional abuse according to gender (t=1.323, p=0.005<0.01). Men ($\bar{x}$=1.71) reported abuse in music class more than women ($\bar{x}$=1.67). There is no significant gender difference in the witnessing of physical abuse in middle school music classes. In high school music classes, there is a significant difference in the witnessing of emotional abuse according to gender (t=1.616, p=0.000<0.01). Men ($\bar{x}$=1.72) reported abuse in music class more than women ($\bar{x}$=1.65). There is no significant gender difference in the witnessing of physical abuse in middle school music classes.

Table 2. Gender and Abuse in Music Class

School	Abuse type	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	s	df	t	p
Middle School	PAM	Women Men	652 246	1.90 1.88	0.305 0.328	898	0.771	0.127
	EAM	Women Men	652 246	1.67 1.71	0.472 0.454	898	1.323	0.005*
High School	PAM	Women Men	442 147	1.90 1.88	0.305 0.329	589	0.636	0.209
	EAM	Women Men	442 147	1.65 1.72	0.478 0.450	589	1.616	0.000*

p<0.01.
PAM= Physical Abuse in Music Class.
EAM= Emotional Abuse in Music Class.

Some of the students from the music department graduated from the Fine Arts High School (FAHG)[1] Music Branch. The rates of this group were also calculated in the belief that their experiences could provide insights into abuse. When their results, including 97 students (women=76, men=20, not identified=1) are examined, it is revealed that 14 students (14.6%) reported witnessing physical abuse in high school music classes and 83 (85.4%) reported they did not. On the other hand, 55

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[1]FAHG is a type of high school that accepts students with an exam and gives art/music lessons to their students based on their interests and abilities.

students (57.3%) reported emotional abuse while 42 students (42.7%) reported none.

Below are sample sentences in which students define physical abuse and emotional abuse in middle and high school music lessons:

Physical abuse by music teachers:

Beating
Breaking recorder, melodica
Ear/hair pulling
Hitting hand/head with recorder, recorder case, guitar, violin bow, ruler
Hitting head to piano
Throwing something (recorder, music book, music stand)

Emotional abuse by music teachers:

Comparing students' voice with an animal sound (e.g., crow)
Giving favor to students who can play an instrument
Forced singing
Forcing student to play in front of the class while knowing that he cannot play and then scolding
Harsh criticism
Ignoring
Insulting
Isolating
Kicking out of class
Making student stand next to trash bin
Making fun of the student's physical characteristics
Making him/her feel incompetent in terms of manners
Neglect
Not listening
Not recognizing
Not trusting
Offending
Saying "Let's start with the wrong example" and showing one student as an example
Scolding
Swearing
Taking student up to the board and asking the other kids to spit on him
Verbal attacks
Yelling

Perceived Reasons of Abuse by students include:

*Quality instruction and classroom management (lack of knowledge about pedagogic principles in the developmental characteristics of children, and teaching methods): Forgetting to bring material/recorder, not being able to play instrument/ recorder, not being able to write correct musical notes, not being able to know/ memorize musical notes, not being able to sing, not having a beautiful voice, not being able to learn quickly, failure, not taking notes on notebook, not studying, not completing homework/ projects, being hyperactive/disabled.

*Disruptive behavior and classroom management: Noise, laughter, swearing, chewing gum in class, being late to class, being hyperactive/disabled.

Students' opinions regarding effects of abuse both in school environment and in music class (*= short-term effect, **= long-term effect):

Negative effects: Alienation to class*, being neglected in class*, being hated by the class*, not taking the class seriously*, becoming quiet*, becoming withdrawn*, crying*, fear*, stubbornness*, decreased self-respect**, dropping out of school**, changing schools**, being prejudiced to music teachers*'**, not making an effort in music class*, changing elective course from music to fine arts*'**, tendency to violence**, changing attitude only in that class*, giving false impression as changed*, having poor attitude toward the teacher*, not respecting the teacher*, causing damage to the teacher's property*'**, family harming the teacher*'**

Positive effects: Learning how to defend**, trying harder*

Discussion

This research aims to investigate teacher abuse in music class. University students were asked to recall their memories of middle and high school (approximately 1-10 years before) and note instances of abuse to the researcher. There was concern during the data collection process that students would not be able to recall their memories, yet their answers to the open-ended questions and their detailed memories indicate that abuse is hard to forget. In addition, during the data collection procedure the researchers engaged in conversation with classroom teachers concerning the research. It was surprising to witness how fresh the memories of the teachers were, though this also called to mind the long-term effects of abuse. One teacher recalled, "My music teacher told me not to sing. That's why I hated music lessons and I wasn't interested anymore."

Another example pertaining to the long-term effects of abuse came from a student in the Fine Arts Education Department. When I told him that participation was voluntary, he looked at the questionnaire and stated that he did not want to answer. Later, I overheard his dialogues with his friends that he had been beaten a lot as a student and therefore did not want to answer because he did not want those memories to return.

The first finding of the present study showed that 70.2% of students reported that they had witnessed instances of abuse in middle school. This high rate, which covers more than half of the study group, is similar to the rates cited in other studies (Benbenishty, Zeiar, & Astor, 2002a; 2002b; Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012; Yaşar, 2009). This result is also consistent with UNICEF and SHCEK's (2010) report. As stated in the report, the use of proverbs in Turkish culture such as, "the meat is yours, the bone is mine," by families entrusting their child to the teacher indicates trust in the teacher, that he or she may discipline the child, even in an abusive way.

As can be seen, although there is abuse (22.2%) in the high school level, the rate is considerably lower than in middle schools (70.2%). Benbenishty, Zeiar, and Astor (2002b) explain this as follows: "the younger the students, the more vulnerable they are to victimization by teachers and school staff. The age

difference in victimization by staff may reflect the enhanced ability of older students to protect themselves and deter aggression against them."

According to the research results, men reported abuse in music classes, both middle school and high school, at higher rates than women. This result is consistent with previous research (Baker-Henningham, 2009; Benbenishty Zeiar, & Astor, 2002a; Caron, 2018; Delfabbro et al., 2006; El Bcheraoui, Kouriy, & Abid, 2012; Theoklitou, Kabistis, & Kabitsi, 2012; Yaşar, 2009). However, considering abuse in school more generally, women reported more abuse than men. In the present study, the questions asked were based on the witnessing of abuse, which might have led to this result. At any rate, it requires additional consideration and research.

Research shows that 10.9% of students reported physical abuse in middle school music classes and 5.8% in high school classes. However, 32.2% of students reported that they witnessed emotional abuse in middle school music classes and 25.6% witnessed emotional abuse in high school music classes. This result confirms my hypothesis that emotional abuse is more common in music classes.

In their work, Sun and Leung (2014) state that only about 20% of the students "liked" their music teachers. Although no question in the present study pertained to liking teachers and/or lessons, a number of students indeed stated that they did not like or hated their music lessons.

As the results revealed, 14.6% of students who graduated from FAHG Music Branch reported physical abuse and 57.3% reported emotional abuse. This result constitutes greater than half of the entire group report and confirms my hypothesis that emotional abuse is more common in music classes; this result is also consistent with previous studies. Fernandez-Morante (2018) explains that in music teaching there are still cases of psychological harassment and sexual abuse. Pace (2015a) argues that music teachers continue to use fear, intimidation, and humiliation against students.

In light of the literature, when we look at the reasons of teachers' abuse of students, we can discuss three main points:

Personal reasons: Krug et al. (2002: p. 1085), quoted by Özmen and Küçük (2013), state that personality disorders, substance abuse, and exposure to violence may turn teachers into abusers. Hyman (1998) affirms that adults who were physically punished in their childhood by their parents or teachers are more supportive of corporal punishment than those who were not subjected to such punishment. Also, a relationship exists among family problems, professional burnout (Maslach, 1981), a willingness to work, and in-class disciplinary practices (Tümkaya, 2005).

Every teacher has hard days at some point in his or her professional life. A frustrated teacher may raise his or her voice when he or she cannot cope with a situation, but it is unacceptable that a teacher directs his or her power through abuse on a student who is vulnerable in the classroom hierarchy. In addition, examples from recent studies such as, "taking student up to the board and asking the other kids to spit on him" and "squeezing spirit into a student's face" seem to go far beyond issues such as discipline or cultural habits, and appear to be related to the teacher's personal problems.

Reasons related with students: It might be a challenging task for the teacher to deal with young children and, especially, adolescents in class. Maladaptive and disruptive behaviors may overwhelm teachers. McCaslin and Good (1998), quoted by Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006), list six possible reasons for misbehavior: "the student may be lonely or scared; out of control or hostile; attempting to save face or at a loss for what to do; bored, frustrated or unsuccessful in attempts to learn; physiologically in pain, sleep deprived in withdrawal; distracted by peers, events or memories. Sometimes these behaviors are enacted unconsciously. According to Thornson (1996), quoted by Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006), "students indicated that they sometimes engaged in 'maladaptive behaviors' as a form of a resistance; in other words, they tried to 'get even' with a teacher who was rude or didn't teach the class effectively." Yet, according to Graziano (1992), if there is a frequent punishment, it "has more to do with a teacher's frustration level than with the child's misbehavior."

However, as Bull and Solity (1989, p. 10) point out, "many of the consequences for children's behavior in class are provided by the teacher. By using and understanding these appropriately the teacher can therefore strengthen behaviors that he wishes to see in class and weaken behaviors that he considers undesirable or inappropriate in the classroom setting." This reasoning steers us toward certain intricacies inherent in the teaching profession.

Reasons related to the teaching profession: Being a teacher requires substantial skills. According to Nakamura (2000), a teacher must recognize and nurture the dimensions of student wellness, namely social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical, and psychosocial wellness.

In order to develop students in these directions, a teacher must be equipped and experienced in terms of the pedagogical, psychological, humanistic, and socializing aspects of education in addition to knowledge of the field to create healthy and effective teaching-learning environments. When teaching music is taken into consideration, artistic skills of teacher must also be taken into consideration.

The reasons for teacher abuse as stated by researchers are as follows: student obedience (Özmen & Küçük, 2013); a sense of discipline (UNICEF & SCHEK, 2010; Shumba, 2007; Tümkaya, 2005); punishment (UNICEF & SCHEK, 2010); overcrowded classrooms (Tümkaya, 2005); motivation (Agbenyego, 2006); to improve academic standards (Agbenyego, 2006); low job satisfaction (Garg, 2017); the socio-economic situation of school (Tümkaya, 2005); stress and frustration (Elbla, 2012); and family expectations (Khanal & Park, 2016; Agbenyego, 2006). In some studies, researchers found that teachers want—and tend to continue—to use corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure (Kudenga, 2017; Feinstein & Mwahombela, 2010; Agbenyega, 2006), and also forms of emotional abuse (Shumba, 2007). However, abuse often fails to eliminate unwanted behavior, but rather creates a cycle (Figure 1) (Wiggfield & Eccles, 2000, quoted by Kvachadze & Zakareishvili, 2009):

Figure 1. Vicious Cycle
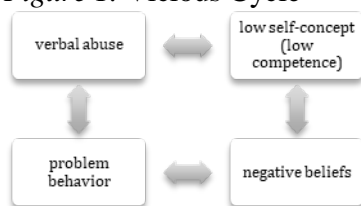
The research results show that the group questioned in the present study experienced and reported physical and emotional abuse from their music teachers. When the factors such as stress of the music teacher are examined, it can be seen that the researchers highlight the following topics: students' apathy and unmotivated students, workload, large numbers of students (Gordon, 2002), the burden of tedious administrative responsibilities, the constant need for music education advocacy, as well as conflicts between personal and professional roles (Scheib, 2003). Additional factors may be added to these, such as the lack of music classrooms in public schools, trying to conduct music classes in crowded regular classrooms, a lack of materials, and constant demands from administration for music teachers to prepare shows for ceremonies and special days. These factors can lead to dissatisfaction, boredom, burnout, and the belief that teachers are unable to develop the requirements of the profession and perform their music duties. As a consequence, these can raise possibilities for abuse.

Among the reasons abuse occurs, classroom management emerges as one of the main factors. Gordon (2002) states, "classroom management is unique in music, requiring differences in pacing, maintenance of student behavior and constant on-task focus. Effective management is of great importance in order to attain optimal learning and promote continued motivation for students." Merrion (2002, p. 178) posits, "fortunately and unfortunately, the issue of classroom management within music instruction poses unique problems due to the aesthetic nature of the arts. To maintain a learning environment free enough to permit personal and individual responses, improvisation, and creativity while providing a structure in which all students can collectively remain on-task and actively involved seems impossible." It might not be impossible, but doing so certainly requires sufficient knowledge and experience.

Another abuse factor involves teachers' lack of knowledge and experience regarding music pedagogy. Student shortcomings (such as the inability to play an instrument, sing, or recognize musical notation) does not seem to be a one-way problem. Being successful in a musical action requires a physical-cognitive-emotional integrity. Practice is needed to achieve the physical. The emotional aspect requires a teacher's attention, love, recognition, and approval. These qualities enhance students' attention, motivation, self-efficacy, and self-confidence. Thus, a music teacher needs to be equipped both with knowledge and psychological insight.

An additional factor that perpetuates abusive behavior may be insufficiency, which is what I encounter most often when I observe my students who are the prospective music teachers program, during the Teaching Practice course. When

they teach children, as soon as they feel insufficient, they begin to face difficulty in controlling the class and start yelling at the students, even insulting them from time to time, or hit a table. This situation also occurs for inexperienced music teachers. As I have witnessed, teachers often revert to literature-type lessons rather than musical ones, in which lectures are given on notation, lyrics, musical descriptions, characteristics of instruments, etc. Managing music lessons effectively, where everyone actively makes music, requires pedagogical, artistic, and social-psychological skills.

"Talent" also might consider as a factor in abuse. When teachers construct their classes around talent, it is inevitable that they will discriminate. The present study explores this factor: "Discriminating students who can play an instrument, read notes from others and only paying attention to them." Every student has the right to benefit from the artistic and social benefits of music education, while nurturing emotional, cognitive, physical, and "peaceful" aspects of music education. As Bartel and Cameron (2004) state, "[I]n music education we have the further concern of 'legitimized deprivation' of opportunity for children on the basis of "talent". Since music is a naturally occurring intelligence, education for the development of musical potential should be every child's right."

Even if abuse in music classes is minor and does not cause lifelong physiological or psychological effects, the consequences of becoming distant from music, becoming indifferent to instruments, moving away from singing (which is the most natural musical act of the human being), and moving away from expressing oneself in an artistic way are enormous.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is hoped that this study may begin a scholarly dialogue on abuse in the music classroom. Asking students to remember and reflect on their experiences of abuse may contribute to their future professional lives. During data collection, a student revealed the following: "I had concerns about teaching. With this questionnaire, I questioned the past, I questioned my teachers and I thought that I could do better than them." Prospective teachers need more classes in which they learn about abusive behavior can relate this knowledge to their previous teachers' attitudes, and, as such, begin to define what a "good teacher" is.

In the present study, questions were designed to reveal students' memories of physical and emotional abuse in school. During the procedure, a student asked what type of abuse was "kicking a student out of classroom." Although it may seem like physical abuse at first because it is a physical action, actually being thrown out of the class constitutes emotional abuse because it involves public humiliation, neglect, rejection, shame, and deprivation (educational and social). In fact, the same can be said for all types of physical abuse. Although, unfortunately, students may think they've deserved it, it eventually leads to self-doubt, self-denigration, and emotional turmoil. As such, the relationships between emotional and other forms of abuse should be considered.

The present study focused on students' perceptions regarding teachers' abusive behavior and its possible causes. Further studies should focus on teachers themselves. What they consider to be abusive behavior might help to improve the quality of music education everywhere.

Despite its absence from the questionnaire, eight students reported sexual abuse as physical abuse and most involved music teachers, a tragedy examined in the work of Pace (2015a, 2015b) that demands additional investigation.

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Distance Education Experiences of Teacher-Parents during the COVID-19

By Derya Güvercin[*], Ayşe Elitok Kesici[±] & Sait Akbaşlı[°]

This research aimed to determine the opinions of teacher parents about distance education process during COVID-19. The study was designed as a case study which is one of the methods in qualitative research. The sample of the study composed of 83 teacher parents from different branches in Turkey. Maximum variation and criterion sampling methods were used to select the participants. The data of the study were gathered though open ended questions developed by the researchers and were analyzed through descriptive and content analyses. According to the participants, distance education is perceived and accepted as a means of support rather than an alternative to face-to-face education. Participants mentioned the distance education carried out during the pandemic process as a beneficial practice in order to prevent students from breaking off from education but also they stated administrative issues, lack of computer science knowledge and internet-related problems. The inability to disseminate distance education to all students, especially disadvantaged students due to the lack of infrastructure, indifferent parents and the fact that distance education is insufficient in the education of young children/special education students show that distance education has not yet met the expectations to provide equal opportunities for everyone involved.

Keywords: COVID-19, distance education, pandemic, teacher, parent

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the whole world, has also affected educational organizations, causing face-to-face education to be suspended and transition to distance education. According to Tedmem (2020), the number of countries that closed all schools from pre-school education to higher education at the beginning of April was 193. In a few other countries, the majority of schools were closed by local-level decisions in terms of administrative structure. In total, the number of students affected by the closure of schools exceeded 1 billion 724 million. Countries that shut down schools decided to continue education with distance learning tools. Distance learning is carried out by using tools such as printed teaching materials, radio broadcasts, television broadcasts, online teaching contents or online interactive lessons according to the technological infrastructure and opportunities of the countries (Tedmem, 2020). Although there are studies showing that the closure of schools provides benefits in controlling the epidemic (Tian et al., 2020; Kwok et al., 2020), data obtained from the SARS outbreak in

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China, Hong Kong and Singapore show that there is no significant contribution at all. Recent studies on COVID-19 have predicted that school closure will prevent deaths by 2-4%, which is much less than other social distance interventions (Viner et al., 2020).

Today, online learning has shown a great development (Borup & Kennedy, 2017) and distance education studies have increased in countries such as United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea and Turkey, especially at the primary and secondary school level (Barbour, 2017; Harris, Dargusch, Ames, & Bloomfield, 2020). Distance education is considered as an inclusive and equality-enhancing factor for K-12 students who have difficulties in accessing education (Buckingham, 2017; O'Donoghue, Lopes, & O'Neill, 2011; Harris, Dargusch, Ames, & Bloomfield, 2020). On the other hand it is claimed that it may cause more educational exclusion for special education students (Slee, Corcoran, & Best, 2019; Slee, 2011). During quarantine period, at least 9 out of 10 students continued their education away from school buildings (Hale et al., 2020). Despite the measures taken, it has been determined that among countries and among different income groups in the countries, students experience problems in accessing internet and technology and therefore cannot participate in distance education. According to OECD data, 95% of students in Switzerland, Norway and Austria have a computer to use in their schools, while only 34% in Indonesia have a computer (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Families, on the other hand, had to take more responsibility for their children's education (Yılmaz, Mutlu & Doğanay, 2020). Students also faced some problems about assessments and exams, post-traumatic stress disorder (Tedmem, 2020). UNESCO (2020), by establishing a global education coalition unit, tried to take the necessary precautions to ensure that countries do not experience disruptions in education. Governments tried to adapt their education systems to emergency remote teaching by turning them into distance education. The general aim of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) in time of pandemic is to provide temporary instructional support and a flexible learning environment for short term solutions (Hodges et al. 2020; Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

During the pandemic, teachers who have school-age children have assumed a double-sided role as both parents and teachers. This situation, which enables them to see this process from both sides, is important for the effective planning, management and implementation of education in such crisis situations. With this study, it is thought that the opinions of education professionals who assume the responsibilities of both teachers and parents on distance education will contribute to the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to reveal the various experiences of teacher-parents during distance education due to the COVID-19 outbreak. For this purpose, participants were asked following questions:

1. What kind of changes has occurred in your daily life during the distance education process due to the COVID-19 outbreak?
2. What kind of institutional/individual studies have you done regarding your child's education in the distance education process?
3. What kind of institutional/individual studies have you done for the education of your students during the distance education process?
4. What were the most challenging areas for you both as a parent and an education worker in the distance education process? In what areas did you need support? How did you deal with the challenges you faced?
5. How do you evaluate the distance education process experienced in terms of your children and students?
6. What are your views on the effectiveness of the distance education process as both a parent and a teacher?
7. What are your suggestions for a more efficient distance education process?
8. Is there any situation you would like to add other than the above questions? If there is, add it.

Methodology

The research was organized in a case study pattern in qualitative research method. In the case study design, the factors (environment, individuals, events, processes, etc.) of a situation are investigated with a holistic approach and the focus is on how they affect the relevant situation and how they are affected by the relevant situation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Because the case is a system with both definite boundaries and related components, it is also defined as an in-depth description and examination of a system (Creswell, 2011; Merriam, 2013). Therefore one of the researcher's primary goals is to identify unique aspects of this specific case (Christensen, Johnson, & Turner, 2011).

Study Group

The participants of the research consist of teachers who are also parents and are involved in the distance education process due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Criterion sampling and maximum variation under purposeful sampling methods were used to determine the work group (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The reason to prefer criterion sampling is that it selects the cases that will provide maximum information for the problem and ensures that case studies about the problem are covered in the research (Neuman, 2007; Patton, 2002). In this study, the people involved in the distance education process as both parents and education workers are the subject of the study. At the same time, diversity of the teachers in the study group in terms of school type, level, seniority and branch were taken into consideration.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were obtained through an online questionnaire called "Educational Experiences of Teacher-Parents during the COVID-19 Outbreak" developed by the researchers. In the survey, the experiences of teacher-parents during the COVID-19 outbreak were collected through open-ended questions. Survey technique is a systematic data collection technique that is used to obtain information from individuals who make up a universe or sample about a particular subject (Yılmaz, Mutlu, & Doğanay, 2020). The surveys conducted for the purpose of collecting data are used to determine the socio-economic levels of people, the degree of the effects of the situation, to obtain information about the participants, to define the risks in the existing situation, etc. (Kudat, 2002). In addition, various demographic variables of the participants were included (gender, seniority, branch, school type (private/public), school level (kindergarten/primary school/secondary school/high school), number of children, school level of the child).

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data, descriptive analysis and content analysis techniques, which are data analysis techniques used in qualitative research, were used (Gökçe, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The frequency and percentage scores of the data were given. For validity and reliability analyses; direct quotations of participants are given in examples, codings are controlled over different coders. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) reliability of a qualitative study increase if two coders study on the same data set and reach out a common vision about what the encodings mean and which piece of data belongs to which code. Also by audit trail technique it was verified that each interpretation is indeed based on the dataset. In order to maintain the integrity of the researcher, develop his/her hypotheses, and shape the research design, the researcher opens himself to the supervision of a colleague who is not involved in the study and receives support from him (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Results

In this section, personal information of the participants is given and their responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire were divided into categories by coding, and as a result, themes were created (Table 1). The answers given by the teachers were evaluated one by one over the questions. The frequency values and percentages of the codes are tabulated and the answers deemed important are presented as examples. Findings are as follows.

Table 1. Personal Information about Participants

Personal Information	
Gender	Female: 73.5%
	Male: 26.5%
Professional seniority	0-5 years: 1.2%
	6-10 years: 7.2%
	11-15 years: 26.5%
	16-20 years: 38.6%
	20 years and above: 26.5%
Branch	Primary school teacher: 37.2%
	Maths: 9%
	Preschool/kindergarten: 7.7%
	Art: 6.4%
	Special education: 6.4%
	Physical education: 5.1%
	Turkish: 5.1%
	Social sciences: 3.8%
	Design and technology: 2.6%
	German: 2.6%
	Turkish Literature: 2.6%
	School counselor: 2.6%
	Geography: 1.3%
School Type	English: 1.3% Science: 1.3% Physics: 1.3% Elektronics: 1.3% Biology: 1.3% Religion: 1.3%
	State school: 92.7%
	Private school: 7.3%
School Level	Kindergarten: 3.7%
	Primary school: 47.6%
	Secondary School: 26.8%
	High school: 22%
School level of children	Kindergarten: 20.3%
	Primary school: 49.4%
	Secondary School: 43%
	High school: 32.9%
Number of children	1 child: 22.9%
	2 children: 65.1%
	3 children: 12%
Number of consults to the hospital because of the suspicion of COVID-19 (among oneself, students or colleagues)	Yes: 6%
	No: 94%
COVID-19 diagnosis taken among participants of the study	Yes: 0%
	No: 100%
COVID-19 diagnosis taken in participant's environment (student/parents/colleagues)	Yes: 7.3%
	No: 92.7%
Deaths because of COVID-19 in participant's environment	Yes: 8.5%
	No: 91.5%

After the personal information module, 7 open-ended questions were asked to the participants to learn about their experiences during pandemic. The answers of

participants were given without any changes. The findings of the questions are given sequentially below.

Question 1: What Kind of Changes have occurred in your Daily Life during Distance Education Process due to the COVID-19 Outbreak?

Participating teachers reported those changes as: increased stress and anxiety, more interest in technology and self-development, staying at home, restriction of social life, the beginning of the distance education process and adaptation to this process, transition to a different lifestyle, spending more time on the internet, increased use of mobile phones for communication, spending more time on yourself and the family. Some participants stated that there was no change in their lives during this period (Figure 1). When the codings were evaluated, three categories were reached. These are: adaptation to the distance education process, psycho-social change and no change. Some of the answers given by the participants to this question are as follows:

Examples for Category 1 (Adaptation to the Distance Education Process):

K2: I researched and learned some computer programs for distance education.
K16: Online education has entered our life. We followed the lessons online.
K48: I started using phones and computers a lot.

Examples for Category 2 (Psycho-Social Change):

K44: I miss going out and talking to someone. Trust problems occurred. Staying distant to everyone due to the possibility of being sick, and getting used to cleaning paranoidly every time we came from outside came into our lives.
K53: I cannot see the faces of my students, I cannot hug and kiss them like every day, I do not know what materials my students have at home while choosing my activities, I do not want families to go out to buy materials.
K80: Doing distance education activities both for my children and students together and being isolated from our life outside home due to the epidemic started to be a bit tiring and boring.
K25: Wasting time has decreased. I was able to read more books and spend time for myself and my family.

Examples for Category 3 (No Change):

K22: There was no particular change.
K68: We seem to be spending the summer vacation at home. Not much has changed

Figure 1. Changes in Lifestyle during the COVID-19 Process
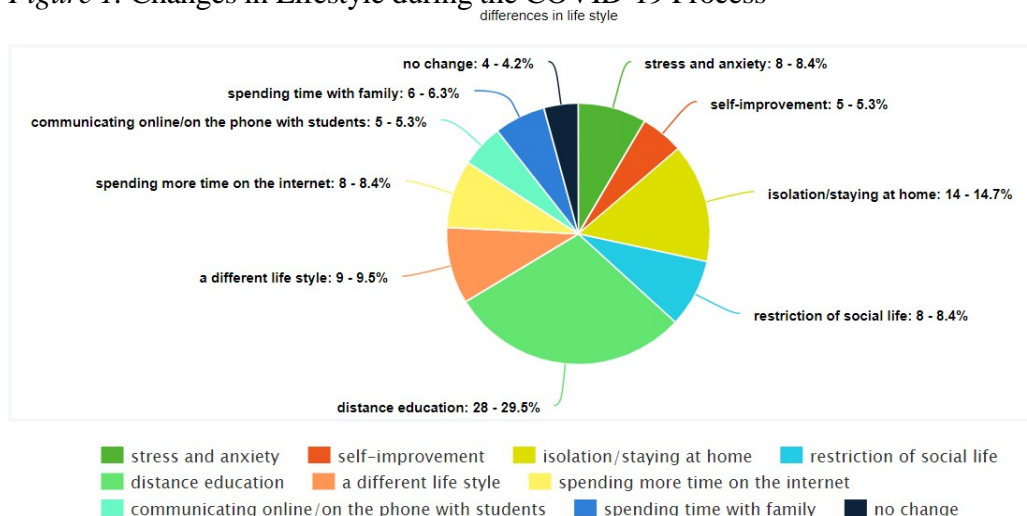
Question 2: What Kind of Institutional/Individual Studies have you done regarding your Child's Education in the Distance Education Process?

Participants stated that they mostly used online and distance education tools in this process for the education of their children (Figure 2). They stated that they managed the education process both through live lectures on EBA TV (Education and Informatics TV) and EBA application, and through lectures, online activities and studies, and trial exams from different online sources. Apart from that, they stated that they did activities such as doing homework, repeating the subject, solving tests/questions, benefiting from subsidiary resources, reading books, doing skill-based/art activities, playing games. Based on these codes, it was observed that the participants displayed behaviors in two categories, both in class activities and extracurricular activities, regarding the education of their children during the COVID-19 pandemic. An important point here is that the nature of the activities performed varies according to the age group of the child. While activities such as EBA TV, reading, domestic activities and doing homework are performed in the younger age group, activities such as test solving and exam preparation are dominant in the older age group. Below are some examples of the answers given by the participants that are deemed important:

Examples for Category 1 (Course Activities):

> K32: We provided technological tools and communicated with his teacher. We ensured that he completed the assignments his teacher gave and participated in activities, and helped with matters he could not understand.
> K71: Since my daughter was preparing for the exam, I found resources for her on the internet.

Examples for Category 2 (Extracurricular Activities):

K11: Cut, paint and paste activities, drawing line exercises, simple mathematical logic.

K73: We are doing exercises for focus attention and study from the math book, and also doing free activities with colored papers. He paints a lot.

Figure 2. Education Activities with Children during COVID-19

Education activities with children during Covid-19
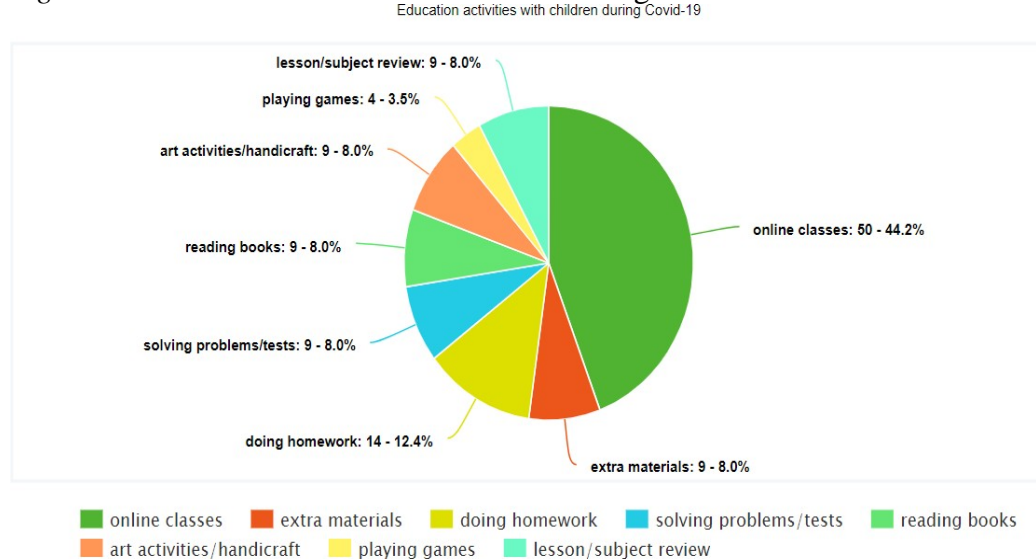
Question 3: What Kind of Institutional/Individual Studies have you done for the Education of your Students in the Distance Education Process?

According to the answers, teachers benefit from online education (distance education/live lesson/Skype/EBA TV etc.) the most for the education of their students during the COVID-19 pandemic process, and extra material and activity sharing (lecture, worksheet, test, applied video, game, etc.) (Figure 3). They also stated that they communicated with students and their parents via smartphone applications (mostly WhatsApp) and phone calls, guided them, provided psychological support, and made the necessary announcements and information about the process. The assignment of students and the follow- up of the given assignments constituted another code group. They also performed games, art activities and domestic activities outside of the classroom. Thus, the activities of the participants for their students in the distance education process can be divided into three categories; activities related to course follow-up: extracurricular activities and other activities. Some of the answers given by the participants to this question are as follows:

Examples for the Category 1 (Activities Related to Course Follow-Up):

K17: I gave online classes. EBA, etc. I sent extra materials and followed them up. I called by phone and provided psychosocial support.

K32: I made one on one interviews, informed the parents about the up-to-date information about education, and shared activities suitable for their level with the students.
K51: I shot videos, prepared tests and shared a lot of other activities.

Examples for Category 2 (Extracurricular Activities):

K79: I shot videos while lecturing, I suggested various artistic activities, they grow flowers and I give daily homework.
K18: We taught old games, shared our memories and told stories that will be lessons for life.

Examples for Category 3 (Other):

K52: E-twinning project events, 23 April and mother's day activities.

Figure 3. Education Activities with Students during COVID-19
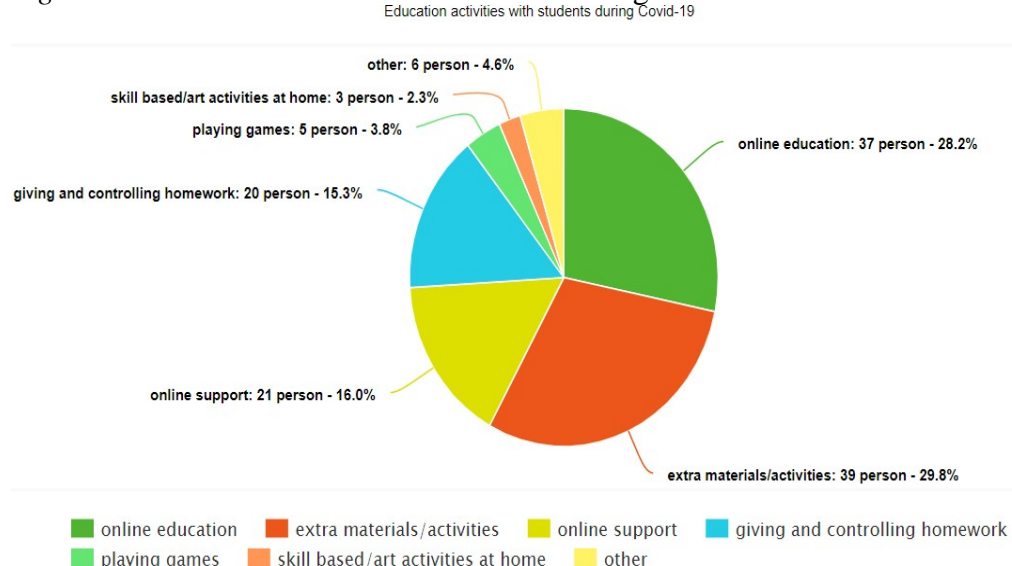
Question 4: What were the Most Challenging Areas for you both as a Parent and an Education Worker in the Distance Education Process? In what Areas did you Need Support? How did you Deal with the Challenges you Faced?

The difficulties stated by the participants were categorized in three: difficulties related to lesson follow-up, technological problems and psycho-social difficulties. The codes emphasized by the participating teachers in the lesson follow-up category were: intensity of the distance education process and excessive homework, problems related to the management of the distance education process (studying regularly, classroom management in online lessons, parent-teacher cooperation, parent indifference, etc.), communication problems and lack of material/resources (Figure 4). In the category of technological problems, participants expressed problems such as technical problems, lack of technological

knowledge, the process of getting used to online classes and constraints based on equal opportunities. The psychological problems that the participants experienced during this process; motivation problems, boredom, digital addiction, feeling of restraint, stress, reluctance, and lethargy. The social problems they experienced were included in the code of restriction of the social environment. A small part of the participants stated that they did not encounter any difficulties in this process. Some of the answers are given below as an example:

Examples for Category 1 (Psychological and Social Difficulties):

K32: As an education worker, I needed the support and cooperation of parents. As a parent, I needed the support of the teacher. Not attending school makes it difficult to provide a complete school environment at home. Sleep pattern, meal time, etc. This negatively affects the study routine. In addition, the constant presence of children at home reflects negatively on their behavior. There is a state of reluctance and negligence. I received support from the teacher from time to time in this regard.

K51: Since it is not like face-to-face education, the motivation of the students decreases from time to time. So I call them and make them feel in control.

K79: Children need to spend their energy and it is very difficult to achieve this in apartment life, and sometimes games that can be played at home do not appeal to them.

Examples for Category 2 (Problems with Course Follow-up):

K20: Lecturing with a child nearby at home. It was not easy to direct children who were not near us.

K23: My child gets bloodshot eyes alone for hours in front of the screen. He started calling it "distance torture", not distance education.

K36: Home, childcare, education altogether were hard to handle with.

K78: I could not reach my parents and students, I could not get feedback. My biggest problem was being able to communicate.

K80: I find most institutional postings useless, and unnecessary. While the special education area should be one-to-one and interactive, we send students educational content on the internet just to pretend to be doing something. It's a futile effort for this area.

Examples for category 3 (Technological Problems):

K55: My students had internet connection problems. There were students who went to their villages, and they experienced greater difficulties. The children who did not have internet were reached by phone and followed up by giving homework from the books.

K67: I find it difficult to keep my child going to live lessons. Because the connection is troublesome he does not want to continue. In addition, we sometimes have trouble doing homework.

K65: I saw that I have deficiencies in the use of information technologies. I am having problems reaching all of our parents and students. K64: My parents' lack of knowledge about the use of technology made communication difficult.

Figure 4. Difficulties Faced during COVID-19
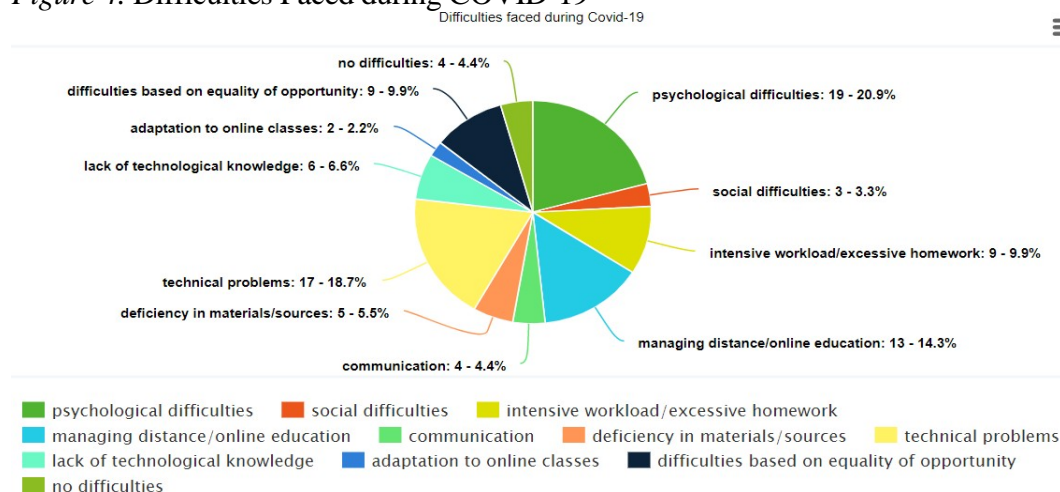
Question 5: How do you evaluate the Distance Education Process Experienced in terms of your Children and Students?

It was observed that the majority of the participants (44.7%) evaluated the process negatively (Figure 5). The expressions used by the participants in the negative evaluation category were: "lingering, distraction, lost time, not like face-to-face education, not suitable for preschool and special education, an inadequate, boring, hectic process, no equal opportunities." The negative evaluation was followed by positive evaluations (25.9%) in terms of frequency, and then the difficulty of the process, indecisive views and "unexpected/unprepared situation" were mentioned. In their answers to this question, teachers generally mentioned that distance education cannot replace face-to-face education, it is inefficient especially for the younger age group and special education students, problems related to internet connection and impossibilities for equal opportunities. On the other hand, they stated that it was a positive practice for students not to break away from education. Some examples of answers to this question are as follows:

Examples for Category 1 (Positive Evaluation):

K16: I think it was the best thing to do in this process. The children did not break away from teaching and their teachers. Psychologically, it was good for them to see their teachers before them every day.
K25: It saves time, more time has been spent as a family, we have devoted more time to education, parents feel the value of teachers more effectively.

Examples for Category 2 (Negative Evaluation):

K28: The process was positive for students with family support. However, unwilling students who have no family support were affected by the process very negatively.

K40: I can say that it was beneficial for my child, but it did not work for special education students because I used the ba-sa method in the field of reading and writing but the sound method was used in EBA.

K44: It is not nice at all, it is more efficient to study face to face at school. Sociality ends at home. Children are not disciplined.

K63: Distance education via TV channel is good for lesson follow-up, but the online education application is not efficient. Not everyone can use the application because they do not have internet at home. Those who have internet also have connection errors and cannot attend most classes.

Examples for Category 3 (Unexpected/Difficult Situation):

K1: Something that happened for the first time and was caught off guard.

K52: It is a difficult process, both children and I missed school.

Examples for Category 4 (Undecided):

K22: This is questionable. For some it is sufficient, for some it is not.

Figure 5. Evaluation of Distance Education during COVID-19 Pandemic

Evaluation of distance education during Covid-19 pandemic

unexpected situation: 3 - 3.5%
uncertain: 6 - 7.1%
positive thoughts: 22 - 25.9%
difficult situation/process: 16 - 18.8%
negative thoughts: 38 - 44.7%

■ positive thoughts   ■ negative thoughts   ■ difficult situation/process   ■ uncertain   ■ unexpected situation
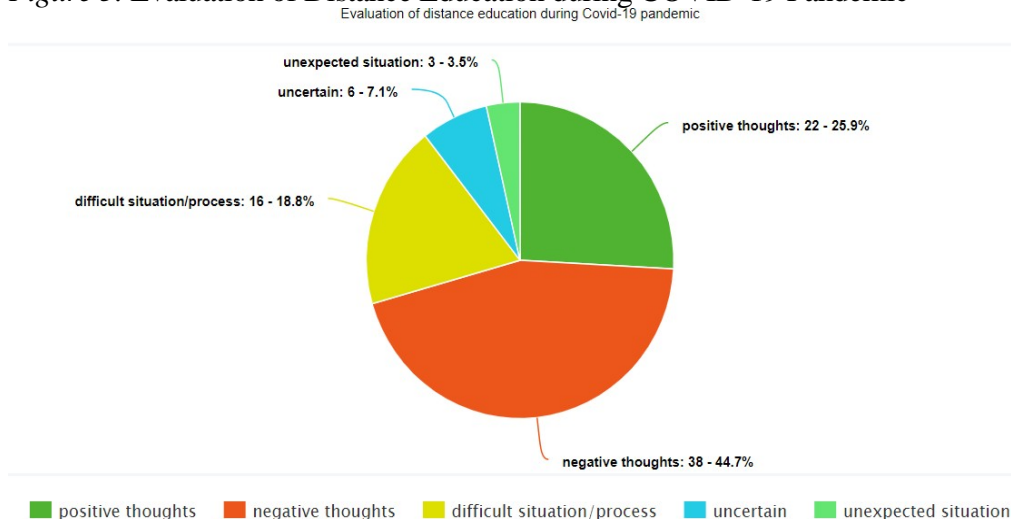
Question 6: What are your Views on the Effectiveness of the Distance Education Process as Both a Parent and a Teacher?

Most of the participating teachers stated that the distance education process was partially effective (Figure 6). This view was followed by "ineffective", "effective" and "less effective" views, respectively. Some examples of answers to this question are given below:

Examples for Category 1 (Effective):

K19: Yes, it is a new system, but I think it ended up well and reached the desired quality and the efforts turned out well.
K56: Going positively, my son reinforced self-study.

Examples for Category 2 (Ineffective):

K37: I do not believe that it is effective, it only helped the children not to break off from school, but unfortunately the information transferring could not take place.
K58: It is difficult to make children sit the in front of the TV. For online classes, most of the students cannot login. The system is inadequate.

Examples for Category 3 (Less Effective):

K64: I can say that it is below the average due to the lack of instant feedback and communication difficulties.

Examples for Category 4 (Partially Effective):

K2: I consider it an important program that should be applied in special cases where face-to- face education cannot be provided.
K41: Although it is not a substitute for face-to-face training, I think it is partially effective provided that parents' attention and sufficient technological equipment are provided.

Figure 6. Efficiency of Distance Education during COVID-19
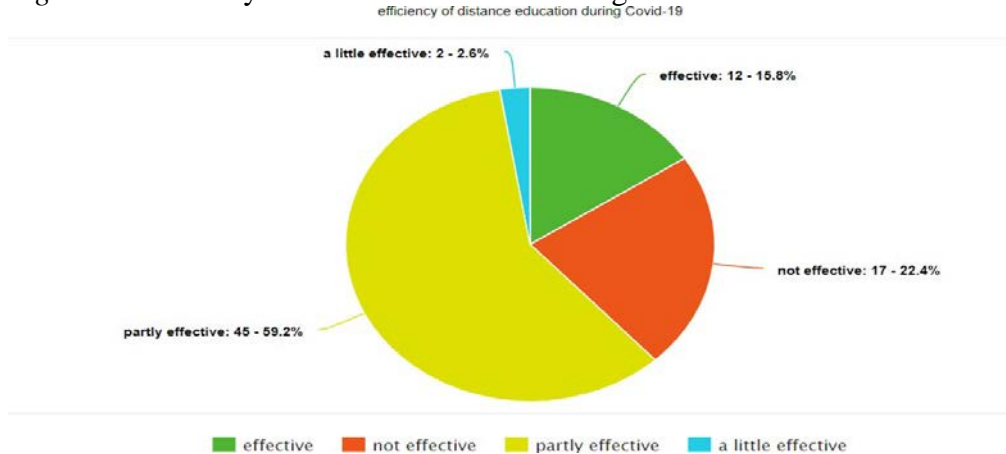
Question 7: What are your Suggestions for a More Efficient Distance Education Process?

It is seen that the participants mostly emphasized the technical, infrastructure and internet access problems should be solved. Later, they mentioned that lessons should be planned better in the distance education process (Figure 8). In this category, they used the expressions like; simplifying the syllabus, better planning, less and meaningful homework, pre-lesson preparation, activities for younger age groups, and increasing the duration of the lesson. In addition, the participants also mentioned issues such as making students more active by increasing the interaction and participation in this process, raising the awareness of parents and students about the process, and especially providing parents with more support in the process. Elimination of resource/material deficiencies, increasing the knowledge of teachers and students in the field of information technology are also mentioned. Other codes, which are less mentioned but deemed important by the researcher, can be listed as: providing psychological support in the distance education process, involving distance education as a means of support in the normal education process and giving priority to psycho-social development. Thus, it is seen that the answers given fall into six categories. Some examples of participants' answers for these categories are given below.

Examples of Category 1 (Organization of Infrastructure):

K67: The internet connection problem should definitely be resolved. In addition, there should be online classes for lower classes. Seeing the student's face is very effective.
K78: Equality of opportunity ... a system accessible to all children and incentives to ensure that distance education is taken seriously by parents and students.

Examples of Category 2 (Lesson Planning):

K79: Homework related to real life experiences should be given more, for instance sewing a button, putting a nail on an empty board and growing a flower.

K32: Parents should provide students with a quiet and simple environment. The student must have headphones. Teachers should make good pre-lesson preparations to make the lesson interesting.

Examples of Category 3 (Increasing Participation):

K8: There is no sanction on students at the moment. This causes a decrease in participation and efficiency for online classes. Unfortunately, because not every student has the internet access, it prevents sanctions such as grading or attendance. Maybe some improvements can be made in the future.

K64: Parental education contributes to explain the importance of the distance education. Because the majority considers this situation as a holiday.

Examples of Category 4 (Eliminating Material Deficiencies):

K48: The course should not be taught monotonously, different materials should be used, not just the screen.

K35: I could not be more effective in distance education because we had difficulty finding materials in this process.

Examples of Category 5 (Increasing Information Technology Knowledge):

K31: Teachers' and students' knowledge of information technology usage should be increased.

K37: All teachers should be trained, subjected to examinations and self-improvement in distance education periodically, but all these should be real, not perfunctorily.

Examples of Category 6 (Other):

K2: Psychological support can be given to our students in primary and secondary education institutions more frequently.

K9: Distance education should be included in our education life from now on as supportive education. Technology and digital education will be essential to both parents and educators from now on.

K80: An approach that prioritizes psycho-social development should be adopted instead of academic education.

Figure 7. Suggestions
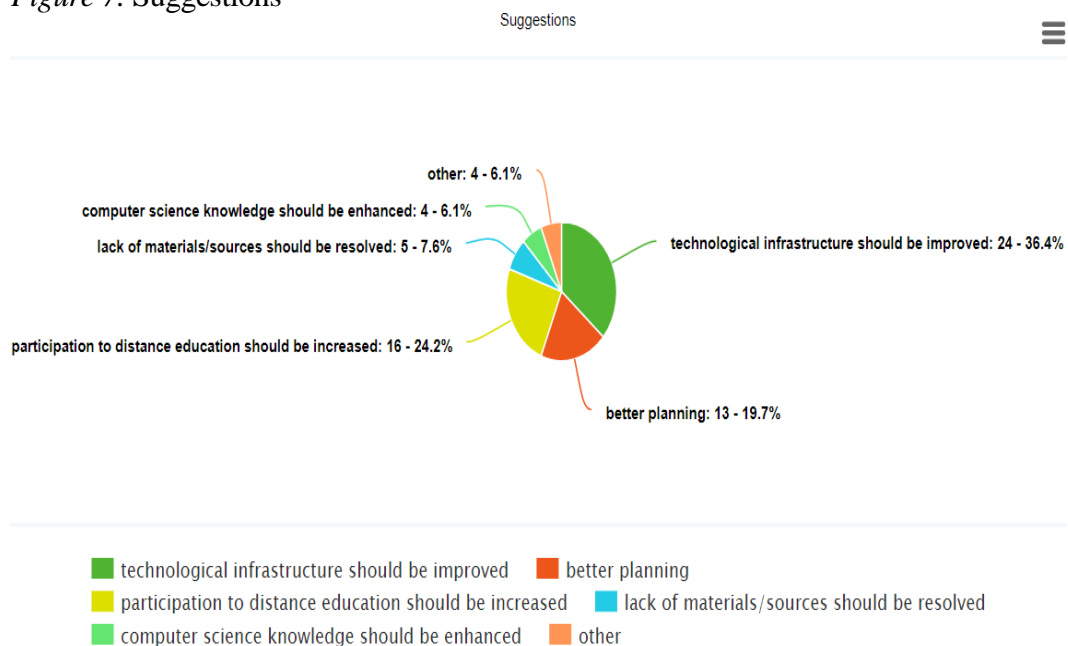
Question 8: Is There Any Situation you would like to Add Other than the Above Questions? If there is, add it.

According to the most striking answers participants talked about issues such as "establishment of crisis units, ensuring equal opportunities, the oppressive attitude of provincial and district National Education Directorates regarding the use of EBA, and the need to improve the distance education system". Examples of the answers given are as follows:

K1: A separate unit should be established as a scientific committee in such circumstances like earthquake, war, epidemic, etc. what to do should be scripted beforehand.

K2: The participation of each individual in the distance education process is very important. When we cannot reach even one individual, the principle of equality is damaged. In this case, it becomes clear that we will be more successful if the necessary technological equipment is provided to each student.

K23: In order to get points at EBA, teachers give lots of homework from every branch every day, which makes children get bored and they don't do homework anymore. They say we didn't have to work that much even when the schools were open. This is due to the fact that the school and provincial or district administration put lots of pressure onto teachers' shoulders.

K59: Although it is difficult to enter EBA, our entrance and the shares we make are scored and evaluated. I would like to inform that different studies are being done for the success of the students in our class, though not through EBA.

Discussion

The results of this study and the literature reveal results that support each other. Muilenburg and Berge (2005) listed the problems encountered in distance education as managerial problems, social interaction, academic competence, technical skills, learning motivation, technical support and internet access costs, in line with the findings of this study. While Lerra (2014) lists the main difficulties in distance education as connection problems and access to the internet, Gökbulut (2020) states that these difficulties have been largely eliminated in university-level education. Also in higher education, students' online presence was found to be related with student performance and there is evidence that both frequency and duration of students' online presence have a statistically significant impact on their final marks (Sharma, Nand, Naseem, & Reddy, 2020). This finding also points to the finding about limitation of the distance education in younger age groups or children in need of special education in this study. Misirli and Ergulec (2021) also found that distance education is unsuitable for young children and students with special needs. In addition, the limited interaction with students in distance education and insufficient feedback from the teacher are some of the difficulties mentioned in other studies (De Oliveira, Penedo & Pereira, 2018; Muilenburg & Berge, 2005; Tedmem, 2020). Student's self-discipline plays an important role in this process. According to parents' opinions students acquired self-regulated learning skills and digital socialization during distance education process (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). In this study, the need for the active participation of parents in the education process during the pandemic process was also emphasized. Family involvement in distance education includes sharing responsibility with the teacher and organizing the physical environment of the students in order to increase education and interaction (Borup, Stevens, & Waters 2015). Parents' complaints about social isolation and increased screen time demonstrate the emergency remote teaching created a high responsibility on behalf of parents (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021). In addition, the inability of teachers and students who are deficient to manage the distance education process effectively is one of the results that is compatible with previous studies (Heinich, Molenda, Russell, & Smaldino, 2002; De Oliveira, Penedo, & Pereira, 2018; Stansfield, McLellan, & Connolly, 2004). Tedmem (2020) stated that, in line with the results of this study, distance education during the epidemic cannot replace face-to-face education. It also touched upon the difficulties experienced by teachers in classroom management, receiving feedback, and student follow-up.

Prior studies on the psychological dimension of distance education, in line with the findings of this study, indicate that teachers, students and parents need support. Cao et al. (2020) revealed that 24.9% of undergraduate students experienced anxiety problems due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Lei et al. (2020) found that the rate of anxiety and depression in the quarantined group was higher than the non-quarantine group in a study conducted with a total of 1593 participants in the south-west region of China, with and without quarantine. Zhang et al. (2020), in a study on children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), found that these children had worsening symptoms during the COVID-

19 outbreak. Brooks et al. (2020) found strong evidence of the negative impact of the quarantine process on human psychology in their study by scanning three databases. These are often described as post-traumatic stress syndrome, confusion, and anger. Tedmem (2020), in its report, drew attention to the same problem and stated that teachers both struggled with stress and tried to support their students, and emphasized how difficult it was to try not to drown students in homework and activities, to keep them in the process, to motivate and support them in the distance education process. In this case, it was underlined that teachers should also be supported psychologically, informed about psychological provincial help, and their well-being should be ensured (OECD, 2020; Unesco, 2020; WHO, 2020). In terms of equal opportunity, Tedmem (2020), in line with the issues stated by the participant teachers, stated that teachers expect quite difficult days to compensate for learning losses and reduce the differences among students on their return to school. Unesco (2020) also drew attention to the urgent need to plan and prepare teachers to reduce inequalities in this regard. The Ministry of National Education (MoE) announced that remedial training will be carried out to compensate for training deficiencies.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As a conclusion, it is possible to make a SWOT analysis about emergency remote teaching process during COVID-19 pandemic by looking at the educational experiences of teacher-parents working in Turkey. Quickly getting organized through EBA TV (national educational support and ICT source TV) and eba.gov.tr, providing students various/multiple mass media (EBA or online classes through different programs, EBA TV etc.) can be demonstrated as the strengths of the distance education process in Turkey. As its weaknesses, especially internet connection problems, not being able to attend online classes due to the lack of sufficient internet package or technical problems related to the applications, low attendance to online classes and the decrease in motivation over time can be stated. Also there are no EBA TV broadcasts in some school levels or types (pre-school, special education) and online classes are not a substitute for face-to-face education, especially in skill-based lessons and in the education of special education students. In terms of opportunities, it can be assumed that distance education can be beneficial in order not to break away from education and can be a tool that can eliminate the inequality of opportunity in education if the infrastructure is further developed and the contents are enriched. In terms of threats, it is seen that distance education cannot replace face-to-face education, especially in terms of socialization, and it can reduce motivation, and may lead to low attendance especially when the limited information technology knowledge of parents and students is taken into account. If the infrastructure required for distance education is not accessible to everyone, it can be predicted that it may lead to inequality of opportunity in education. Hopefully, there are solutions in literature to address the issues of lack of motivation, or ICT infrastructure or teacher qualification.

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Study on Factors Affecting English Acquisition of Chinese Minority Students Majoring in Nursing in a Blended Learning Environment

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Blended learning is an increasingly prevalent trend in College English acquisition. This research seeks to study the influence of a blended learning environment to English acquisition, and the differences between the high- achieving learners and the low-achieving learners for Chinese minority preparation college students in English acquisition. Eighty students were selected as the research subjects, and the research instruments included questionnaire and interview questions to collect data. The study results show that a blended learning environment, to some degree, can help learners overcome anxiety and cultivate autonomous learning abilities. In addition, high-achieving language learners are willing to ask for help from others when they encounter problems; they are able to choose their learning strategies on their own, and have the strong ability of self-learning.

Keywords: Chinese students, nursing, English as a foreign language, acquisition, blended learning

Introduction

Current studies on second language acquisition (Wen & Johnson, 1997; Yao, 2010, 2014, 2019) find that learners' characters are essential to the acquisition activities, which determines the success or failure of second language learning. Therefore, in recent years, many scholars (Norton & Gao, 2008; Yao, 2010; 2014, 2019) focus their studies on how the learners' character-learning affect their English acquisition.

China is a multiethnic and multilingual country with a population of over 1.36 billion, 56 ethnic groups recognized officially, and more than 130 languages spoken (Yao & Zuckermann, 2016). Among them the Han people compose the largest ethnic group, who constitute about 91.51% of the total population. The other 55 ethnic groups are called minority ethnic groups, except *Hui*, other minority ethnic groups have their own language or languages, respectively.

In contemporary China almost all secondary school students from grade 7 to grade 12 and college students are required to learn a foreign language, and even primary students from grade 1 to grade 6 in some places. Most of the students choose English as their foreign language to learn. The Chinese minority students are also required to learn English, but they are different from other students in China regarding English acquisition. Usually, English learning is the third language acquisition to Chinese minority students and most of them learn English with the

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help of Chinese language (their second language). Usually Chinese minority students' English abilities are not as good as other Chinese students when they graduate from high school.

In China the high school students who hope to continue their studies in a college must succeed in the competitive college entrance examination. Usually a perfect score for the examination is 750, while the required minimum entrance score is from 500 to 700 according to the students' hometown and the target college's academic position in China. For example, Tsinghua University is one of the top universities in China, which requires that new students have an excellent college entrance exam mark. In 2015 the required minimum mark was 704 in Hebei province, in which 95.8% of its residents are Han people; while 637 was the mark in Qinghai province where 47.7% of its residents are ethnic minorities. Regarding these figures, the Chinese governments try to help more minority students to access top universities.

Another way that the governments help minority students to access tertiary education, especially top universities, is the Preparation College Students program. This program was founded by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China cooperatively in 1984. Through the program, the minority students can access a university with an entrance score as much as 80 less than the minimum required score. That is to say, minority students in Qinghai province with an entrance mark of higher than 557 could apply for a preparation student position in Tsinghua University in 2020. The preparation students will improve their knowledge studies in high school (such as Chinese, math, English) in the preparation school in the following year. If preparation students cannot speak Chinese fluently, one more year is required to improve their Chinese abilities.

The Preparation College Students program requires the preparation students to catch up with other freshmen in the level of all academic subjects (of course, including English) after one academic year, which is a heavy task for them. At the same time, they are faced with different English acquisition environments when they begin their college preparation study. Usually, it is a teacher-centred learning environment for Chinese primary and secondary students, but a blended learning environment (BLE) for some preparation college students and college students. Through the *College English Curriculum Requirement*, Chinese college students, as well as preparation college students, are required to acquire English online after class, and output English in class, while the English teacher is required to instruct the students' English acquisition in class (The Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China, 2007). Therefore, it is an urgent task for researchers and teachers to study the factors that affect minority preparation college students' English acquisition in a BLE and try to help them to improve their English acquisition.

Literature Review

The term blended learning (also called hybrid learning, technology-mediated instruction learning, web-enhanced instruction learning, mixed-mode instruction learning) is an increasingly prevalent term often used to describe the combination of web-based technologies and face-to-face teaching, when used as an alternative to more traditional course structures (Bonk & Graham, 2006). This mode of teaching and learning brings together traditional physical classes with elements of virtual learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). Originally, blended learning first gained widespread currency in corporate training situations describing the combination of teaching and learning approaches that included coaching, mentoring, online interactions, face-to-face classes and on-the-job training (Gruba & Hinkleman, 2012). This training model is widely popularized and accepted within companies due to its effectiveness, adaptability and flexibility, and thus has been gradually applied in traditional school education.

In spite of its traceable origin, the term *blended learning* means many things to many people, even within the relatively small online learning community. With the development of studying blended learning, most scholars have agreed on the definition of blended learning. The most common meaning of blended learning in the literature is some combination of face-to-face instruction with online teaching, such as forum, blog, and wiki (Vanslambrouck et al., 2018; Wichadee, 2017).

Scholars have paid attention to blended learning in three aspects. The first aspect is to discuss what a learning environment is and how to establish a BLE (Allen & Seaman, 2016; Bates, 2018; Lakhal & Meyer, 2019; Shih, 2010). For example, Shih (2010) establishes a blended teaching and learning model combining online and face-to-face instructional blogging. He believes that this model could contribute to learning effectiveness and student satisfaction if the blended model is implemented with sufficient supportive equipment and course plans; most importantly, peer and instructor's feedback and the blog characteristics like free access, ease of revision, and interesting material for learning are major factors that enhance students' learning satisfaction by motivating them to learn effectively. This model is still used by teachers in recent times. The second aspect is to evaluate the learning performance in a BLE (Berga et al., 2021; Gjestvang, Høye, & Bronken, 2021; Jalinus et al., 2021). The research findings show that a blended environment enables students to, "have the potential to foster innovative and flexible learning opportunities" (Berga et al., 2021), to "acquire professional competence relevant to practice" (Gjestvang, Høye, & Bronken, 2021), and to improve students' cognitive abilities, affective abilities, communication abilities, collaboration abilities, cooperation abilities, and creativity abilities (Jalinus et al., 2021). The third aspect is to evaluate the influence of a BLE on students' learning styles, such as learning motivation (Firat, Kılınç, & Yüzer, 2018; Yusoff, Yusoff, & Noh, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020), self-control abilities (Zhu, Au, & Yates, 2016) and self-esteem abilities (Giofrè, Borella, & Mammarella, 2017). These studies report that a BLE and these learning styles (such as learning motivation, self-control abilities, and self-esteem abilities) are interacted with each other. It is hard to say which one is the independent variable and which one is dependent variable.

In the beginning of the 21st century, blended learning appeared in China with the contribution of textbook publishers. In order to enhance their products' competitiveness, some textbook publishers offer supplementing online learning materials in their leaning management system (LMS) and some forums for learners to discuss with each other. Thus, the BLE was established in some universities in China.

Since 1980s onwards, Chinese scholars have paid much attention to minority students' English acquisition (Wu, 2007). Their studies contribute to almost all aspects of English learning, such as the management of minority education (Yang, 2006), learning motivation (Zhou, 2013), learning strategy (Xu, 2009; Xu & Cao, 2012), learning anxiety (Huang & Deng, 2008; Li & Lin, 2013), autonomous ability (Liu, 2013; Wang & Wang, 2013; Zhang, 2005), and so on. The aforementioned studies reveal some traits of Chinese minority students in English acquisition. First, Chinese minority students prefer affective strategies to other strategies in English acquisition (Xu, 2009). Second, the desire of integrated personal development is the greatest motivation for Chinese minority students to learn English (Zhou, 2013). Third, 80% of the minority undergraduates experience moderate or high levels of speaking classroom anxiety (Li & Lin, 2013). Fourth, learners' autonomous abilities are the most important factors affecting their English acquisition, which determines the success or failure of their English acquisition to some degree (Liu, 2013; Wang & Wang, 2013; Zhang, 2005).

Chinese Minority Preparation College Students (CMPCS) are a special type of Chinese minority college student— they are at the transition period from high school students to college students. Unfortunately, few scholars focus on CMPCS English acquisition, especially those majoring in nursing. Yao (2014) has studied CMPCS' English acquisition in a traditional learning environment and reveals some characters of their English acquisition. Compared with other factors, four factors including the learning strategy, the emotion in learning, the help-seeking ability and the ability of autonomous learning are the most important factors affecting the learners' English acquisition, which determines the achievements of the learning activities. In addition, the CMPCS' anxiety levels are a little higher than the moderate level, and their academic help-seeking abilities are at the moderate level in English acquisition. Furthermore, CMPCS are weak at English autonomous learning abilities and some of them cannot choose the learning strategies on their own.

As blended learning is a newly-born teaching model in China, the study on the factors affecting CMPCS' English acquisition in a BLE is still not clear. Yao (2014) has revealed that the four factors (including the learning strategy, the emotion in learning, the help-seeking ability and the ability of autonomous learning) are the most important factors affecting the learners' English acquisition in a traditional learning environment. Therefore, this study will investigate how the aforementioned factors affect the English acquisition for CMPCS majoring in nursing and analyze how language teachers can help the learners to improve their English acquisition in a BLE.

Research Methodology

This study is an empirical and pilot study approved by the Committee of Ethics and Integrity in Research with Humans in Tanjin Chengjian University. As we know, many factors can affect foreign language acquisition and it is impossible to study all of the factors in one study. The previous studies (Cao & Yao, 2010; Yao, 2011; 2014; 2019) report that factors such as learning anxiety, academic help-seeking behavior, learning strategies and autonomous learning ability play very important roles in English acquisition for Chinese minority college students in a traditional class. Therefore, the current research tries to examine the differences of English acquisition between the high-achieving learners and the low-achieving learners of CMPCS majoring in nursing in a BLE regarding the aforementioned aspects.

In the current study, the research instruments of questionnaire and interview questions are used to collect data. In the first stage the researchers investigated 148 students' data about their English learning anxiety, academic help-seeking behaviour, learning strategies and the autonomous English learning ability. Then the researchers identified the top 40 subjects (on their English examination results) of the 148 students as the high-achieving learners and the bottom 40 as the low-achieving learners. The data of the sample size of the 80 students were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively to study the differences of English acquisition between the high-achieving learner and the low-achieving in a BLE. Regarding the differences, the study tries to find the factors affecting English acquisition of CMPCS majoring in nursing in a BLE.

Research Subjects

In China there are nearly 3,000 new Preparation College Students in each class year. These students are distributed among six universities. Take the year of 2019 as an example; 2,945 ethnic students were enrolled as Preparation College Students. Among them, 846 students were enrolled in Southwest University for Nationalities; 537 in South-Central University for Nationalities; 473 in Minzu University of China; 414 in Dalian Nationalities University; 375 in Northwest University for Nationalities; 300 in Beifang University of Nationalities (State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the People's Republic of China & Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2019). This study takes Minzu University of China as the research location site, as this University is the oldest university in the aforementioned universities, which has a high prestige in Chinese higher education. In addition, one of the authors of this study has studied in Minzu University of China. It is convenient to collect data in this University.

In the current study, all the subjects are selected from Preparation Education School in Minzu University of China. At the beginning of the research study, all the bilingual or multilingual students in the school (154 students) were investigated. The researchers then collected 148 valid questionnaires which were from students from 34 different ethnicities, such as Mongolian, Uygur, Kazak, Zhuang, Buyi, Tujia, and so on. Of them, 48.6% (72 subjects) are male while 51.4% of them (76

subjects) are female; 52.7% of the total sample size (78 subjects) come from rural areas, while 47.3% of them (70 subjects) come from cities or towns (38 subjects are from small towns, and 32 subjects are from the big cities). Their ages range from 18 to 21 years old and the mean age is 19.2.

Research Content

This study focuses on the differences in four aspects (including English learning anxiety, academic help-seeking behaviour, English learning strategies and English autonomous learning ability) between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners of Chinese minority preparation college learners in a blended learning environment. It aims to answer the following questions:

1. Are there any differences in anxiety degrees, anxiety performance, academic help-seeking motivations, academic help-seeking behaviours and autonomous English learning ability between high-achieving learners and low- achieving learners in a BLE?
2. What kind of English learning strategy do the high-achieving English learners or the low-achieving learners prefer?
3. How do these factors affect learners' English acquisition in a blended learning environment?

Research Tools

The study aims to study the differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners of minority preparation college students in their English acquisition in a blended learning environment. It references the research tools of previous studies on the differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners of Chinese college students in a traditional learning environment (Yao, 2014), as well as in a BLE (Yao, 2017). The research tools include four questionnaires and some interview questions. All questions in the questionnaires have a five-point scale, including (A) Totally Agree, (B) Agree, (C) Neither Agree Nor Disagree, (D) Disagree, (E) Totally Disagree.

The research method of interviewing is a complement data collection method in the current study by which the researcher has a face-to-face communication with the research subjects on the topic of English learning anxiety, academic help-seeking behavior, English learning strategies and autonomous English learning abilities. To relax the interviewee, the researcher records the interview by a recorder rather than writes down what the subjects said on the spot. With the interviewee's permission, the researcher transcribes the interview materials after the interview.

Research Process

The data are collected from a collective test. After all of the subjects are aware of the research purpose and know the requirements, they are asked to finish the

questionnaire on the spot while the test time is unlimited. When all the subjects finish their work the researcher withdraws the questionnaires.

After 10 days of the questionnaire test, 20 subjects (10 male students vs. 10 female students; 10 students from rural areas vs. another 10 students from towns or cities; 10 students who are high-achieving learners vs. 10 students who are low-achieving learners, respectively) are selected randomly to do the individual interviews.

After removing all of the questionnaires with incomplete information, the researcher evaluates the operation and inputs the data into a computer. With the help of the software SPSS 22.0, the Independent-Samples T-Tests are made to exam whether there are significant differences between the high-achieving learners and the low-achieving learners of CMPCS in their English acquisition in a BLE.

Results and Discussion

The study analyses its data. It finds the characteristics of Chinese students in English acquisition and the differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners.

On English Learning Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex constructs of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 128). It is useful to draw parallels between the foreign language anxiety and another three related performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by fear of, or anxiety about, communicating with people; test-anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure; fear of negative evaluation, defined as, "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively," is a third anxiety related to foreign language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 130). Aslan and Thompson (2021) report that classroom anxiety has a relationship with classroom performance and learning confidence.

Yao (2014) reports that the anxiety level for CMPCS in English acquisition is a little higher than the moderate level in a traditional learning environment. Among the three subtypes of English learning anxiety, the test anxiety is the highest while the negative evaluation anxiety is the lowest in Chinese Preparation College Students. The differences of the English learning anxiety between the two groups in a BLE are revealed in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences in English Learning Anxiety

	High-achieving learners		Low-achieving learners		T	P (two-tailed)
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Communication apprehension	3.20	0.52	2.88	0.52	2.739	0.008
Test anxiety	4.21	0.75	3.99	0.83	1.244	0.217
Fear of negative evaluation	2.86	0.33	2.85	0.38	0.127	0.899
Foreign language anxiety	3.57	0.29	3.08	0.35	6.776	0.000

Table 1 reveals that the level of test anxiety as well as the fear of negative evaluation for high-achieving learners are slightly higher than those of low-achieving learners, but the T-test results show that there are no significant differences between them ($p = 0.217$, 0.899, respectively; both are more than 0.05). Both groups are anxious of English exams (4.21 and 3.99, respectively) and do not care about the negative evaluation (2.86 and 2.85, respectively). In the interviews, some students said: "I am afraid of the English exam, especially the College English Band-4 (or College English Band-6) exam. I am not afraid that the teachers criticize at me. I know the criticism is helpful for me to improve my English abilities."

There are significant differences in the level of communication apprehension and foreign language anxiety between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners in English acquisition ($p = 0.008$, 0.000, respectively; both are less than 0.05). In the details, the high-achieving learners have a higher anxiety level of communication apprehension (3.20 VS. 2.88) and foreign language anxiety (3.57 VS. 3.08).

The aforementioned data show that both high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners have a high level of anxiety in English acquisition (3.57 and 3.08, respectively; both are higher than the median level 3) in a blended learning environment, which is harmful to their study (Yao, 2014). Therefore, the teachers may need to focus on learners' emotions in English acquisition and help the students to lighten their anxiety.

On Academic Help-Seeking Behavior

Help-seeking is a kind of social behavior with which the help-seeker can get help from others; it may be fundamental in the development of mature give-and-take social relations with others, and it plays an important role in cognitive and academic tasks as well (Gall, 1981). In Gall's view, the help-seeking methods can be divided into two kinds: instrumental help-seeking and executive help-seeking. The former refers to instances in which the help requested is limited to the amount and type needed to allow students to solve problems or attain goals for themselves, while the latter refers to those instances in which the student's intention is to have someone else solve a problem or attain a goal on his or her behalf. Academic help-

seeking is a necessary skill in second language acquisition, which to some degree determines the success or failure of the second language acquisition (Yao, 2011). In the existing help-seeking literature, Denise, Barry and Todd (2021) study the gender differences in academic help-seeking with the Help-Seeking Scales and the Traditional Gender Script Questionnaire. On their report, those with higher scores on the masculine gender script subscale Mastery and Control of feelings are reluctant to seek help. However, studies about the differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners in academic help-seeking are very limited.

Yao (2011) reveals that the academic help-seeking abilities for CMPCS are at the middle-level in their English acquisition in a traditional environment; meanwhile the students prefer executive help-seeking rather than instrumental help-seeking, as most of them believe that English acquisition is only a kind of "rotting memory" activity. The differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners in academic help-seeking are revealed in Table 2.

Table 2. Differences in Academic Help-Seeking

	High-achieving learners		Low-achieving learners		T	P (two-tailed)
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**		
Instrumental help-seeking	2.77	0.60	2.48	0.58	2.882	0.005
Executive help-seeking	3.70	0.49	3.24	0.69	4.676	0.001
Academic help-seeking	3.23	0.38	2.86	0.42	5.568	0.000

Table 2 shows that the level of executive help-seeking for high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners are 3.70 and 3.24, respectively. Both of them are higher than the median level (3), while the levels of instrumental help-seeking are 2.77 and 2.48, respectively. Both of them are lower than the median level (3). The research data show that both high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners of minority Preparation College Students prefer the executive help-seeking rather than the instrumental help-seeking.

Another finding is that the levels of academic help-seeking (3.23 vs. 2.86), executive help-seeking (3.70 vs. 3.24) and instrumental help-seeking (2.77 vs. 2.48) for the high-achieving learners are higher than those for low-achieving learners. All of the differences are significant ($p = 0.000$, 0.001, 0.005, respectively; all are less than 0.05), which may indicate that high-achieving learners are more willing to ask for help from others than the low-achieving learners.

The aforementioned findings are similar with those reported in Parnes, Kanchewa, Marks, and Schwartz (2020), which indicate that high-achieving students ask more questions than low-achieving students over time. In the interview process, some low-achieving learners tell the researcher that they rarely ask for help from others in the class forum or after class as they do not learn English well and are ashamed of asking help from others. They also feel that their

teachers are not patient enough to them. When they meet some problems in their English acquisition, they prefer to get the answers directly from other students. These factors result with low-achieving learners being unwilling to ask help from others.

On English Learning Strategy

Learning strategies are defined as, "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques—such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task—used by students to enhance their own learning" (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 63). They are composed of at least six sub-strategies: memory strategy, cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, compensation strategy, affective strategy and social strategy (Ardayati & Ramasari, 2021; Oxford, 1990).

The previous study (Yao & Ren, 2011) reports that CMPCS cannot choose the learning strategies on their own, or select the strategies instinctively in a traditional learning environment. Most of them only know the memory strategies and compensation strategies while they are weak at the social strategies and affective strategies. The differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners of minority Preparation College Students in English learning strategy in a BLE are revealed in Table 3.

Table 3. Differences in English Learning Strategy

	High-achieving learners		Low-achieving learners		T	P (two-tailed)
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation		
Memory strategy	4.22	0.45	4.18	0.19	0.581	0.563
Cognitive strategy	3.51	0.66	2.88	0.46	4.981	0.000
Metacognitive strategy	3.21	0.39	2.71	0.28	6.513	0.000
Compensation strategy	3.89	0.28	3.64	0.19	4.646	0.000
Affective strategy	2.76	0.37	2.59	0.34	2.218	0.030
Social strategy	2.76	0.39	2.68	0.44	0.890	0.376

Table 3 reveals that the mean scores of high-achieving learners are higher than low-achieving learners in all six strategies (4.22 vs. 4.18, 3.51 vs. 2.88, 3.21 vs. 2.71, 3.89 vs. 3.64, 2.76 vs. 2.59, and 2.76 vs. 2.68, respectively). It means that high- achieving learners apply more strategies in English acquisition than low-achieving learners. This result is consistent with those reported in Dwinka (2020).

There are significant differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners in the applying of cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, compensation strategies and affective strategies ($p = 0.000, 0.000, 0.000, 0.003$, respectively; all are less than 0.05), while no significant differences were found in the memory strategies and social strategies ($p = 0.563, 0.376$, respectively; both are more than 0.05). Part of the reasons for the findings is that in China teacher-

centred classroom learning has dominated English education for a long time. In this model, teachers have sovereign power to determine what to teach and how to teach. At the same time, recently almost all Chinese high schools put the college entrance rate at a most important position, and students are asked to practice more for examinations. This learning model causes the students to think highly of acquiring language knowledge and the memory strategies in language acquisition, but look down on the communicative abilities and the social strategies (Yao, 2017). Although studying in a blended learning environment, they are still used to the memory strategies in English acquisition.

On English Autonomous Learning Abilities

Autonomous learning ability is the ability to take charge of one's own learning, to have, and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning (Du, 2020). Autonomous learning is seen (Du, 2020; Holec, 1981) as a double process; it entails learning the foreign language as well as learning *how* to learn the foreign language.

In the last 30 years many scholars (Aripova, 2021; Lou, 2021; Marantika, 2021; Vakilifard & Sabokbar, 2021) discuss the definition and connotation of autonomous learning, the affection aspects of autonomous learning and how to help the learner to cultivate autonomous abilities.

Based on the definitions of autonomous learning, the current study divides English autonomous acquisition abilities into five aspects: knowing the learning purpose; setting up learning schedule and learning goals; selecting suitable learning strategies; adjusting learning strategies; adjusting and evaluating English learning. The previous study (Cao & Yao, 2010) reports that CMPCS are weak at English autonomous acquisition abilities in a traditional learning environment; most of them aren't good at selecting suitable learning strategies, adjusting learning strategies, adjusting and evaluating English learning. The differences between the two groups in English autonomous learning abilities in a blended learning environment are revealed in Table 4.

The data in Table 4 reveal that high-achieving learners have stronger autonomous learning abilities than low-achieving learners (2.57 vs. 1.95), and the differences are significant ($P = 0.000 < 0.05$). Furthermore, high-achieving learners are significantly better than low-achieving learners on all the subcategories of self-learning ability except the selecting suitable learning strategies (2.51 vs. 2.18, 2.57 vs. 2.16, 2.41 vs.2.09, 2.74 vs. 1.76, respectively), and the differences are significant ($P = 0.007, 0.002, 0.004, 0.000$, respectively, all are less than 0.05). The aforementioned results suggest that there is a positive correlation between students' self-learning ability and their academic achievement in English acquisition in a blended learning environment.

Table 4. Differences in English Autonomous Learning Ability

	High-achieving learners		Low-achieving learners		T	P (two-tailed)
	Mean	**Standard Deviation**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**		
Knowing the learning purpose	2.51	0.53	2.18	0.53	2.748	0.007
Setting up learning schedule	2.57	0.54	2.16	0.59	3.248	0.002
Selecting suitable learning strategies	2.11	0.46	1.97	0.36	1.523	0.132
Adjusting learning strategies	2.41	0.52	2.09	0.44	2.989	0.004
Adjusting and evaluating English learning	2.74	0.72	1.76	0.57	6.681	0.000
English autonomous learning ability	2.57	0.30	1.95	0.19	11.172	0.000

Interviews in the study verify that high-achieving learners have stronger self-learning abilities. Most of them have the following features: understanding of the teaching intent and teaching purpose, willing to develop study programs, having strong perseverance, willing to learn from others and constantly adjust their learning methods.

Conclusion

As said above, the previous studies (Chen, 2021; Chen & Chen, 2018; Setya & Anis, 2020; Xiao & Liu, 2021; Yao, 2014) find that in a traditional learning environment the CMPCS' anxiety levels are a little higher than the moderate level and their academic help-seeking abilities are at the moderate level; they are weak at English autonomous learning abilities and they cannot choose the learning strategies on their own. This study gets the similar results of CMPCS' English acquisition in a blended learning environment. The comparison results show the degrees of anxiousness in a blended learning environment are a little lower than those in a traditional learning environment, while no notable difference in the abilities of academic help-seeking and choosing English learning strategies. That is to say, a BLE in some way can help learners overcome anxiety (Lane, Hoang, Leighton, & Rissanen, 2021) and cultivate autonomous learning abilities (Wang, Chen, Tai, & Zhang, 2021), as a BLE can give learners more freedom to control one's own learning activities.

The results in this study suggest that both high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners experience a high degree of anxiety. High-achieving learners are willing to ask for help from others when they encounter problems or difficulties; they are able to choose learning strategies on their own, and have a strong ability for self-learning. However, some of the low-achieving language learners are not

willing to seek for instrumental help when they encounter problems or difficulties; parts of them are not good at choosing their suitable learning strategies, and they are weak at self-learning abilities. Although we cannot contribute the achievement of English acquisition only to the aforementioned factors, it is undeniable that these factors are important factors which influence their English acquisition in a blended environment for CMPCS.

Both high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners of minority preparation college students experience a high degree of anxiety, which is not a good environment for conducting to the students' physical and mental growth, let alone their English acquisition (Yao, 2014). Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should not only teach students knowledge, but also help ease the anxiety of co-construction of English knowledge, which requires the teachers to improve their teaching quality, and to master more psychological knowledge and provide students with rich and diverse lectures (Wang, 2012). They are also required to become friends with students and stimulate the students' academic interests (Wang, 2010). Traditionally, Chinese students and their parents look highly upon their academic performance and their teachers' attitudes toward them. Teachers' praises or criticisms to them in some way determine their feelings in English acquisition. Teachers, therefore, are suggested to praise students rather than pick up their errors in their English teaching. In one sentence, the teachers may need to try all the methods to lighten the students' anxieties in their English acquisition.

Academic help-seeking abilities are the necessary abilities for the success of language acquisition. The current study finds that due to the fear of being embarrassed, some learners, especially the low-achieving learners, do not want to ask for help from other persons when they encounter difficulties in their English acquisition. In order to help students to cultivate academic help-seeking abilities, teachers may need to encourage students to ask questions and help them become more confident in themselves. In addition, some tutorial lectures may need to be established where students can get help from teachers.

As said above, all the learning strategies are equal to each other. Neither one is better nor worse than the others. The current study finds that both high- achieving learners and low-achieving learners of preparation students only prefer the memory strategies. Some reasons for that are that the learners do not master more necessary language learning strategies, which requires teachers to offer students some help. English teachers, on one hand, should master a variety of learning strategies, and on the other hand should be familiar with students' different learning characteristics. In addition, some programs about strategy on language acquisition need to be established where students can master more strategies, and the ways to choose suitable strategies. Similarly, teachers may be able to better help students with choosing individual strategies. In this way teachers may be able to help students better with choosing individual learning strategies, and the English acquisition activity can play a multiplier effect.

Most importantly, teachers may need to help students improve their English autonomous learning abilities. The current study reveals that CMPCS are weak in their English autonomous learning abilities, which is not consistent with the teaching aims set by the *College English Curriculum Requirement* (The Ministry

of Education of People's Republic of China, 2007). Therefore, teachers should help learners (especially the low-achieving language learners) with autonomous learning abilities. They also need to help them with developing learning plans, scheduling study time, choosing strategies as well as checking the strategies' implementation. English teachers, therefore, need to explain the significance of the autonomous learning ability to the learners and invite some high-achieving learners to share their successful experience with others. The learners, in this way, can master not only the knowledge of the English acquisition abilities, but also the skills of regulating their abilities.

In summary, it is an unavoidable fact that some learners are good at English acquisition while others cannot learn English well. Therefore, teachers should look straight at the discrepancy and concern about the learners, especially of the low-achieving learners. They should help them overcome anxiety, develop academic help skills, choose the suitable strategies, and constantly improve the self-learning capabilities.

The current study takes Chinese minority preparation students as research subjects. The aim of the research is to help the CMPCS' English acquisition in a BLE, as well as to call for more attention to their acquisition. As said above, many factors affect minority students' English acquisition. Because of the limitation of time, the current study only examines the differences between high-achieving learners and low-achieving learners on four aspects. Maybe there are still some other important factors for the CMPCS' English acquisition. It is hoped that further studies be carried out regarding the factors affecting their English acquisition in a BLE.

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Appendix

1. Questionnaire of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (外语课堂焦虑调查问卷) (Yao, 2014)

姓名　　name＿＿＿　　　性别　gender＿＿＿＿　　出生年月　　born＿＿＿
民族ethnic＿＿＿＿
家庭住址 address＿＿＿＿＿　联系电话 mobile number＿＿＿＿＿

A1. 在外语课说英语很没有信心 (I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.);

A2. 我不担心外语课上会犯错 (I do not worry about making mistakes in language class.);

A3. 外语课上老师叫我时会发抖 (I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.);

A4. 外语课上没听懂老师用外语说什么会感到害怕 (It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.);

A5. 即使上更多的外语课，我也不觉得受困扰 (It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.);

A6. 上外语课时在想一些和课堂内容无关的事 (During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.);

A7. 我总觉得同学的英语能力比自己好 (I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.);

A8. 对外语课上的一些小测验感到放松 (I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.);

A9. 外语课上做没有准备的发言时感到恐慌 (I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.);

A10. 我担心外语课不能通过 (I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.);

A11. 我不懂为何有些人在外语课上会如此心烦不安(I do not understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.);

A12. 外语课上很紧张以致知道的东西都忘了 (In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.);

A13. 在外语课上主动发言会使我感到尴尬 (It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.);

A14. 和外国人说英语不感到紧张 (I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.);

A15. 不理解外语老师纠错内容时会很不自在（I get upset when I do not understand what the teacher is correcting.);

A16. 对外语准备得很充分，还是感到焦虑 (Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.);

A17. 经常感觉不想去上外语课 (I often feel like not going to my language class.);

A18. 在外语课上发言很自信 (I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.);

A19. 外语老师要纠正我错误时很害怕 (I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.);

A20. 快被叫到回答问题时我会感到心跳得很厉害 (I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.);

A21. 外语考试准备得越多越觉得没底 (The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.);

A22. 我不觉得课前做好准备会有压力 (I do not feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.);

A23. 我觉得其他同学的英语讲得比我好 (I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.);

A24. 在其他同学面前说英语会很拘谨 (I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.);

A25. 外语课的进度很快，我担心跟不上（Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.);

A26. 我上外语课比上其他课更紧张和不安 (I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.);

A27. 在外语课上发言讲英语时会感到紧张和困惑 (I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.);

A28. 去上外语课的路上感到有信心 (When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.);

A29. 没听懂外语老师讲的每一个词我会感到很不安 (I get nervous when I do not understand every word the language teacher says.);

A30. 学外语要学那么多规则使人头疼 (I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.);

A31. 说外语时担心别的同学取笑 (I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.);

A32. 和外国人在一起感到轻松自在 (I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.);

A33. 老师问事先没有准备的问题时感到紧张 (I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.).

2. Academic Questionnaire of Help-seeking Scale in English Acquisition (英语学习课业求助调查问卷) (Yao, 2014)

姓名　name_____　性别　gender_____　出生年月　born_____ 民族ethnic_____

家庭住址 address_____ 联系电话 mobile number_____

H1.当我遇到不会的问题时，我会查阅参考书或上网查询，直到自己完全理解这部分内容 (When I meet difficulties in learning, I go to internet or check reference books.);

H2.
当我做错了题却不知道自己错在什么地方时，我会请老师或同学讲解 (when I cannot find out the reasons for my mistake, I will ask for help from my teachers or classmates.);

H3. 对于不会的题目，我会请别人替我完成 (I invite others to complete my assignments if I do not know how to finish them.);

H4. 如果遇到不会的问题，我会请老师或同学给我一些提示 (I ask for tips from my teachers or classmates if I meet difficulties in learning.);

H5.虽然我自己动动脑筋也能做出题目，但这样做很麻烦，所以我会请别人告诉我正确答案 (I know I can solve the problem if I try my best. However, in order to save my time and energy, I prefer to get the keys from others directly.);

H6. 英语课上如果有听不懂的地方，我会直接举手，当堂向老师请教 (If I cannot understand my teacher in English class, I will ask for explanation on the spot.);

H7.英语学习中遇到困难，我会在课下找老师或同学为我反复讲解，直到我完全明白 (If I cannot understand my teacher in English class, I will ask for explanation after class.);

H8. 英语学习中遇到问题时，我不做任何尝试就去问别人正确答案 (If I meet difficulties in English learning, I will ask for the keys from others directly.);

H9. 遇到不会的题目我会照抄别人的 (If I meet difficulties in my English assignments, I prefer to copy the keys from others.);

H10. 遇到不会的问题，我会在网上直接搜索答案 ((If I meet difficulties in my English assignments, I prefer to find the keys from websites.).

3. Appendix Three English Learning Strategy Questionnaire (英语学习策略调查问卷) (Oxford, 1990; Chinese translated by the author) (Yao, 2014)

姓名　name_____　性别　gender_____　出生年月　born_____ 民族ethnic_____
家庭住址 address_____ 联系电话 mobile number_____

S1. 我会去思考学过的和新学的英语之间的关系 (I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.);
S2. 为了记住新学的英语单字，我会试着用这些生字来造句 (I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.);
S3.
我会在脑海中想出可以配合英语声音的图片或意象，以便记住某个单字 (I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.);
S4.
我会在脑中制造出某个生字出现的情境，以这种方法把单字背起来　　　(I

remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.);

S5. 我会使用押韵的方式来记住生字 (I use rhymes to remember new English words.);

S6. 我会使用闪示卡来背生字 (I use flashcards to remember new English words.);

S7. 我会把生字用肢体演出来 (I physically act out new English words.);

S8. 我常常复习英语课程 (I review English lessons often.);

S9. 我会按照生字或词组出现在课本、黑板或是街道广告牌的位置，来记住生字或词组 (I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street.).

S10. 我会重复说或写英文生字好几次 (I say or write new English words several times.);

S11. 我会想把英语说得像以英语为母语的人一样 (I try to talk like native English speakers.);

S12. 我会练习英语的发音 (I practice the sounds of English.);

S13. 我会把学过的英文字用在不同的方面上 (I use the English words I know in different ways.);

S14. 我会以英语开启对话 (I start conversations in English.);

S15. 我会看以英语发音的电视节目或电影 (I watch English TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.);

S16. 我阅读英文做为休闲活动 (I read for pleasure in English.);

S17. 我会以英语来记笔记、信息、书信或是报告 (I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.);

S18. 我会先略读英语的文章(很快地把文章看过一遍)，然后再回来细看 (I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.);

S19. 我会在我的母语里找寻和英语相同的生字 (I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.);

S20. 我会找出英语的构成方式 (I try to find patterns in English.);

S21. 我会把英语拆解开来，找出自己懂的部份，藉以了解单字的意思 (I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.);

S22. 我不会逐字逐句翻译 (I try not to translate word-for-word.);

S23. 我会把听到或是读到的英文信息做成摘要 (I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.);

S24. 遇到不熟悉的英文单字，我会去猜它的意思 (To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.);

S25.在对话中，我如果想不出某个字英文怎么说，我会使用表情和动作 (When I can think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures);

S26. 如果我不知道英语该怎么说，我会自己创造新字 (I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.);

S27. 阅读的过程中，我一遇到生字就马上查字典 (I read English without looking up every new word.);

S28. 我会用英语试着去猜别人接着会说什么 (I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.);

S29.如果我想不起来某个英文单字，我会用别的字或词组来转述同样的意思 (I can think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.);

S30. 我会尽量找机会练习英语 (I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.);

S31. 我会注意我所犯的错误，藉此帮助自己学得更好 (I notice my English mistakes and I use that information to help me do better.);

S32. 当有人在说英语时，会引起我的注意 (I pay attention when someone is speaking English.);

S33. 我会想办法让自己成为更好的英语学习者 (I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.);

S34. 我会好好规画时间，以便有足够的时间学英语 (I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.);

S35. 我会找能用英语谈话的人练习英语 (I look for people I can talk to in English.);

S36. 我会尽量找机会阅读英语 (I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.);

S37. 对于如何增进英语能力我有相当清楚的目标 (I have clear goals for improving my English skills.);

S38. 我会去思考我在学习英语上的进步程度 (I think about my progress in learning English.);

S39. 每当我感到害怕要用英语时，我会尽量放轻松 (I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.);

S40. 即使我很怕会说错，我还是鼓励自己多开口说英语 (I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.);

S41. 当我在英语方面有良好表现时，我会犒赏自己 (I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.);

S42. 我会注意当我在研读或使用英语时是否会紧张 (I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.);

S43. 我会把我的感觉记录在语言学习日记里 (I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.);

S44. 当我在学英语时，我会告诉别人我的感觉 (I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.);

S45. 如果遇到听不懂的英文，我请他放慢速度，或是再讲一次 (If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.);

S46. 当我说英语时，我请以英语为母语的人纠正我的错误 (I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.);

S47. 我和别的学生练习英语 (I practice English with other students.);

S48. 我求助英语母语人 (I ask for help from English speakers.);

S49. 我以英语来问问题 (I ask questions in English.);

S50. 我想知道英语国家的文化 (I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.)

4. Questionnaire of Autonomous English Learning Ability (英语自主学习能力调查问卷) (Yao, 2014)

姓名 name_____ 性别 gender_____ 出生年月 born_____ 民族ethnic_____

家庭住址 address_____ 联系电话 mobile number_____

AU1. 对教师教学目的与要求的了解情况 (I am familiar with the teaching purposes and teaching requirements.);

AU2. 把教师的教学目的转化成学生自己的学习目的的情况 (I can set up my learning goals on the teacher's requirements.);

AU3.
把教师的教学目的转化成学生自己学习目的，并在此基础上努力学习(In order to achieve my goals that are set up on the teacher's requirements study English hard.);

AU4.
我能理解教师在课堂上采取某项教学活动提高学生语言能力意图的情况 (I always understand the purpose of teaching activities and know how these activities improve students' language skills.);

AU5. 课堂上是否能跟上教师教学进度的情况 (I can keep up with the learning progress with my English teacher.);

AU6. 除了教师布置的学习任务，学生制订自己英语学习计划的情况 (except completing teacher's assignments, I have my own plan to study English after class.);

AU7. 根据自身实际确立学习目标的情况 (I can set up my own learning goals on my actual situation.);

AU8. 调整学习计划的情况 (I can adjust my learning programs in new situations.);

AU9. 规划英语学习时间的情况 (I can manage my English learning time.);

AU10. 根据《大学英语教学大纲》的要求确立学习目标的情况 (I can set up my learning objectives on 'College English Syllabus'.);

AU11. 对学习策略的了解情况 (I know how to choose the suitable strategies myself.);

AU12. 有意识使用有效听力策略的情况 (When I listening to English, I use listening strategies consciously.);

AU13. 有意识使用有效交际策略的情况 (When I communicate in English, I use communication strategies consciously.);

AU14. 有意识使用有效阅读策略的情况 (When I read in English, I use reading strategies consciously.);

AU15. 有意识使用有效写作策略的情况 (When I write in English, I can use writing strategies consciously.);

AU16. 对交际策略使用的监控情况 (I can monitor my communication strategies effectively.);

AU17. 对写作策略使用的监控情况 (I can monitor my writing strategies effectively.);

AU18. 对阅读策略使用的监控情况 (I can monitor my reading strategies effectively.);

AU19. 对听力策略使用的监控情况 (I can monitor my listening strategies effectively.);

AU20. 评价学习方法以找出存在的问题和解决办法的情况 (I always evaluate my learning strategies to identify my learning problems and try to solve them.);

AU21. 意识到学习方法是否切合实际的情况 (I can realize whether my learning strategies are workable.);

AU22. 在课外主动寻找各种机会学习英语、运用英语的情况 (I look for the opportunities to learn and practice English consciously.);

AU23. 克服不利于英语学习的情感因素的情况 (I can control my negative emotional factors in English learning.);

AU24. 利用已有学习资源的情况 (I try to use all my resources to learn English.);

AU25. 把新学的知识应用到语言实践中去的情况 (I try to practice my English knowledge.);

AU26. 与他人合作学习的情况 (I always learn English with others corporately.);

AU27. 在语言学习过程中能否意识到自身错误的情况 (I can realize my errors in English acquisition.);

AU28.
在意识到错误的同时能否找到错误原因，并采取相应措施更正错误的情况
(I can correct my errors by myself in English acquisition.);

AU29.
能否选择有效学习途径使自己成为一个更好的语言学习者的情况 (I can choose the effective ways to learn English efficiently.);

AU30.
在完成某项语言任务过程中能否同步检测自己预先制订计划完成的情况 (I always complete my English learning task and check my English acquisition plan concurrently.);

AU31.
在完成某项语言任务过程中能否检查并更新自己对前面知识理解的情况 (I always complete my English learning task and check my comprehension of learned knowledge concurrently.).

5. Interview Questions (Yao, 2014)

姓名   name_____   性别   gender_____   出生年月   born_____ 民族ethnic_____

家庭住址 address_____ 联系电话 mobile number_____

1.

你是否喜欢上英语课，为什么？你是否害怕英语考试，为什么？你是否喜欢用英语与他人交流，为什么？在英语学习中你是否担心受到老师的批评，为什么？(Do you like attending English lecture? Why or why not? Are you afraid of English test? Why or why not? Are you interested in communicating in English? Why or why not? Are you scared of being criticized by your English teacher? Why or why not?)

2.

学习英语遇到问题时你更愿意找谁去帮你解决这些问题？为什么？你更希望他们怎么帮助你，为什么？(When you meet difficulties in English learning, where do you want to get help? Why? What kind of help do you want to get? Why?)

3.

英语学习过程中你是否反复记忆学过的英语单词，为什么？遇到不认识的单词时是否通过上下文猜测这个单词的意思，为什么？当用英语交流遇到困难时，你是否使用身势语言帮你完成交际，为什么？学习英语过程中你是否出现过焦虑的情绪？你认为焦虑情绪是否影响英语学习？现在你掌握多少种英语学习策略？你认为哪些学习策略最适合你？(Do you remember English words by rotting? Why or why not? When you meet new words in reading, do you guess its meaning on context? Why or why not? When you have difficulties in expressing in English, do you employ gestures to help your communication? Why or why not? Do you feel anxious in learning English? Do you think the feeling of anxiety will affect English acquisition or not? How many English acquisition strategies do you know? Which strategy (or strategies) is (or are) the best for you?)

4.

英语学习过程中你是否了解教师的教学目的和对你的要求？你是否为自己制定学习计划？你是否根据学习进度调整自己的学习计划和学习策略？你是否经常反思自己的英语学习以便找出更加适合自己的学习方式和学习风格？(Do you know the teaching purpose and your English teacher's requirement to you? Do you set up your English learning schedule? Can you set up and adjust your English learning schedule and strategy? Do you often consider how to learn English well?)

5. 你认为影响英语学习的因素都有哪些？(In your opinion, what factors affect English acquisition?)

Determinants of Academic Performance of the Students of Public Universities in Bangladesh

By Rashed Alam[*] & Rafiqul Islam[±]

Education is one of the most important factors in producing human resources. University education can be influenced by many factors that affect students' quality of academic performance. The main focus of this study is identifying the influencing factors that are significantly associated with the academic performance of universities students. Data were extracted from the various departments of two public universities. Data analysis by Contingency and logistic regression were used to identify the determinants of academic performance of the students. Among the students, 56.8% were male and 43.2% were female most of them are Muslims and unmarried. 75.1% of students came from rural areas, only 15% of students' mothers were higher educated and 65% of student's family status was middle class. Higher educated mother, HSC and SSC results, admitted to an expected university, admitted present department by their own choice, study environment in the department and use of the internet had significant effects on the results of 1st year of the students. The findings concluded that increase and improve students' academic performance are some crucial steps regarding securing admission first choice of the department and advising about peer influence should be taken into consideration.

Keywords: determinants, academic performance, public university, logistic regression analysis, Bangladesh

Introduction

Education is one of the most essential factors in producing a human resource that is compulsory for any development according to the needs of a country. The role of education plays and contributes to the intellectual growth and development of a society which becomes a common concern in both developed and developing countries (Hosseini, 2014). Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Its population increased day by day and also developed its educational institution and all development sectors. It has achieved 8.2 percent economic growth in 2019 and has become a faster-growing economy of the world (IMF, 2019). But, this economic growth will not continue for a long time without substantial development of its human capital because "investment in human capital development plays a positive role in economic growth and that human capital is the driver of economic growth and development" (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1997). This economic growth and development depend on its education systems. Thus, the development of human capital through quality of higher

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education and training must be needed for Bangladeshi people, if it wants to ensure sustainable development and growth of its economy (SDGs, 2030; Sarkar & Hossain, 2019). The quality of the education system may reflect the development efforts that must be made in the social, economic, and political spheres. Furthermore, in this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered the first step for every human activity (Battle & Lewis, 2002). Higher education in Bangladesh has grown at an exponential rate during the last two decades.

Students are an essential asset for every educational institution. The social and economic development of a country is directly related to the academic performance of students. These factors have a major impact on learning performance, but these factors vary from person to person and from country to country (Hanushek, 1997). Indeed, academic performance can be influenced by several factors that influence the quality of academic performance, both inside and outside the school. These factors may be termed as student factors, family factors, school factors, and peer factors (Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder, 2004). It is important to ensure both the internal and external efficiency of any academic performance must be desirable of the students. Internal efficiency is the utility created within the system by the students output and external efficiency manifests the adaptability of the performance output in an external environment (Windham, 1990).

Education as well as academic achievement of students imposes a high impact to create better citizens and plays a vital role in producing the best quality manpower and leader for economic and social development of the country (Ali et al., 2009). Most people know that the number of determinants or factors other than university entrance results may significantly affect the academic performance of students. The factors might be the type and location of secondary school performance, type of admission, quality of teaching, study habit, economic and educational background of parents, references and textbook availability, student's placement by their first choice, etc. (Kapur, 2018). In our study, we take the Grade point average (GPA) of students can measure student academic performance. This idea supported by (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006) stated that GPA in university is a commonly used indicator of student academic performance. Therefore, we conducted this study to identify the determinants of the academic performance of the students

Public Universities Scenario in Bangladesh

The area comprising present Bangladesh was to have no university for a long time during the British rule. A teaching cum residential university was set up first in Dhaka in 1921. The second university was set up in Rajshahi in 1953. In total there had been 6 public universities in the country before 1971. After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, during the last 50 years, the higher education scenario has greatly been transformed. The number of public universities has increased significantly (Table 1). University seats are a scarce commodity in Bangladesh, especially at quality institutions of higher education in 2017, 801,711 potential students had passed the HSC exams, but fewer than 50,000 available seats in the

top tier of competitive public universities[2]. However, larger numbers of spaces are available at the less reputable and non-competitive are National University and Open University, as well as in open distance education. Admission criteria differ by institution and faculty, but entrance examinations that are often hard to pass are a common requirement at competitive institutions, in addition, to set minimum GPAs in the HSC/Alim examinations. There may also be minimum grade cutoffs in specific subjects (for example, high grades in mathematics for science programs). Science and engineering programs are generally hard to get entrance compare to programs in the social sciences and humanities. All public Higher education institution (HEIs) are required to use centralized entrance examinations in Bangla, English, and major-specific subjects, according to the current national education policy and also the specific universities rules and regulation.

Table 1. Number of Universities, Teachers, and Students and Teacher-Student Ratio during 1981-2020

Year	No. of Universities	No. of Teachers	No. of Students	Teacher-Student Ratio
1981	6	1,245	16,683	1:13.4
1994	11	3,241	45,699	1:14.1
2001	20	5,241	92,562	1:17.7
2006	29	7,905	153,249	1:19.4
2011	35	9,781	389,963	1:39.9
2012	35	10,568	413,434	1:39.1
2013	37	11,323	457,183	1:40.4
2014	37	12,047	496,425	1:41.2
2015	38	12,531	541,506	1:43.2
2016	38	13,072	594,052	1:45.4
2017	41	13,168	519,488	1:39
2018	44	13,465	527,546	1:38.6
2019	46	13,988	531,544	1:38
2020	49	14,293	535,988	1:37.5

Source: UGC Annual Report up to 2020.

Public University out of 49 public universities, 3 newly established agricultural and science and technology universities have not yet started their academic activities, 44 universities are teaching universities having their classroom, residential accommodation, and other physical facilities in their campus, and the remaining 2 are special, of which one is the National University (NU) and open university, an affiliating university, which affiliates all degree colleges that provide general education, conducts examination and awards certificates or diplomas depending on the nature of academic programs, and offers subject-wise special training and M. Phil and Ph.D. programs for the teachers of affiliated colleges. Public universities are the foremost choice of the majority of students seeking higher education. This is for various reasons. First, these universities offer a wide range of subjects in Science, Commerce, Liberal Arts, Humanities, Engineering and Technology, Law,

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[2]Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics: http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/.

Education and Medicine disciplines. Second, public universities attract the best brains and researchers as teachers although monetary compensation for them is anything far from attractive. Third, the library, laboratory, internet, and research facilities are much better there than anywhere else in the country. Fourth, seminars, symposiums, workshops, debates, exhibitions, and visiting teachers lecture series are often held in these institutions with a wide scope for national and international exposures for promising young knowledge seekers. In 2017, Bangladesh's parliament also passed legislation to create an independent accreditation council. The plan is to have the council accredit universities, public and private, as well as individual study programs, for periods of five years following an initial interim accreditation period of one year (UGC, 2019).

According to the latest UGC report, there are 49 public universities across the country. On average, the teacher-student ratio (TSR) is 1:19 at the public universities except for the National and Open University. The TSR is not ideal at 21 public universities as the ratio was over 1:22 at the institutions. But the UGC is not happy as the teacher-student ratio at many public universities is not satisfactory which is frustrating as it has given a sorry state of education at these institutions.

The teacher-student ratio (TSR) was 1:90 at Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, 1:90 at Sylhet Agricultural University, 1:90 at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, 1:90 at Sheikh Hasina University, 1:70 at Jashore University of Science and Technology, 1:70 at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Digital University, 1:60 at Bangamata Sheikh Fojilatunnesa Mujib Science and Technology University, 1:44 at Begum Rokeya University, 1:43 at University of Barisal, 1:40 at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University, 1:33 at Rajshahi University, 1:38 at Islamic University, 1:53 at Sheikh Mujib Medical University, 1:37 at Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, 1:29 at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, 1:50 at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, 1:24 at Jagannath University, 1:24 at Comilla University, 1:29 at JatiyaKabiKazi Nazrul Islam, 1:25 at Pabna Science and Technology University, 1:32 Rangamati Science and Technology University. Even the teacher-student ratio is not ideal at some renowned and old universities. There are only 1,150 teachers against 38,291 students at Rajshahi University, 399 teachers against 15,057 students at Islamic University, 188 teachers against 8,393 students at Begum Rokeya University, 261 teachers against 3,959 students at Jashore University of Science and Technology, and 312 teachers against 11,547 students at Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2015; UGC, 2019). Whereas the University of Tokyo in Japan: 6.7, Seoul National University of South Korea: 12.6, the University of Science and Technology in China: 8.2, the Indian Institute of Science: 8.4, and the University of Malaya in Malaysia: 10.9 (Solamain, 2018).

Literature Review

During the last few decades, there have been done several good studies on determinants of academic performance and academic competence all over the world and in Bangladesh. Academic performance is dependent upon how well the students manage their course load describes in their curriculum. Academic competence is also indicative of the extent to which the curriculum is interesting for the students to enjoy the classes. Students' academic performance in higher education is affected by various socio-economic, psychological, and environmental factors (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006). A review of the works that have been done related to the present study reveals a wide range of factors including socio-economic, demographic, and cultural that vary from one area to another area and also one country to another country. Thus, a review of the literature is necessary to know about the earlier studies accomplished in the field. Only the expectable literature in the perspective of the current studies is reviewed in a few words.

Hosseini (2014) observed that the teachers regarding their change of performance in the classroom, despite the passing of several years. She also indicated that they made positive use of the pattern. All the teachers participating in the course stated that attending the course helped them to move away from teacher-centered toward learner-centered classes, which has made their students very enthusiastic.

Jacobsen and Forste (2011) investigated students' perspectives on the potential of current educational strategies to encourage creativity in university students. The survey data reveals a strong tendency of university faculty to rely on didactic, memory-based instruction, even though respondents also recognized that this form of learning was not motivating for their current students. She recognized that higher education has encompassed philosophies and aims directed at the knowledge creation and cultural development of a nation.

Monem and Baniamin (2010) suggested that better understanding among teachers and students, the introduction of modern teaching methods, and dedication of teachers and students can improve the culture of higher education in Bangladesh. They also believe that a proper academic calendar can bring discipline. Initiate to free the universities from the clutches of politics can play a lot of the overall improvement of the universities.

Islam (2016) suggested that the no University of Bangladesh is managed to 'rank' in the list of top-ranking universities in the world. He alleged that it has been happened due to a lack of good governance in the education sector. Does he also arise that does governance matters for quality education? What types of governance problems confronting quality education in Bangladesh? What is the role of the UGC and how does it play its role in respect to good governance in the higher education sector in the country? He argues and explores the answers to these questions as well as puts forward policy implications in this regard.

Shahiduzzaman, Ali, and Islam (2017) suggested that the guardians and the teachers take more attention to their wards and students respectively to improve their future academic performance. The university authority should take care of the students especially of science, law, and art faculty for their academic improvement.

The students may be advised to reduce their monthly expenditure and not to drop their studies in any semester. Despite that, the guardians and university authorities should take more attention to the male students in their academic study period.

Sothan (2018) observed that personal backgrounds played a potential role in predicting the academic performance of undergraduate students. Some researchers argued that older students performed better than younger ones (Guney, 2009; Alhajraf and Alasfour, 2014; Kim et al., 2016).

Methodology

Data were extracted from two public universities named Rajshahi University (RU) and Pabna University of Science and Technology (PUST). The primary consideration in the sample selection of these studies is to include representative and adequate numbers of cases to perform meaningful analysis. This study has been conducted under a purposive sampling procedure because of the time-consuming and constraints of the cost of sampling. Based on that sampling procedure, the present study has considered 1,000 respondents as a sample size. Among the respondents we target 700 will be collected from Rajshahi University out of 26,560 students and the rest of them collected from PUST out of 3,240 students. Finally, we collect 800 respondents at two different universities in Bangladesh. The summary statistics including mean, frequency, and percentage distribution were used to describe study characteristics. Association Ist year result (GPA) and selected socio-demographic variables were assessed by Chi-square test. Finally, logistic regression models were used for identifying the effects of the various selected socio-economic and education-related characteristics of the study population. All analysis was performed in SPSS software version 16.

Results

Descriptive analyses, contingency analyses, and logistic regression analyses were used to determine the study objectives. Students' academic performance was categorized as a high GPA achiever group with GPA 3 and above, whereas those with GPA below 3 were categorized as low GPA group. Based on this criteria students were categorized in the low GPA group (n = 165) and the high GPA group (n = 629). The study characteristics of Table 2 represent the selected socio-economic and education-related variables. Among the variables, Mother education, SSC and HSC GPA, Admitted to the expected institution, admitted to the present department by their own choice, study environment their department, and using internet facilities have a significant effect on the academic performance of the students. Moreover, there is a nonsignificant difference found on religious status, father education, monthly family income, place of residence of the students, year drop after admission, enough books in their own their department seminar and courses finished in due time. Table 3 indicates logistic regression model that showed higher educated mothers, a student in the middle class and high-income family, college types, strategy of studying course teachers, admitted in the present

department by their own choice, using the internet have a significant effect on academic performance of the students and the other hand gender, finishing courses in time have an insignificant effect on academic performance of the public universities students.

Table 2. Chi-Square Test of Academic Performance of Students According to the Selected Background Characteristics

Background Characteristics	1st-year result (in GPA)		χ^2_{cal} p-value
	<3.00	≥3.00	
Religious status			
Muslim	142(21.4%)	522(78.6%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.901
Non-Muslim	23(17.7%)	107(82.3%)	p = 0.343
Gender			
Male	103(22.8%)	348(77.2%)	χ^2_{cal} = 2.684
Female	62(18.1%)	281(81.9%)	p = 0.101
Father's education			
Literate	53(21.0%)	199(79.0%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.784
Up to HSC	56(22.3%)	195(77.7%)	p = 0.676
Higher Educated	56(19.2%)	235(80.8%)	
Mother's education			
Literate	92(23.7%)	296(76.3%)	χ^2_{cal} = 8.858
Up to HSC	60(20.8%)	228(79.2%)	p = 0.012
Higher Educated	13(11.0%)	105(89.0%)	
Monthly family income (in Taka)			
<15000	25(16.4%)	127(83.6%)	χ^2_{cal} = 2.556
15000-30000	109(22.3%)	379(77.7%)	p = 0.279
>30000	30(19.7%)	122(80.3%)	
Permanent residence			
Rural	124(20.8%)	473(79.2%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.000
Urban	41(20.8%)	156(79.2%)	p = 0.090
Present residence			
Hall	129(20.4%)	504(79.6%)	χ^2_{cal} = 3.292
Mess	19(18.3%)	85(81.7%)	p = 0.193
Own or Relative's house	17(29.8%)	40(70.2%)	
Got expected GPA in SSC			
No	47(20.9%)	178(79.1%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.002
Yes	118(20.7%)	451(79.3%)	p = 0.962
GPA in SSC			
<4.00	6(42.9%)	8(57.1%)	χ^2_{cal} = 4.219
≥4.00	159(20.4%)	621(79.6%)	p = 0.040
Location of college			
Urban	127(22.0%)	451(78.0%)	χ^2_{cal} = 1.832
Rural	38(17.6%)	178(82.4%)	p = 0.176
GPA in HSC			
<4.00	8(44.4%)	10(55.6%)	χ^2_{cal} = 6.265
≥4.00	157(20.2%)	619(79.8%)	p = 0.012
Admitted in expected institution			
No	87(24.8%)	264(75.2%)	χ^2_{cal} = 6.131
Yes	78(17.6%)	365(82.4%)	p = 0.013
Admitted to present department by own choice			
No	92(27.1%)	248(72.9%)	χ^2_{cal} = 14.759
Yes	72(15.9%)	381(84.1%)	p = 0.001
Disinterest in study			
No	49(17.9%)	224(82.1%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.926
Yes	69(24.5%)	213(75.5%)	p = 0.336
Year drop after admission			
No	140(20.1%)	557(79.9%)	χ^2_{cal} = 1.673
Yes	25(25.8%)	72(74.2%)	p = 0.196
Course class amount is enough			
No	53(24.7%)	162(75.3%)	χ^2_{cal} = 2.683

Yes	112(19.3%)	467(80.7%)	p = 0.101
Enough books in seminar			
No	91(22.6%)	312(77.4%)	χ^2_{cal} = 1.610
Yes	74(18.9%)	317(81.1%)	p = 0.204
Study environment in department			
Very good	16(16.2%)	83(83.8%)	
Good	73(19.9%)	293(80.1%)	χ^2_{cal} = 7.470
As a whole	55(20.7%)	211(79.3%)	p = 0.058
Bad	21(33.3%)	42(66.7%)	
Course finishes in due time			
No	69(21.6%)	251(78.4%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.199
Yes	96(20.3%)	378(79.7%)	p = 0.656
Study environment in home			
Enough	115(20.3%)	452(79.7%)	χ^2_{cal} = 0.300
Inadequate	50(22.0%)	177(78.0%)	p = 0.584
Use of internet			
No	6(10.2%)	53(94.4%)	χ^2_{cal} = 4.359
Yes	159(21.6%)	576(78.4%)	p = 0.037

Table 3. The Results of Logistic Regression for the Effects of Selected Background Characteristics on the Academic Performance of the Students

Background characteristics	Adjusted odds ratio	95% CI		p-value
		Lower	Upper	
Gender				
Male [(RC)]	1.00			
Female	0.90	0.622	1.313	0.596
Mother's Education				
Literate [(RC)]	1.00			
Secondary to Higher Secondary	1.14	0.772	1.670	0.518
Higher Educated	2.58	1.361	4.881	0.004
Monthly family income				
Low-income family (>=10000Tk) [(RC)]	1			
Middle-income family (10001-30000 Tk)	1.78	1.61	3.97	0.051
High-income family (above 30000 Tk)	1.45	1.21	3.41	0.029
Types of college				
Government [(RC)]	1			
Private	0.71	0.46	0.96	0.051
The strategy of studying course teacher				
Very good [(RC)]	1			
Good	0.85	0.63	0.97	0.030
Average	0.62	0.57	1.63	0.087
Bad	0.30	0.47	0.95	0.047
GPA in SSC				
<4.00 [(RC)]	1.00			
≥4.00	2.06	0.634	6.710	0.229
GPA in HSC				
<4.00 [(RC)]	1.00			
≥4.00	2.91	1.036	8.139	0.043
Admitted to the expected institution				
No [(RC)]	1.00			
Yes	1.41	0.543	1.656	0.612
Admitted in the present department by own choice				
No [(RC)]	1.00			
Yes	1.92	1.289	2.854	0.001
Course class amount is enough				
No [(RC)]	1.00			
Yes	1.175	0.782	1.767	0.438
Study environment in the department				
Very good [(RC)]	1.00			
Good	0.73	0.394	1.367	0.329
As a whole	0.77	0.398	1.469	0.421
Bad	0.49	0.215	1.101	0.084
Use of internet				

No [(RC)]	1.00				
Yes	0.37	0.149	0.903	0.029	
		Lower	**Upper**		
Finishing course within the scheduled time					
No [(RC)]	1.00				
Yes	2.13	1.53		3.56	0.001
Model summary					
Model χ^2 (ρ-value)	335.470 (<0.0001)			ρ^2_{cv}=0.329022	
-2 log likelihood	763.862			λ=0.0159	
Cox & Snell R-square	0.345			Stability of R^2=0.9841	
Nagelkarke R-square	0.460				

Note: Significant at $\rho<0.05$ and "RC" = Reference Category.

Discussion

Education is the key component of any development of any nation. In Bangladesh, all citizens must undertake ten years of compulsory education which consists of 5 years at primary school level and five years at high school level. Primary and secondary education is financed by the state and free of charge in public schools (CPRB, 2017). After completing the primary school and secondary education they were admitted to higher secondary education and completed this higher secondary education and then admitted tertiary level education or higher education. Bangladesh Nevertheless, access to tertiary-level education is still very limited. Only about 12 percent of the year twelve graduates can enter into higher education in public universities (Shahiduzzaman, Ali, & Islam 2017). More than 80 percent of these students are admitted to the National University (NU) affiliated colleges others are in the public and private universities. Tertiary education in Bangladesh comprises two categories of institutions: degree-awarding universities and colleges affiliated to the National University (NU) (Monem & Baniamin, 2010). There were only 6 universities in Bangladesh at the time of independence in 1971, the University of Rajshahi is one of them. All of those universities were publicly financed autonomous entities. At present, there are 49 such universities, PUST is one of them. The present study focuses on determinants of the academic performance of the students of public universities in Bangladesh. The chi-square test reveals that 56.9% were male respondents and the rest of them were female. Gender and education focused on whether differences in the educational outcomes of males and females were due to biological differences. General overviews of gender and education provide broad information on trends and theories in this field.

Female students have better results than male students. Bangladesh is the fourth-largest Muslim-populated country in the World (Pew Research Center, 2015; BBS, 2011). Muslims are the predominant community of the country and they form the majority of the population in all eight divisions of Bangladesh. The total population in Bangladesh was over 149 million in 2011, which makes up 90% percent of the Muslim population in the country. The Constitution of Bangladesh declares Islam as the state religion (Bangladesh Government, 2015; Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2015). But the study results revealed around 16% of students were Non-Muslims and Non-Muslims students have better results than

Muslim students. A mother's education level has a long-lasting effect on her children. Whatever else a mom does for her child, achieving a higher level of education can be an accomplishment that has a profound impact. The Foundation for Child Development report Mother's education and children's outcomes presents economic, health, and other hard statistics that demonstrate how children benefit from a higher level of mother's education (Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006; Edcor, 2019). The study showed that students or children with a higher level educated mother had better results (89.0%) than that of a college-educated mother. Currently, Bangladesh's education system can be divided into three big stages, 1) primary, 2) secondary and 3) higher education. Primary education is related chiefly to primary-level institutions. Secondary education is comprised of junior secondary and higher secondary level institutions. The main two branches of secondary education are comprised of SSC and Higher Secondary education HSC. After finishing the HSC the students were admitted to higher education. But the SSC and HSC results had a significant effect on student higher education academic performance. This study depicted that very few students get GPAs 4 and above in their SSC and HSC level among them around 57% and 55% of students had better academic performance in higher education level. The admission system of higher education in Bangladesh had three processes such as national university, private university, and public university.

The public university's admission is based on examination on their university rules and regulation. After admission, the students have been admitted to the university according to their examination marks. Among them, many students were admitted by their own subject choice, and the rest of them have been admitted to university rules and regulations. The study results showed that the students who were admitted to the expected institution have better results than unexpected on the other hand the students who were admitted by their own subject choice had much better results than the rest of them. Study environment designs should facilitate modern learning methods that prepare students for department, careers, and citizenship in the twenty-first century. Students are expected to show what they know through problem-solving and in-depth demonstration of subject matters. It makes sense that students would do better when they learn in positive environments. After all, most people would agree that some environments are more conducive to learning and academic performance (Kilbourne, Scott-Webber, & Kapitula, 2017). The study results revealed that the students who were answered very well (83.8%) of their departmental study environment and had bad (66.7%).

The Internet has immense potential to improve the quality of education, which is one of the pillars of sustainable development goals (SDGs, 2030). This Internet Society briefing outlines ways in which policymakers can unlock that potential through an enabling framework for access to the internet or use of the internet. It sets out five priorities for policymakers: infrastructure and access, vision and policy, inclusion, capacity, and content and devices. Together these represent key considerations for unlocking access to the internet in support of education. It can improve the quality of education in many ways (UNHR, 1996). It opens doorways to a wealth of information, knowledge, and educational resources, increasing opportunities for learning in and beyond the classroom (Broadband Commission

Working group on Education, 2013). Teachers use online materials to prepare lessons, and students extend their range of learning using the internet. The study results showed that around 92.6% of students had used the internet for their study purposes. Among them, the students who use the internet had a much better result and same time better academic performance of the classes compared to those who were not using the internet.

Conclusion

Academic achievement as well as education of students imposes a high impact to create better citizens and plays a vital role in producing the best quality manpower and leader for economic and social development of the country. In this study, it was tried to explore the factors that influenced the academic performance of the students at higher education level in public universities in Bangladesh. Hence, according to the study, it is recommended that, as parent's education and profession are vital predictors associated with their academic performance, the parents need to give more attention to their son or daughter and also the students have to study properly to improve their future academic performance. Besides, the institutes should have to create a proper study environment by improvement and digitalization of the classrooms, well teacher and students understanding, etc. that make the student's more attentive to the classroom and make them capable of achieving a good result. In addition, excessive internet use can impede the progress of the student. Thus, the academic performance of the students in higher education will be improved and it should help to produce a well-educated citizen as well as to produce quality manpower for the nation.

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Exploring the Practice of Academic Freedom and Active Learning in Ethiopia's Higher Education: A Case Study

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Given the immense role of the student-centred approach in enhancing students learning, this study explores the role of academic freedom in implementing a student-centred approach. To achieve this objective, the study relies on a qualitative case study research design. In this regard, semi-structured interviews and observation were employed as data gathering tools. The data passed through a series of data analysis processes ranging from data reduction to data verification. The study was conducted at a public university in Ethiopia and recruited ten instructors and twelve students from four randomly selected colleges/institutes belonging to the participating university. The initial analysis resulted in two major themes, each having two subthemes. That is academic freedom at the institutional level for instructors and students and academic freedom at the classroom for instructors and students. Given this, the findings show that the academic freedom of students at the classroom level affects the adoption of student-centred approaches. Students seem to be restrained from freely sharing their concerns, being afraid of the backlash from their instructors and colleagues. Moreover, the instructors in Abay University seem excluded in deciding to implement a student-centred approach in every classroom other than receiving pedagogical training to implement it as a non-negotiable change. These findings call for higher education reforms at national and institutional levels to cultivate an organisational environment that facilitates student-centred approaches.

Keywords: student-centred approach, academic freedom, active learning approaches, higher education, Ethiopia

Introduction

Changes in organisations are inevitable in the age of information and globalisation, leading them to search for innovative ways of conducting business (Saint-Onge & Armstrong, 2004). Further, globalisation increasingly demands diverse changes in higher education institutions (Mok, 2010). Stakeholders in these institutions demand that they be more accountable and transparent and bring concrete proof of success. Changes in higher learning institutions could be achieved through working continuously on innovation in curricula, teaching strategies, support services, and overall functioning (White & Glickman, 2007). According to Zhu and Engels (2014), these innovations in higher education are of paramount importance to properly prepare a new generation for a knowledge society. By

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considering this fact, higher education institutions should promote innovative practices in the significant activities they are concerned with. Hence, this study aims to explore the impact of academic freedom on active learning approaches in a public university in Ethiopia.

Reform of Ethiopian Higher Education System

Motivated by the need for better performance and the desire to answer stakeholders' expectations, the Ethiopian higher education system has promoted various reforms as witnessed in revising the inherited legacy (Yizengaw, 2005). This is due to higher education institutions being "organic in the sense that their parts (norms, ideas, organisations, and frameworks) are subjected to change in response to internal and external pressures, to maintain stability in the institutional arrangement as a whole" (Waks, 2007, p. 287). In cognisance of this, the new Ethiopian higher education proclamation, approved by the parliament in 2003, served as a starting point for implementing innovative reforms (World Bank, 2003). One of these reforms was a shift in pedagogical philosophy from instructor-led teaching to student-centred learning (MoE, 2015). Since then, student-centred learning has focused on education reform in Ethiopia and has repeatedly been mentioned in policy documents (Ayele, Schippers, & Ramos, 2007).

Consequently, Ethiopian public universities have long acknowledged the significance and worth of active learning approaches. Administrators of higher education institutions duly dedicated resources to the pedagogical training for faculty members. However, implementing these approaches in higher education classrooms has failed to match the expectations set by the Ethiopian government (Alemu, 2010; Teshome, 2012; Woldeamanuel, Atagana, & Engida, 2013). Not all new approaches have been understood and implemented as expected since there could be "forces that work to conserve the status quo in public education" (Senge, 2010, p. 150).

Academic Freedom in the Ethiopian Higher Education System

The Ethiopian higher education system 'academic freedom' is a known concept reflected in different national and institutional level-related documents. In this regard, Ethiopia's fifth Education Sector Development Program indicated that higher education institutions should encourage freedom of 'views' and 'opinions' as a value reflected in education and research endeavours. However, this academic freedom is subjected to limitations set by other laws (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2009). Based on this national direction, the notion of academic freedom is reflected in the official documents of the Abay University and is described as:

> *Academic freedom shall mean the right to discuss and openly express views on ideas, immediate national and global problems, and issues as well as other controversial matters in class, in connection with academic work on campus in discussion groups or print provided the expression of views is generally relevant to the subject under discussion and is consistent with rational and intellectual inquiry.* (AU, 2013a, p. 206)

Role of University Teachers in Academic Freedom

Concerning an instructor's participation in university's affairs, "an academic staff of the university shall design, develop and implement courses in an area of specialisation following established university procedures…" (AU, 2013b, p. 25). This is justified by Briggs and Sommefeldt (2002), who stated that teaching course contents prepared by a higher administrative body without the involvement of instructors and students would result in a teaching approach that mainly emphasised outcomes while overlooking the development and propagation of innovative ideas among students, and between instructors and students. Moreover, in an education system where "a national curriculum is tightly defined…, instructors may find themselves 'teaching to the test' using a teacher-centred approach" (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002, p. 46). This necessitates making instructors free to determine their teaching strategies by considering different factors, including the type of students and the time available to teach a lesson (Marzano, 2007).

As promoted in the institutional document of Abay University, students are entitled to participate in different university-wide activities. Among others, the Senate Legislation of the university points out that students can "give suggestions in the preparation of by-laws, regulations, and directives pertaining to administrative matters, and the review and development of curricula" (AU, 2013a, p. 206). Concerning student learning, Jackson (2020) argued that students' experiences play a vital role in achieving and realizing academic freedom, hence, learning. This highlights the importance of academic freedom at the classroom level. The Abay University declared that instructors should avoid imposing their own political beliefs and views on students (AU, 2013b).

Moreover, the Senate Legislation of the Abay University points out that students have the right to "participate in a free exchange of ideas in an open academic environment" (AU, 2013a, p. 206). To this end, instructors are responsible to "create a learning environment in which learners feel free to answer a question, knowing that there will be no cost to them if they are wrong" (Michael & Modell, 2003, p. 96). To create such a learning environment where students feel emotionally safe, it is indispensable to maintain "trusting relationships between students and instructors, and among students…to do this, professors lead by example by listening to students and treating them with both respect and compassion" (Soltis, 2015, p. 28).

Without assuring the freedom of students in the classroom, "instructors' efforts to try to get students to reflect … [will be] easily undermined by instructors' authority and formal power, which intimidates students programmed to seek correct answers" (Senge, 2010, p. 139). In general terms, Abay University seems to be dedicated to "…duty-bound to enact rules and regulations governing the academic right, freedoms, and responsibilities of its staff" (AU, 2013a, p. 31). However, this does not mean that the concept is in good status in terms of implementation.

Academic Freedom Hindering Factors

In the existing competitive environment of the intellectual world, academic freedom and autonomy values are endangered (Fair-weather, 1999; Grappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007, cited in Hardré & Cox, 2009). According to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) (2006), "instructors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their controversial teaching matter which has no relation to their subject" (p. 3).

It should be noted that academic freedom in higher education is not moulded so much by the existing education laws and regulations but by all students and academic staff (Mccrae, 2011). In the same vein, Badley (2009) asserted that "academics and students will inhabit a university space as a place from where to speak' only when they are free from administrative, corporate, religious and state constraints to be scholars who speak and write differently…" (p. 160). In attributing students' freedom to students' freedom at the institutional level, Mccrae (2011) argues that instructors could not value students' freedom of expression in the context wherein the instructors are themselves deprived of the right of free expression. This implies that in the classroom context of a higher education institution where academic freedom is lacking, students may have less chance of taking a central role in the teaching/learning process.

The Present Study

Recent studies in different contexts reported a relationship between academic freedom in higher education and political power. Among these contexts are Turkey (Fındıklı, 2020), Germany (Thompson, 2020), Vietnam (Marklein & Van Tinh, 2020), the UK (Morrish, 2020), Hungary (Bárd, 2020), and Russia (Oleksiyenko, 2020). However, other authors argue that this granted academic freedom should not be so flexible to affect education negatively. For instance, the academic staff should not have so much freedom in choosing their teaching methods as this can affect the learning outcomes (Finn, 2020). Jackson (2020) argues that regardless of the importance of academic freedom for academics and students, this concept should be approached more broadly to include other factors beyond the political influence on academic freedom. To this end, this study takes an ethnographic approach to explore the impact of academic freedom on implementing a student-centred approach in one anonymous public higher education institution in Ethiopia with the pseudonym "Abay University" (AU). The study attempted to answer the following two questions: (1) How instructors' academic freedom contributes to adopting a student-centred approach at Abay University? and (2) How students' academic freedom supports implementing the student-centred approach at Abay University?

Methods

To answer the fundamental research question of the study, a single-site case study design was adopted (Flick, 2007; Jones, Rodger, Ziviani, & Boyd, 2012). The study was conducted in a public university in Ethiopia with the pseudonym of "Abay University." One of Ethiopia's leading higher learning institutions provides instructors with year-long advanced pedagogical training to help them implement different teaching approaches and assessment techniques in the actual classroom.

Participants

Ten instructors from four colleges/faculties of Abay University were recruited purposively, believing that their classrooms are equipped with different teaching aids. They have better knowledge and awareness about student-centred approaches they took a year-long pedagogical in the same university. Considering that other personal characteristics of instructors may affect their adoption of student-centred approaches, efforts have been made to recruit instructors having different qualifications, gender, academic rank, etc. Similarly, twelve (12) students who were taught by the same instructors and served as class representatives were selected purposively, considering that they could represent and reflect students' viewpoints in their respective programs concerning academic freedom and student-centred approach. For a detailed description of the participants see Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Instructor Participants

Participants' codes	Sex	Discipline	Qualification	Academic Status	Teaching Experience	College/ Faculty
T1	F	Nursing	Master	Lecturer	4 Years	CMHS
T2	F	Medical Microbiology	PhD	Assistant Professor	10 years	CMHS
T3	M	Pharmacy	Master	Lecturer	3 Years	
T4	F	Mechanical Engineering	Master	Lecturer	5 years	IT
T5	M	Hydraulic	PhD	Assistant Professor	6 years	IT
T6	M	Natural Resource Management	Master	Assistant Professor	7 Years	CART
T7	M	Rural Development and Agricultural Transformation	PhD	Assistant Professor	7 years	CART
T8	F	Geography	Master	Lecturer	3 Years	CSSH
T9	M	English	PhD	Assistant Professor	8 Years	CSSH
T10	F	Psychology	Master	Lecturer	6 Years	CSSH

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Student Participants

Participants	Sex	Department	Year	Participation in university affairs	Faculty/College
S1	F	Nursing	3rd	Class representative	CHMS
S2	M	Nursing	3rd	A member of a club	CHMS
S3	M	Physiology	2nd	Class representative	CHMS
S4	F	Pharmacy	4th	Class representative	CHMS
S5	M	Mechanical Engineering	4th	A member of a club	IT
S6	F	Hydraulics and Water Engineering	4th	Class representative	IT
S7	M	Natural Resource Management	2nd	Class representative	CART
S8	F	Natural Resource Management	3rd	No Participation	CART
S9	M	Geography	3rd	Class representative	CSSH
S10	F	English	3rd	A member of a club	CSSH
S11	M	Psychology	2nd	Class representative	CSSH
S12	F	English	2nd	No Participation	CSSH

Measures

The data were collected in two sequential phases. Firstly, data related to perceived academic freedom and student-centred approaches were collected from ten instructors and twelve students through a semi-structured interview. Secondly, participant observations were conducted to shed light on how instructors and students collaborate to implement the student-centred approach in the actual classroom. Combining the two data sources helped the researchers better understand how instructors' and students' academic freedom practically dictates the implantation of student-centred approaches.

Procedure

The data obtained through interviews were transcribed into Amharic and then translated into English. To avoid personal bias, two language experts who were not members of the research team did the translation. Two authors read the decoded data between lines to understand what was said by the interviewees (Ghundol & Muthanna, 2020). This helps researchers to code the data accordingly. Following a careful reading of codes, categories preceded by major themes were drawn out. Table 3 shows how we coded the data and developed themes and types.

Table 3. Sample Codes, Themes, and Categories

Codes	Themes	Categories
Staff meeting, meeting agenda, reflecting thoughts, misinterpretation of views, accommodation of views	Instructors' freedom to reflect their views at the institutional level	Freedom at the Institutional level
Participation, general meetings, decision making, and acknowledging voices, and revenge	Students' freedom to reflect their views at the institutional level	

Conducting research ethically and getting ethical clearance from a university to which a researcher is affiliated is vital. The researcher's experiences in the study context show it is not easy to enter a particular organisation to access research data unless the government initiates the research project. As a result, the researcher recognised all the bureaucratic procedures as usual and passed them patiently. However, getting permission from institutions does not guarantee access to all data from research participants, so the researcher attempts to secure individuals' voluntary participation by avoiding any psychological and physical harm. As much as possible, the researcher has tried to be reflexive and design strategies to protect individual research participants from different risks. To put research participants at ease, the researcher established a good rapport and made honest dialogue with them, believing it is imperative to uphold professional ethics such as avoiding plagiarism throughout the research report.

Therefore, before conducting my research, the researcher applied to the higher officials of Abay University for permission for entry. Then, potential research participants were provided with clear information about the purpose of the study, and they were informed that confidentiality and anonymity are maintained and that they have the right to discontinue or refuse to participate in the study. Those who were willing to participate were asked to give written informed consent before data gathering. The researcher planned to share the study report with the participating university to ensure transparency and recognise its contribution to the successful accomplishments of the research project.

Results and Discussion

In this study, attempts have been made to comprehend how instructors and students perceive academic freedom and its impact on the realisation of student-centred approaches in the classrooms of Abay University. The university defines academic freedom as follows:

> *Academic freedom shall mean the right to discuss and openly express views on ideas, immediate national and global problems, and issues as well as other controversial matters in class, in connection with academic work on campus in discussion groups or print provided the expression of views is generally relevant to the subject under discussion and is consistent with rational and intellectual inquiry.* (AU, 2013a, p. 206)

The themes generated following the data coding were organized into two categories, including freedom at the institutional level and freedom at the classroom level. These categories reflect how the notion of academic freedom in Abay University exercised at the classroom and institutional levels.

Freedom at the Institutional Level

Instructor's Freedom to Reflect Their Views at the Institutional Level. Regarding the instructor's freedom to express their viewpoints in university-wide conferences, instructor participants reported the university organises only a few general meetings for the academic staff. An instructor participant (T10) mentioned that "the university organises joint annual conferences include research and education quality conferences." This restriction of expressing viewpoints also prevailed at the faculty/college level as expressed by an instructor participant:

> *Instructors also have a good relationship with the deans of colleges and faculties, but deans are not organising frequent staff meetings to discuss the teaching and learning process and other routines. Moreover, they do not conduct regular on-site visits. We requested our dean to call for a meeting since we had urgent issues…the university organises only a few general staff meetings annually. It is not enough to discuss recurrent institutional problems. Colleges and faculties should organise regular public staff meetings.* T8

This point of view revealed that instructors had very few opportunities to express their feelings and concerns through formal channels. The data also revealed that the meetings at the university level that specifically focused on the teaching and learning process were few. Instructor participants complained that most of the general staff meetings were not intentionally organised for gathering instructors' views to solve recurring institutional problems but were conducted for the sake of reports. Instructor participants mentioned that some of the university-wide meetings were organised as per the direction of the Ministry of Education, adding that the university rarely organises general meetings to discuss national policies.

The instructor participants explained that instructors did not adequately raise issues when institutional-wide meetings were considered sensitive and crucial issues at the department level. In contrast, instructor participants reported that instructors could freely express their views in different meetings. However, the participant instructors still admitted that most of the instructors did not feel comfortable to comment about their bosses openly and critically and directly oppose their views other than taking their ideas as future directions. This idea was summed up by one of the instructor participants:

> *Superficially, instructors can unreservedly express their personal views during seminars and conferences, but I do not think instructors can confidently reflect on their thoughts since they do not feel comfortable commenting openly and critically on their bosses. There are cases in which instructors who often criticise their bosses receive adverse reactions. An instructor who explicitly forwards his/her concerns and critically evaluates his/her bosses in a general staff meeting would be considered a brave man/woman.* T6

This idea is strengthened by the same instructor participant who stated:

Instructors, in principle, can reflect any ideas at different meetings regardless of their leader's commitment to accommodate their ideas and take immediate actions. Of course, instructors feel that academic leaders dislike those who regularly raise questions and forward comments at different meetings. T6

The above accounts indicate instructors are supposed to express their views freely regardless of other people's feelings, but in practical cases, it seemed that the freedom to share personal opinions with bosses in public was found to be limited. This shed light on the deeply rooted culture among instructors that expressing all personal feelings in public would damage a healthy relationship with others, including bosses. Scholars attribute students' freedom of expression in a classroom to the instructor's freedom at the institutional level. For instance, Mccrae (2011) argues that instructors could not value students' freedom of expression in the context where the instructor themselves are deprived of the right of free expression. This implies that in the classroom context of a higher education institution where academic freedom is lacking, students may have less chance of taking a central role in the teaching-learning process.

It was further pointed out that there were cases in which others might misinterpret the instructor's personal views in staff meetings. Hence, as reflected by instructor participants, instructors restrain themselves from reflecting their feelings for personal and/or political reasons. An instructor participant expressed it this way:

I know instructors can freely reflect their views at different academic meetings, but some instructors restrain from sharing their opinions with the audience by suspecting that the bosses would misinterpret their ideas. T3

The data further highlighted that raising all personal concerns in general staff meetings were perceived as nonsense. This was justified by instructor participants who disclosed that the university primarily accommodates ideas that best suit the need of the management bodies or ideas in line with the university's plan. A participant instructor explained:

Instructors can freely reflect their opinions at different meetings to discuss various issues, but higher officials decide most matters in advance. Hence, instructors developed a feeling that most sessions take place for the sake of formality rather than for accommodating instructors' views to the betterment of institutional practices. T2

Moreover, an instructor participant (T9) mentioned that "the university does not entertain and implement all the issues raised by instructors during meetings." Instructors rarely followed up, even ideas welcomed by the management bodies to see their ideas in practice. For this reason, instructors mostly prefer keeping silent to share their concerns and demands with the university management publically. Instructors are less likely to support a decision if they feel their ideas have been overlooked. This is an issue that leaders need to think of so that firm decisions are reached critically. As to student-centred approaches, the Abay University instructors seem excluded in deciding its implementation in every classroom other than

receiving pedagogical training to implement it as a non-negotiable change. It is wise to make instructors understand its value since they are most impacted by it.

Student's Freedom to Reflect Their Views at the Institutional Level. During the interviews, some questions were directed concerning students' freedom to reflect on their views at the institutional level, and the interviewed students raised several ideas and concerns. Most argued that there were few opportunities to share their thoughts with the university administrative bodies; they felt the university fails to properly acknowledge their voices though the Senate Legislation of the university points out that students can "give suggestions in the preparation of by-laws, regulations, and directives about administrative matters as well as in the review and development of curricula" (AU, 2013a, p. 206). Despite this statement in the Senate Legislation, most of the manuals and policies of the university do not exclusively address students' freedom at the university level.

The student participants reported that the university does not organise regular meetings to discuss the teaching-learning process. Put differently, and the university arranged only a few general meetings to discuss different administrative and academic issues. One student participant (S4) mentioned that "when students come to the university for the first time, the administrators and academic leaders used to give information about the university. Otherwise, students rarely involve in decision making." The following student participants further supported this idea:

> *There are a few discussion forums that the university organises for students. The university calls for only one annual general meeting to welcome new students though there are recurring problems in the university that should be regularly discussed with students to bring about solutions. There is no discussion forum at the faculty level to raise questions and forward comments on the teaching and learning process. The cafeteria workers are not listening to the voices of students.* S1
> *I can say there is no freedom to express personal views. There is no consecutive meeting organised for students to raise questions and forward comments except when we first arrived at the university to orient us about our duties and responsibilities. In the classroom, we never forward comment to the instructor except asking questions.* S6
> *There are some meetings to discuss the teaching and learning process. But the university rarely organises meetings about service quality except a meeting that takes place when we first arrive at the university to introduce the services. In general, there are no regular meetings that the university organises for students.* S1

The above viewpoints indicate that Abay University is good at providing new students with essential information to help them settle in promptly, and the orientation program seems to be well planned and organised for the benefit of students. However, students are seldom involved in the decision-making process during their university life. This means the university officials made decisions concerning students without including them in the decision-making process, and it is crucial to make students part of a solution that directly addresses their problems.

It was also revealed that the student's active participation in a meeting called by the management bodies was encouraging once they could participate. Student participants explained this active participation in asking questions and forwarding

comments regarding the quality of the university services. However, student participants complained that the university administrators did not acknowledge their voices and promptly solved the problems other than recording students' concerns and opinions during meetings. Hence, students are obliged to raise similar questions and complaints in different academic years; one student participant stated:

> *Officially, the university organises meetings for us to disclose the prevailing problems to different administrative bodies. The points we raised seem to be well noted by the meeting's chairperson, but the university does not practically solve these problems. In general, I want to claim that students are not fully experiencing their freedom as stated in different university guidelines.* S12

Regarding the meeting agenda set by the university, most student participants disclosed they never attend meetings meant for students to discuss problems regarding the quality of classroom instruction in general and the performance of instructors in the presence of classroom instructors. It seems there is no culture of dialogue between students and instructors concerning the teaching and learning process. As one student participant (S1) explained, "no one organises a meeting for students to evaluate instructor's performance, but we only rank their performance via paper-based evaluation tools."

This implies that students evaluate the instructor's performance only through evaluation checklists distributed in the classroom by the head of the department and sometimes by an individual instructor. This contrasts with a student participant's viewpoint that different university offices, including the president's office, welcome students as they want to share their complaints. On this, student participants further expressed that the heads of departments encouraged students to freely share their concerns about the teaching and learning process through students did not voluntarily do so because of the fear of receiving bad grades as revenge from instructors who got negative feedback from students. Referring to an instructor with this kind of adverse reaction, a student participant said:

> *I remember when the university administrative bodies invited me to discuss the teaching and learning process as a class representative. Most class representatives prefer to keep silent in that meeting, but the chairman frequently requested us to forward any questions and suggestions regarding the teaching and learning process. Consequently, my friend raised his complaint regarding an instructor who was an autocrat and rude to her students. On the following day of the meeting, this instructor came to the class and complained about the student's feedback that she received through the head of the department. At the end of the semester, she prepared for a very tough examination which caused many students to fail her course.* S7

The interviewee justifies students' everyday experiences in which their instructors abused students—as a result, sharing their concerns regarding the teaching and learning process in a classroom.

Students had few opportunities to reflect their views and concerns in official meetings concerning the quality of services and the university's teaching and learning process let students evaluate the instructor's performance based on

evaluations tools. The university did not promptly solve students' problems, making students perceive the university had failed to acknowledge their concerns. Furthermore, students did not exercise their freedom to officially complain about the instructor's quality since they were afraid of the adverse reactions from individual instructors.

Freedom at the Classroom Level

Instructor's Freedom at the Classroom Level. When instructors were asked to detail their freedom to express personal views in the classroom, most mentioned they did not personally face challenges to express personal opinions. In other words, instructors can freely express their ideas in the classroom if they support their arguments with scientific knowledge rather than personal judgments. There was also some level of practice in the classroom wherein instructors could freely criticise government policies though they believe that instructors, as scholars, had to be officially entitled to reflect personal views. An instructor participant (T3) expressed that 'instructors do not feel confident to openly share their viewpoints about national policies and criticise them as well in the classroom.' Instructor participants stressed that classroom instructors did not feel free to share their concerns with students about the prevailing gaps of the nationally harmonised curriculum, let alone criticising national-level policies. This idea was also strengthened by an instructor who explained:

> *In the classroom, I do not think instructors have the freedom to promote ideas that are antagonistic to government policies. I know what the consequence would be if a student informed some concerned bodies about the case.* T8

More importantly, the interview indicated that the freedom of criticising government policies was restricted because of political reasons. The study data further revealed that instructors who were teaching courses that, by their nature, related to political affairs and government policies, did not freely express their views as they were afraid that students might misinterpret their ideas. The university itself officially declares that instructors should avoid imposing their own political beliefs and opinions on students (AU, 2013b).

While reflecting on instructors' and students' freedom to design courses collaboratively, many participants explained that let alone negotiate the course contents with their students. They do not have the right to select course contents unless they officially discuss the case with the department council. In contrast, a reviewed document of the Abay University states, "an academic staff of the university shall design, develop, and implement courses in an area of specialisation following established university procedures…" (AU, 2013b, p. 25). Teaching course contents prescribed by a concerned body other than instructors and students would result in teaching focused on outcomes that may suppress the sharing of innovative ideas between an instructor and their students (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002). Concerning this, one of the instructor participants asserted that:

> *The curricula of undergraduate programs are nationally harmonised. I informally heard that instructors could only revise ten percent of the course content. Instructors can add some content to a course if it is convincing, but instructors cannot remove it.* T10
>
> *Instructors have only some levels of freedom to modify the contents of undergraduate curricula since these curricula are nationally harmonised. I do not know precisely to what extent we can adjust the contents. We wish to make significant changes to the contents, but we are afraid to do so.* T8

Another instructor participant further explained this based on his personal experience:

> *I came to know irrelevant contents included in the course that I am delivering, but I have no right to avoid these contents unless I get permission from the department. However, it is possible to add new content to the course syllabus freely.* T14

As revealed in the classroom observations, it is worth noting that instructors did not discuss the course contents with their students, which violates an assumption in the constructivist approaches that as students negotiate with instructors about course contents, it is more likely they will take responsibility for their learning (Vrasidas, 2000). This would provide instructors with limited scope to freely redesign their course syllabus. They did not have the autonomy to remove content perceived as unimportant though they had the right to add relevant and contemporary content related to the course. So, instructors are expected to teach classes based on the syllabus they developed in line with a particular curriculum, but they seem to have the freedom to broaden the contents without deviating much from the fundamental essence of the course. In an education system where "a national curriculum is tightly defined…, instructors may find themselves 'teaching to the test' using a teacher-centred approach" (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002, p. 46). Concerning this, an instructor participant (T2) pointed out that "if instructors have strong justification for adding some contents in the existing course syllabus, they can do that in consultation with the concerned bodies."

Nonetheless, an instructor's freedom to redesign course contents is constrained by the nationally harmonised curricula developed by the curriculum experts and the team of professionals. This seems to be intentionally enforced so the concerned government bodies have "a higher degree of control and standardisation than a more autonomous curriculum model would permit" (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002, p. 13). Briggs and Sommerfeldt also noted that regardless of the national curriculum framework supposedly guiding the teaching and learning process, an instructor's quality plays an immense role in bringing about quality instruction in a classroom.

The instructor participants did not deny they had the right to plan and implement a wide range of teaching methods and assessment techniques to fill perceived gaps of teaching and assessment methods proposed by the curriculum experts. Marzano (2007) argued that an individual instructor should determine the teaching strategies by considering different factors, including the type of students and the time available for the lesson. In this concern, the interview with participating instructors further revealed that instructors had the freedom to change

the mode of delivery proposed by the curriculum as far as they found it essential. No one, including the department head, imposed teaching methods specified in the curriculum as the only teaching strategies. Their views, in this regard, were well represented by the following viewpoints:

> *Instructors are free to use any kind of teaching method. The university does not set restrictions on the way instructors teach courses in the classroom if the methods they choose suit them.* T2
> *Instructors can exercise some freedom in the teaching and learning process unless they have personal fear. They can freely use a range of teaching methodologies and add new contents to the existing course syllabus, but they cannot avoid course contents proposed by the curriculum.* T3
> *As far as they believe the methodologies effectively deliver the lesson, all instructors are privileged to plan and employ different teaching methods …We sometimes give cases for students to discuss. However, most students may not participate unless instructors compel them to participate.* T10

The freedom bestowed upon instructors by the university to use various teaching approaches provides an impetus for them to plan different active learning approaches. An instructor participant stated it this way:

> *Academic freedom, to some extent, contributes to the implementation of the student-centred approach in the classroom. For instance, it provides a chance for instructors to plan different teaching approaches flexibly. However, students do not like their instructors to stay for a long time in the classroom, and they dislike strict instructors and teach courses as per the syllabus. Students want to keep silent in the school. There are cases in which instructors push students for a prompt response to their questions. This might be a result of students' previous learning trends. Forcing students to answer and ask questions is like denying freedom to them.… hence, instructors get discouraged from making the lesson student-centred.* T8

This was also reflected in the collection of artefacts. The reviewed course syllabus, for instance, confirmed that instructors have the right to plan a range of active learning approaches. The Senate Legislation of AU also states, "the university is…duty-bound to enact rules and regulations governing the academic right, freedoms, and responsibilities of its staff" (AU, 2013a, p.10). In contrast, the data collected through classroom observations revealed that instructors did not practically use their freedom and used a range of active learning methods. An instructor participant pointed out:

> *There is the freedom to employ various teaching methodologies, but instructors mostly use the lecture method to take much of the class time. Sometimes instructors try to use varied active learning approaches, but students are unwilling to participate.* T5

As clearly indicated in the above script, one can confidently infer that the freedom to plan different active learning approaches was not guaranteed to adopt student-centred approaches in the classroom successfully. In other words, though instructors have the freedom to teach as they plan, they predominately use the

lecture method except when forwarding questions at the end of the lesson and sometimes requiring students to do group assignments.

Student's Freedom at the Classroom Level

While reflecting on students' freedom of expression of personal viewpoints in the classroom, instructor participants stated that classroom instructors encourage students to express their views on debatable issues.

Instructor participants stressed that higher learning institutions should argue, generate new ideas, and hold diverse views on different classroom issues. There were pragmatic responses to the question related to student's freedom of expression and discussion in the classroom, as these instructors explained:

> *We, instructors, give our students freedom to participate and provide direction to discuss and debate. Students will be active learners if instructors provide them with a chance and guidance to participate.* T1
> *There is a course named 'seminar' in which students can discuss and argue on some topics. Moreover, I sometimes provide students with assignments and give chances for them to present their works.* T9
> *In the classroom, I give students the freedom to debate sensitive issues, which would help them develop their decision-making skills. Of course, not all classes invite students to discuss with each other.* T2

These viewpoints indicate that instructors recognise the significance of the student's freedom of expression in the classroom and attempt to let students reflect their views. Concurrently, freedom of discussion and expression in every classroom was highlighted in different institutional documents. In this context, the 'instructor's handbook,' for instance, stated "through contact with students for teaching purposes, an academic staff member has the right to promote and permit an atmosphere of free, rational, and dispassionate inquiry concerning issues relevant to the subject matter of the course…" (AU, 2013b, p. 24). Such a statement reveals that students have the right to enjoy a classroom environment wherein they can reflect their views during their interaction with instructors and other students. In contrast, it was disclosed from the interviews with instructors that most students keep silent when instructors ask questions. On this issue, an instructor participant (T7) mentioned, "I know there could be students who have the correct answer about my questions, but they would be afraid to answer them." This was justified by instructor participants who expressed that most of their students are afraid of the adverse reactions from instructors when they give wrong answers, so it is suggested that "instructors must create a learning environment in which learners "feel free to answer a question, knowing that there will be no cost to them if they are wrong" (Michael & Modell, 2003, p. 96). Otherwise, "instructors' efforts to try to get students to reflect … [will be] easily undermined by instructors' authority and formal power, which intimidates students programmed to seek correct answers" (Senge, 2010, p. 139). On this issue, instructor participants explained by saying:

We instructors do not react to students' wrong and unrelated answers, and some students may laugh at a student when they give irrelevant answers. It would have been better to appreciate students' participation and provide constrictive feedback afterward, which would enhance students' tendency to participate in subsequent sessions. Instructors can boost the confidence of their students to participate by creating a friendly and conducive classroom environment. T2

I used to claim that complexity of the topics induced passivity among students. But, one day, I intentionally asked students a trivial question. However, all students keep silent. This gave me a clue that students are either afraid or lose interest in participating in the classroom. My students should know that I am asking questions not to frustrate them but to adjust my instructional approaches to improve learning. T10

The above points indicate that students abstained from answering questions since they were afraid instructors may negatively react. This was also evident from student participants' responses that some instructors may raise questions instead of answering their questions. Student participants seemed to agree that some instructors gave them opportunities to pose questions though they still felt disheartened by instructors' hostile reactions. As a result, a student participant (S4) asserted that "most of the students prefer referring books to raise questions for their instructors to understand points that were not clear to them during a lesson." Other student participants further confirmed the above viewpoints:

Since some instructors show irritating faces when asked by students, students feel that all instructors may do the same. As a result, students think unease to raise questions for their instructors, and they prefer to listen to what the instructor is saying rather than asking questions. Even we choose not to respond when instructors orally ask questions. S12

There is…an issue of freedom. When students are afraid of asking questions in the classroom, they refer to books in the library to find answers. Instructors may invite students to ask questions, but they do not show a welcoming face when students forward questions. Most students then fail to ask questions since they are afraid of the unfriendly approaches of instructors. S7

Concerning academic freedom in the classroom, I can say that it is so poor. I prefer not to ask my instructors questions since some consider my questions silly, and they do not encourage me to ask them again. When I ask questions, instructors themselves raise questions instead of answering my questions. S1

Some instructors encourage students who participate in the classroom. At the same time, some instructors do not like to be asked by students. They do not show a welcoming face for students to ask. It seems that these instructors expect students to be silent and listen to what they are saying. This deprives my freedom to ask. S10

The data further suggested that students' freedom to raise questions was attributed to the classroom instructor's behaviour. In other words, a student's academic freedom depends on their relationship with their instructors. On this issue, one student participant (S2) pointed out, "it is difficult to say whether students have freedom or not in the classroom. It depends on individual instructor's behaviour." As reported by student participants, there were several occasions when students did not feel at ease speaking and raising questions to the instructors

who had an unfriendly approach. The classroom observations also confirmed this. For example, some instructors in the observed classrooms were friendly to their students and invited them to reflect their views, but some looked harsh and unreceptive to students' ideas. In the latter cases, students were not airing their opinions and concerns. This contrasts with the assumption that best teaching is characterised by the perceived freedom of students to learn (Brown & Atkins, 1988).

While specifically reflecting on their freedom to comment on an instructor's view or their way of teaching, student participants revealed that students could not freely give comments on lessons in the classroom, one of the student participants (S6) explained "students never forward comments for their instructors unless their instructors request them to do so." Student participants also revealed that instructors rarely give a chance for students to provide them with feedback. This idea was further strengthened by student participants who stated:

> *Students usually are afraid of giving comments unless they force each student to provide comments. I know, in principle, students can express their views. But, starting from the lower grades, we do not have the experience to comment on our instructors. This is what we developed in the lower grades. We may give comments to instructors through a classroom representative. When we comment on instructors through our representatives' instructors may still be angry at us. In general, we lack the experience to give a face to face comments to instructors.* S3
> *I never comment on my instructor, even if they teach something wrong. How could I interrupt the lesson and give comments to my instructor unless they invited me to comment? I know the university administration will favour instructors if conflict happens between students and instructors. Moreover, students may laugh at the student who argued with instructors. I do not think instructors need students to express all that they feel. If a student disagrees and argues with an instructor about the proposed answers of an examination, the instructor may think that the student undermines them. In such circumstances, a student may fail to express his idea confidently.* S2

The above accounts highlight those students do not freely comment on the instructor's views and their ways of teaching; students give feedback only if their instructor pointedly asks an individual student to do so. Students felt the instructors did not duly acknowledge their comments, and they got little opportunity to comment on a lesson. Concurrently, the lesson observations showed that the students receive information from their classroom instructors without questioning its validity. For instance, an instructor delivered a lecture about 'professional ethics in one observed classroom.' The instructor displayed and incorrectly said 'paid vocation' during this lesson instead of 'paid vacation.' Surprisingly, none of the students commented on this. This also suggests there is not a culture of forwarding comments to instructors. A student participant (S6) commented, "students fail to participate because of lack of freedom to express personal views and argue with instructors." In such conditions, it is impossible to realise student-centred approaches in the classrooms of Abay University. The classroom observations confirmed that some instructors looked angry at the whole class when they heard voices. Generally, student participants felt most of their instructors failed to

accommodate students' ideas adequately, and they thought they had been deprived of their academic freedom in the classroom. In this concern, an instructor participant witnessed:

> *Every student is interested in reflecting their views, but the instructor's approach matters most to reflect their ideas freely. Some instructors recognise students' ideas regardless of their English language skills, which enhances students' participation in the classroom. Of course, some students are so fearful and shy of their instructors and classmates.* T1

The above interviewee seems convinced there could be students willing to respond to instructors' questions when instructors establish a good rapport with their students. This is in line with Schein's (2004) assertion that organisational culture is "the most critical factor determining the success or failures of an organisation" (as cited in Arifin, Troena, Djumahir, & Rahayu, 2014, p. 22). It was also found that there were few occasions in the classroom for students and instructors to discuss their common concerns. As revealed in the classroom observations, the researcher noticed a conversation between an instructor and a class representative.

> **Instructor**: *Why do not you ask questions? Why do not you answer my questions as well? I am allowing you to do so.*
> **Student**: *Instructor…most students are interested in asking and answering questions, but most of us are afraid of asking and answering questions since students mock each other's mistakes.*

This dialogue delivered a message that students felt there was no such classroom environment to ask and answer questions freely. It was also evident from the conversation that students failed to freely express their views and concerns in the class due to the risk of an embarrassment of reflecting on something that other students may perceive as wrong. This idea was supported by a student (S2) who said, "I worry that my questions might be silly for other students which would, in turn, make them laugh at and undermine me." As viewed by student participants, this makes students restrained from active participation due to being demoralised for giving wrong responses. This contrasts with the articulated Senate Legislation of the Abay University, stating that students have the right to "participate in a free exchange of ideas in an open academic environment" (AU, 2013, p. 206). To create an environment in which students feel emotionally safe, it is essential to establish "trusting relationships between students and instructors, and among students…to do this, professors lead by example by listening to students and treating them with both respect and compassion" (Soltis, 2015, p. 28). Concerning this, student participants pointed out the immense role of the classroom instructors in establishing a conducive classroom environment that supports students to express their views freely. On this, a participant instructor explained:

> *Instructors can boost the confidence of their students to participate by creating a friendly and conducive classroom environment. Moreover, instructors should credit the participation of students since it would enhance the tendency of students to experience.* T2

Further, a participant instructor provided a response based on his personal experiences:

> *Since students mostly worry that their colleagues will laugh at them if they give wrong answers, I usually make students aware that making mistakes is nothing, and mistakes are part of learning. When students restrain from reflecting on their views, I switch the lesson to questioning and answering. I also appreciate students who actively participate in the classroom.* T1

The above accounts indicate that institutional policies and guidelines that state the freedom of expression do not assure such freedom in the classroom. Instead, students' freedom of expression is in the hands of their instructors. In this concern, Mccrae (2011) stated that academic freedom in higher education is not moulded so much by existing education laws and regulations but by the thoughts and behaviours of all students and academic staff. The above account also stipulates that instructors are considered accountable for building a class environment where students' views are welcomed. Otherwise, having a harsh classroom environment would instill fear among students. Students' active participation in the classroom would be impossible unless they are courageous to answer questions and express their feelings. On this, student participants also commented that most of the instructors were not authorising students to reflect personal views since they perceived the students had no pre-knowledge about the topic being taught. Students had no option other than to accept all the information without questioning in such a classroom context.

As reported by student participants, the poor participation of students was also caused by a deep-rooted prejudice that was frequently forwarding comments and posing challenging questions to instructors would lead students to receive poor grades. Concerning this, a student participant (S5) pointed out, "most students suspect that an instructor will reduce marks if they challenge him/her in the classroom." Other students strengthened this point of view:

> *We knew that students have the right to raise questions and reflect personal views in the classroom. However, most students think that the instructor may reduce their marks if they pose questions to an instructor. Some students ended up getting hurt emotionally. I stop raising questions to my instructors in the classroom.* S3
> *Since students are afraid of their instructors, they do not like to ask questions. Students believe that if they ask questions repeatedly in the classroom, the instructor may give them an "F" grade as an act of revenge.* S6
> *I abstain from forwarding comments to my instructor in the classroom even though they made* serious and apparent errors *while teaching a topic. It is challenging to give comments to instructors since I am afraid that the instructor may get revenge on me.* S11

The above excerpts indicate that students are aware of having the right to forward personal viewpoints and ask questions though they perceive that instructors who have been frequently requested and commented on by students would take revenge by giving them a bad grade. This hinders students from sharing their views and concerns with their instructors. If students fear getting poor grades, they may unreasonably keep silent while their instructors make apparent mistakes in delivering their lessons. In such circumstances, students fail to achieve the specific learning objectives set for a particular class.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Action

As to the students' freedom to express personal views at the classroom level, the analysis shows that instructors tried to provide some opportunities for students to ask and answer questions. However, most of the students did not freely participate since they were afraid of the negative reaction from instructors and the embarrassment of reflecting on something that other students may perceive as wrong. Student participants felt most of their instructors did not acknowledge their ideas and felt deprived of their academic freedom in the classroom. A deep-rooted prejudice that frequently forwarded comments and posed challenging questions to the classroom instructors would lead to poor grades from their instructors. Such situations cannot be reversed unless instructors encourage students to participate in questioning and answering and reflect their personal views (Michael & Modell, 2003). Instructors need to recognise a student's freedom in the classroom as noteworthy. This would motivate students to generate new and diverse ideas.

Students' freedom to reflect their views was found to connect with individual classroom instructors' behaviour, implying that students' freedom in the classroom is in the hands of their instructors. Creating a friendly and welcoming classroom environment helps instructors to enhance active participation among students. It should be noted that the freedom that students experience in the classroom would contribute to effective classroom instruction (Brown & Atkins, 1988; Soltis, 2015). Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations were forwarded to academic leaders and instructors.

Last but not least, academic freedom seems to be hierarchical. The university leadership allows academic freedom based on the freedom given to them by the highest education authority. The highest authority of education allows academic freedom based on the government's level of freedom. Therefore, this is reflected when looking at the academic freedom given to instructors and students. While this showed a vital influence on this university case, other factors like culture and social structure are undoubtedly hindering factors in the proper practice of academic freedom in the Ethiopian higher education system.

Recommendations for Academic Leaders

It is recommended that the academic leaders make students aware of their freedom of speech in the classroom, and the level to which instructors give freedom

for their students should be included as a criterion in the instructor's performance evaluation checklist. The university needs to promote a culture that values mutual understanding and authentic discourse between instructors and students and instructors regardless of their academic and administrative status.

Recommendations for Instructors

Instructors should employ two-way communication in the classroom to help them effectively share their knowledge with students. They should also make the class participatory by using various teaching methods that accommodate diversity in the classroom and put exact assessment mechanisms.

Acknowledgments

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Understanding Effective Teaching Beliefs of Instructors and Students: A Qualitative Study at an Ethiopian University

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This article explores instructors and students' beliefs toward effective teaching in higher education in Ethiopia. Besides classroom observations, we developed and conducted semi-structured interviews with ten instructors and 12 students at one higher education institution. We followed the data condensation and displayed it for interpreting the data. The findings highlight the qualities of effective teaching and the hope for a change in the current teaching approach to actively participate in the teaching-learning action. This, however, demands a change in designing the course syllabus and assignments and the continuous professional development of the teaching faculty.

Keywords: beliefs, effective teaching, student-centered approach, professional development, higher education, Ethiopia

Introduction

It is reasonable to recognize that teachers' pedagogical skills and personal beliefs shape their classroom teaching (Brinkmann, 2016). It is equally important to consider students' beliefs toward effective teaching as their beliefs help teachers design effective teaching strategies for their courses (Kurniati & Cahyono, 2018). This means that personality aids teaching (Arif, Rashid, Tahira & Akhter, 2012). Therefore, understanding beliefs could help comprehend how personality and functioning vary across individuals (Dweck, 2008). Therefore, this article focuses on exploring the beliefs of instructors and students toward effective teaching in higher education in Ethiopia, how their beliefs influence teachers to adopt a student-centered approach, and how students take responsibility for their learning.

In the age of information and globalization, there is an increasing demand for changes in higher education institutions with a focus on curricula, teaching strategies, support services, and overall functioning that prepare the new generation for current and future challenges (Mok, 2010; White & Glickman, 2007; Zhu & Engels, 2014). A change is a never-ending process that could be adapted as far as the goals of a given change are made clear and shared to have a conscious social awareness of a particular change (Keating, 2005). For example, a change in

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curriculum or teaching approaches could improve educational institutions (Lin, Chuang, & Hsu, 2014).

Ethiopian higher learning institutions provide teachers with a year-long pedagogical training for all instructors to enable them to implement a student-centered approach in their classrooms. However, they are focusing on developing teachers' teaching skills without addressing students' and teachers' beliefs on effective teaching. How teachers and students' beliefs shape the implementation of the student-centered approach is an under-researched issue in Ethiopian higher education. This article explores the influence of teachers and students' beliefs on the implementation of the student-centered approach. It mainly aims to answer these research questions: 1) How do instructors and students perceive effective teaching at university? Moreover, 2) How do such beliefs contribute to using a student-centered approach?

A Brief Overview of Higher Education in Ethiopia

Higher learning in Ethiopia has almost the same age as Axum Obelisks that dates back to the traditions of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church before 300 AD (Abebe, 1995; Kebede, 2010; Teferra, 2017; Teferra & Altbach, 2004; Saint, 2004; Wagaw, 1990 as cited in Yallew, 2020). However, the history of modern higher education in Ethiopia dates back to the establishment of the Addis Ababa University College in 1950 (Asgedom & Hagos, 2016). The Ethiopian higher education system has seen a massive expansion (Abdela & Pillay, 2014); federal universities are currently forty-four. The Ministry of Education was responsible for leading the Ethiopian higher learning institutions. Nevertheless, after establishing the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in October 2018, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education became responsible for overseeing science, technical, and vocational education and training.

Many nations continuously evaluate and develop their higher education policies and systems. The Ethiopian higher education is no exception; it called for a pedagogical philosophy reform, hoping for a shift from instructor-led teaching to student-centered learning and provided pedagogical training for faculty members (MoE, 2015). In the 21st century, there is a trend toward employing a student-centered approach wherein students take responsibility for their learning (Trentin, 2010). Below is a brief description of what effective teaching is.

Beliefs on Effective Teaching

The teaching action is at the heart of education institutions. It mainly includes teachers and students (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002). A variety of beliefs on the implementation of teaching has been reported. For example, many instructors prefer not to engage students in class participation and keep their primary role as controllers and transmitters of knowledge (e.g., Alemu, 2010; Li, 2014; Trentin, 2010). Others believe that both instructors and students play essential roles in making the teaching-learning activity effective (e.g., Bidabadi, Isfahani, Rouhollahi, & Khalili, 2016; Brown & Atkins, 1988). Moreover, employing

different teaching approaches that encourage students' independent and collaborative learning helps develop critical thinking skills (Dunne & Wragg, 1994).

Effective teaching is viewed differently. Some scholars attribute effective teaching to an instructor's quality in relation to their subject knowledge, teaching skills, and professional skills (Brown & Atkins, 1988; Dunne & Wragg, 1994). In a cultural context where the people attribute effective teaching to the instructor's subject knowledge, students and instructors themselves may think of instructors as the primary source of knowledge, and they may gear the teaching/learning process to be teacher-centered (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002). In such teaching approaches, students may fail to have a meaningful learning experience and may not retain concepts introduced in the class (Senge, 2010). If instructors and students recognize rote learning as a norm in a given context, they never hesitate to adopt the teacher-centered approach (Briggs & Sommefeldt, 2002). Concerning this issue, Michael and Modell (2003, p. 96) asserted that "if instructors mainly test students' "ability to regurgitate memorized information," their students will "make little effort to learn to solve problems".

While one teaching approach could be practical in one context, it might not be so in another context (Brown & Atkins, 1988). However, the relationship between instructors and students is essential for an effective teaching-learning process in all contexts (Kyriacou, 2009).

University Teacher Competence and Effective Teaching

Are Beliefs Competencies, Vice Versa, or Both? It is not well-known whether university teachers and students' beliefs are static or dynamic. Do they keep changing based on the teaching environment, experienced lives, and professional development (Yuan, Chen, & Peng, 2020)? Or are they static and remain in conflict with the new beliefs in the work environment (Noben et al., 2021)? Given that they are a controversial issue, we assume it is not enough for university teachers to have positive beliefs on teaching and their discipline (e.g., Wang, Lee, & Park, 2020). Similarly, it is not enough for students to have positive beliefs on learning and their study discipline.

Although both parties' beliefs are essential for effective teaching and learning, these beliefs' nature is still insufficient for effective teaching. What is more, when these beliefs have in common, this is undoubtedly advantageous for both the students, the university teachers, and the society (Brickhouse, 1990). When the opposite happens, professional development training to help the teachers and students gain situational knowledge is highly required to bridge the gap (Halim, Buang, & Meerah, 2010). These beliefs, which are different according to the experiences and disciplines, are also valuable sources for the required key competencies for a university teacher and student (Clement, Clarebout, & Elen, 2003). For instance, several university teachers worldwide might find it hard to implement technology in their classes. They attribute this to the need for high efforts to prepare materials, tasks, or even incompetence in using technological equipment (Steel, 2009).

That being said, the professional development of university teachers is the essence of successful higher education. Higher education institutions' responsibility is to ensure continuous professional development for university teachers (Duţă, 2012). This professional development should include university students, too. When the students are not well-prepared for learning, this hinders effective learning, even with university teachers with high key competencies (Gil-Galván & Gil-Galván, 2013). By this means, professional development is intersectional in that it involves the collaboration of three parties at the micro-level: university teachers, students, and administration of the university. The beliefs of these three parties will be inconsistent, and they will need to reach an agreement. This conflict could hinder both teaching and learning processes (e.g., Çelik, Bayraktar-Çepni, & İlyas, 2013). Previous research argues that this conflict is more evident in novice university teachers (e.g., demonstrators, lecturers) (Löfström & Poom-Valickis, 2013). A study found that while university teachers should develop and be trained to have self-reflecting, self-renewing, self-motivating, and self-developing personality competencies; students should equally have inter-reflecting, inter-renewing, inter-motivating, and inter-developing competencies (Blašková, Blaško, Jankalová, & Jankal, 2014).

Key Competencies of a Good University Teacher. Several attempts have been made towards a standardized model identifying the critical competencies of a good university teacher. A comprehensive model is that including professional competence, educational competence, motivational competence, communicational competence, personal competence, science and research competence, and publication competence (Blašková, Blaško, & Kucharčíková, 2014). Higher education institutions' provided training is significant to ensure the provision of quality materials reflecting all these competencies. It should have training that ensures lifelong learning for both teachers and students. Lifelong learning enables them to learn, do, live together and with others, and learn to be (Duţă & Rafailă, 2014a). This list of competencies is not different from scientific, teaching, transversal, relational, vocation and dedication, higher education experience, self-assessment, professional development, and research competencies (Duţă Pânişoară, & Pânişoară, 2014). At all rates, whatever the list of these critical competencies, they should ensure achieving three dimensions: cognitive, functional, and professional skills and knowledge (Dută & Rafaila, 2014b).

Factors Enhancing Effective University Teaching. Mutual understanding and collaboration between university teachers and students are vital to achieving successful learning and teaching. A university teacher who is pedagogically, professionally, and communicatively competent needs to be flexible for all teaching environments, students' preferences, and even beliefs (Blaskova, Blasko, Matuska, & Rosak-Szyrocka, 2015; Ospanova et al., 2015). This kind of teacher should motivate oneself, students, and colleagues and be motivated in return (Blaskova, Blasko, Figurska, & Sokol, 2015; Su, 2016). To have both competent teachers and students is a step towards higher quality higher education and world-class higher education institutions (Kornienko, 2015). Moreover, the teaching-

learning environment and even the socio-economic environments contribute to this mutual understanding between the two parties to reach effective teaching (Bogomaz, Kozlova, & Atamanova, 2015; Van Houtte & Demanet, 2016). When the university teachers believe in learners' autonomy, they create a learning environment yet establish a positive context for their teaching environment (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018).

Knowledge is also a potential factor enhancing effective university teaching. Pedagogical knowledge is more influential than the belief in integrating technology use towards effective teaching (Taimalu & Luik, 2019). This includes the administrators and policy-makers' role in supporting and funding professional development, helping teaching acquire practical knowledge (Ingwu et al., 2019). In other words, while some teachers might have the initiative to practice student-centered learning, the educational system in their country could be a barrier (e.g., Yasmin, Naseem, & Masso, 2019). Inadequate and/or insufficient knowledge in the field being taught turns to be a disadvantage, even when the teacher manifests high self-efficacy (Kartal et al., 2019). It is the higher education administration's responsibility to develop effective strategies for professional development, including the knowledge element (Yessimgaliyeva et al., 2020). It is worth mentioning that inadequate teacher knowledge affects university teaching, organizational inadequacy, and stress as threatening factors for teachers' psychological state, affecting their teaching (Yin, Han, & Perron, 2020).

Methods

The authors employed the qualitative ethnographic methodology that focuses on understanding individuals' actions and exploring and reporting events as they occur in natural settings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Smith, 2005). For collecting in-depth data, the authors recruited 22 participants from the College of Medical and Health Sciences (CMHS), the Institute of Technology (IT), the College of Social Science and Humanities (CSSH), and the College of Agriculture and Rural Transformation (CART) within the same higher education institution. This triangulation of sources enhances the trustworthiness of the collected data. The instructor participants, who are 10 in total, were selected based on their pedagogical training and were teaching undergraduate students during the study conduction. Such purposive selection of participants helps obtain deeper and quality data (Stephens, 2009). Some participants also had administrative experience besides their teaching tasks. Table 1 provides profiles of instructor participants.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Instructor Participants

Code	Sex	Discipline	Qualification	Academic Status	Teaching Experience	College/Faculty
T1	F	Nursing	Master	Lecturer	4 Years	CMHS
T2	F	Medical Microbiology	PhD	Assistant Professor	Ten years	CMHS
T3	M	Pharmacy	Master	Lecturer	3 Years	
T4	F	Mechanical Engineering	Master	Lecturer	5 years	IT
T5	M	Hydraulic	PhD	Assistant Professor	6 years	IT
T6	M	Natural Resource Management	Master	Assistant Professor	7 Years	CART
T7	M	Rural Development and Agricultural Transformation	PhD	Assistant Professor	7 years	CART
T8	F	Geography	Master	Lecturer	3 Years	CSSH
T9	M	English	PhD	Assistant Professor	8 Years	CSSH
T10	F	Psychology	Master	Lecturer	6 Years	CSSH

The other 12 participants are students selected from classes being taught by the selected instructor participants. In addition to the instructors' suggestions that these recruited students are more expressive, they were also the representatives of their classes regardless of their academic performance. Some student participants were also involved in students' affairs at the university level. Table 2 describes the student participants.

Table 2. Characteristics of Students

Participants	Sex	Department	Year	Role	Faculty/College
S1	F	Nursing	3rd	Class representative	CHMS
S2	M	Nursing	3rd	A member of a club	CHMS
S3	M	Physiology	2nd	Class representative	CHMS
S4	F	Pharmacy	4th	Class representative	CHMS
S5	M	Mechanical Engineering	4th	A member of a club	IT
S6	F	Hydraulics and Water Engineering	4th	Class representative	IT
S7	M	Natural Resource Management	2nd	Class representative	CART
S8	F	Natural Resource Management	3rd	No Participation	CART
S9	M	Geography	3rd	Class representative	CSSH
S10	F	English	3rd	A member of a club	CSSH
S11	M	Psychology	2nd	Class representative	CSSH
S12	F	English	2nd	No Participation	CSSH

Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

For collecting data, the authors developed and designed the semi-structured interviews for the study participants, focusing on exploring the institution's organizational culture under study and its impact on the implementation of the

student-centered learning approach. The interviews were developed in English. Semi-structured interviews help collect in-depth data (Muthanna, 2019). Another focus of the interviews focused on exploring the potential effect of beliefs on effective teaching and implementing active learning approaches in the classroom.

After the primary author collected the participants' consent for participating in the study, he conducted the interviews. He started by interviewing the instructor participants. This is followed by interviewing students. The primary author also conducted classroom observations to strengthen data collected via interviews (Flick, 2007; Van Maanen, 1979). The observations focused on exploring how faculty members teach, and students learn in the classrooms, focusing on implementing the student-centered approaches. The primary author conducted 20 observations (two for each instructor participant) with around 1 hour for each observational session.

Data Interpretation Techniques

After transcribing the collected data verbatim, the authors followed the data condensation and data display techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman (2012) for critical interpretations. Miles and Huberman (2012, p. 12) defined *data condensation* as "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and/or transforming the data that appears in the full corpus (body) of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical materials". This means that organizing chunks of data into categories is the primary activity that helps to note details and identify emerging patterns (Hamersley & Atkinson, 2007; Waal, 2009). The data condensation included activities such as "writing summaries," "coding," "developing themes", "generating categories," and "writing analytic memos" (Miles & Huberman, 2012, p. 12). The extensive readings of the transcripts led to the emergence of many codes. These coding processes helped reduce the data to a manageable volume.

Further readings of the coded texts led to the identification of themes and categories. After the condensation of data, the authors employed the technique of data display, which is inseparable from data condensation and is "an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing and action" and assists researchers in comprehending and interpreting the data effectively (Miles & Huberman, 2012, p. 12). Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) proposed different techniques for displaying data, such as "matrices" and "networks," arguing that the way qualitative researchers display their data depends on the nature of the coded data. We adopted the networks technique by connecting similar codes and texts in one separate file. Reading these texts several times led to the emergence of three essential themes being reported below.

Results

This study aimed to explore teachers and students' beliefs at the Ethiopian higher education system through a qualitative study. This section presents the findings for three essential themes: qualities of an effective teacher, effective teaching, and call for reform in teaching and learning perspectives. Each of these themes is supported by extracted excerpts from the collected data from the participants, both teachers and students. These are also integrated with the collected observations.

Many instructors and student participants defined an effective instructor in personality traits, preparedness, and content knowledge. All participants also agreed that the instructors are responsible for students' learning and the effectiveness of the teaching-learning activity. The participants' beliefs on effective teaching impact the adoption of the student-centered approaches. Their beliefs are discussed in the following three themes.

Qualities of an Effective Instructor

Instructor and student participants regarded an effective instructor as a person with sufficient up-to-date content knowledge and preparedness. They also agreed that effective instructors have practical knowledge (beyond theoretical knowledge), which helps them ease the lessons for their students. Most importantly, the instructor's understanding of the course is an essential quality of an effective instructor. However, many participants highlighted the importance of instructors' content knowledge over their instructional skills to contribute to students' learning. Following are exemplary quotes:

> *To be an effective instructor, first and foremost, instructors should have good knowledge of the subject matter. Instructors without adequate subject matter knowledge are nothing. Instructors' communication skill is something that should come next to share their knowledge with students.* T10
>
> *I would like to suggest that instructors' subject matter knowledge matters more than their instructional skills. Effective transmission of information in the classroom is highly determined by how well the instructors are prepared for the course matter since knowledgeable instructors can easily design and implement different teaching approaches on the spot. Hence, the teaching approaches of instructors are something secondary.* T6

In addition to the content and pedagogical knowledge, all participants believed that instructors should possess and practice professional ethics such as showing respect to one another and students in words and deeds. Further, effective instructors are highly 'passionate' about the teaching profession and care about students' learning. In connection to this, an instructor participant said:

> *… an effective instructor values professional ethics, which includes the way he dresses and communicates with students, and besides, they should plan the lesson and prepare*

themselves before delivering the lesson since there is a saying that "to teach, is to learn twice. T2

Teaching ethics also relates to instructors' being disciplined and supportive. Showing punctuality, communicative competence, playing role models for students, and dressing well are also ethically crucial for effective instruction. The instructor participants mentioned that such traits potentially influence the students' learning in the classroom. This idea was summed up by an instructor participant who stated:

One of the reasons that hinder students from participation in the classroom is the instructor's behavior. Students fear participating in a class taught by an unkind, arrogant, overacted, and disrespectful instructor. Most students know instructors who have such behavior, and they sometimes accuse these instructors of showing misbehavior. T4

Furthermore, all participants stated that effective instructors consistently guide, appreciate, respect students, and establish a good rapport with students. However, the student participants showed a deep concern regarding a smooth relationship between instructors and students. For example, S11 stated that effective instructors have "optimal relationships with students". Also, the student participants discoursed that instructors should treat students with respect. Following is an exemplary quote:

There is an Ethiopian proverb that says, "ከፍትፍቱ ፊቱ," which means that a person's approach is more valued than the things they deliver for others. An effective instructor shows welcoming faces for students. Students may make mistakes, but instructors should advise students to help them avoid repeating the same mistakes rather than insulting and approaching them fiercely. S1

As highlighted above, a good relationship with students is essential in students' effective learning. The significance of developing a good relationship with students is also emphasized in the university's reviewed documents. For instance, it is stated that instructors are required to "treat and interact with students … giving due respect to their human dignity, emotions, efforts and the particular circumstances they may find themselves and rid off oneself from injuries, bias, and prejudice, iniquitous and discriminatory practices" (University of Gondar, 2013, p. 25). However, the instructor participants raised the difficulty of controlling some students who do not reflect learning ethics, stating that a teacher-student relationship should have limitations.

By consensus, all participants indicated the significance of understanding students' needs and treating all students equally. Additionally, the student participants shared that effective instructors attempt to understand their students' psychological state, especially those who face challenges during their studies. Metaphorically, the student participants depicted an effective instructor like an influential medical doctor who diagnoses the patient's conditions and prescribes clear recommendations accordingly. In this sense, S3 discoursed that 'if students

have an examination, they might be too stressed to attend other classes … only effective instructors who would appreciate students' condition and provide them with some advice. Considering the psychological aspect of students' wellbeing is essential, and the instructor participants also highlight this. For example, T4 mentioned that "effective instructors worry about and consistently investigate students' individual and social factors that would potentially affect their learning, and they discuss with students how they could manage their problems".

The Effective Teaching

The employment of a variety of teaching methods and techniques makes the teaching-learning activity enjoyable and effective. Considering the needs of students is also the main factor in the development of a course. Both study participant groups reported that students' needs for the course development are not considered. Further, class observations show that students' previous knowledge is not investigated or tested, leading to repeated topics. This indicates the lack of engagement and participation, an essential aspect for enjoyable and effective learning and/or teaching. The instructor participants show awareness of the importance of engaging students in participation and discussion, as seen in the following exemplary quotes.

> *If the instructor gives chances for students to reflect on what they have learnt, they can identify their knowledge gaps to take further actions…inside the classroom, instructors should make the session practical, give chances for students to participate, listen to their ideas, and understand their emotions and feelings.* T1
> *To enhance students' understanding of the lesson, the instructor should revise the previous lesson in question and answer, employ a participatory teaching approach, and present the lesson carefully, without rushing.* T2

However, classroom observations show that instructors are not implementing their views in actuality. This is due to the institution's lecture style implementation despite the university's emphasis on using the interactive approach in teaching. The student participants expressed their hope for a change in the teaching activity, where their voices and reflections are encouraged, heard, and valued. They are also aware of their obligations, such as ethicality and good relationships, as seen below.

> *… Students should adequately listen to and write what the instructor is saying. Of course, students should ask questions if there is something unclear. They should not raise questions by interrupting the lesson since it may affect the teaching and learning process.* S9
> *If the instructor forwards some questions, students should try their best to answer questions. Otherwise, students should ask questions only at the end of the session.* S1
> *Students might have questions, but it is not wise to interrupt the lesson. Of course, I am not saying that students should not ask, but I am saying that students should ask questions after the instructor has finished the lesson.* S8

Further, the student participants suggested that an effective instructor can use different icebreakers to create an encouraging learning environment. For example, one participant said:

An instructor provides students with psycho games related to the lesson. I feel bored of instructors who always focus on the lesson without motivating students through different techniques. Otherwise, students will be tired of the lesson, and their retention level will decrease since it is lecture intensive. S12

A Hope for a Change in the Teaching Approach

The study participants agreed that a good understanding of the content and the discipline and instruction mode (English) are essential for helping learners comprehend the content and comply with the discipline's overall nature. Some participants emphasized the importance of instructors' being well expressive and systematic in their teachings. Following are examples of the participants' viewpoints:

As far as instructors know what they are teaching, nothing hinders students from understanding the lesson. This means that instructors cannot face problems expressing points to the students more quickly if they know what they are teaching. Delivering lessons without adequate knowledge about the content shall not be considered teaching; instead, it attempts to confuse students. (T9)
A knowledgeable instructor is an effective instructor who can help students understand the content in a reasonable manner. Students taught by a knowledgeable instructor will definitely have good subject knowledge as the instructor can answer questions forwarded from students. (T5)

The above accounts refer to instructors as knowledge transmitters and students as dependent learners, which is evident in the teacher-centered approaches.

Our observational research reports that instructors explain every concept, leaving no room for students to reflect on their thoughts. Being silent, the students get the feeling of being dependent (on their teachers). Such an authoritarian teaching approach does not effectively develop students' critical thinking that demands their participation and discussion with real-life situations. While interviewing the student participants about such a teaching approach, they preferred to participate and discuss. Some instructors even highlighted this, who stated "students could understand a lesson if they engage in laboratory work as per the curriculum's direction, T3". Likewise, student participants further agreed that students understand lessons as long as instructors work in the laboratory and fieldwork. This revealed how instructors and students associate practical lessons with practice-based teaching.

While all study participants believe in the importance of linking theories with practice to better understand a lesson, it is not attained. For example, the student participants discoursed:

> *Since instructors do not teach theory with practice, I usually forget the lesson after the examination. Even I do examinations by memorizing every fact rather than analyzing and establishing the links among concepts that I have learnt in the classroom.* S5
>
> *As a science stream, instructors are not teaching courses by linking theories with practice. In cognizant of this fact, I do not feel confident that I will solve natural work environments. Generally, instructors focus on theories.* S7

Further, our classroom observations showed the absence of engaging students in participation. Further, while instructors provide examples, the student participants hoped to use national-related examples rather than Westerners. Additionally, combining instructors and students' efforts all together leads to better outcomes of the teaching-learning activity. Doing so demands consideration of students' interests rather than the curriculum. On this issue, some participants said:

> *… Instructors should give project works even though students are losing interest in working on projects. Moreover, instructors should create opportunities for students to be active participants and present their project works to help them understand the topic well.* T4
>
> *To make the lesson understandable, instructors should have power-point slides full of figures and charts, and they should give students a chance to reflect their personal views about the issues to be discussed in the classroom, and practices should support the lesson taught in the class. Otherwise, memorization is meaningless and would lead students to forget the lesson.* T8
>
> *If the instructor takes most of the class time, students cannot develop their self-confidence and communication skills, and they will understand only some of the lesson as their attention decreases…I know students who succeed in the paper-pencil tests but begin to shiver when their instructors request them to present in front of their colleagues. Some students cannot speak in front of people at all.* S8

The above quotes reflect the participants' hope for a change in the teaching approach that is teacher-centered. They are hoping for the use of a centered approach wherein their voices are heard. Such engagement of students in learning would enrich their understanding of the curriculum. While instructors support the learner-centered approach, they are simply informed about their inability to practice it due to the shortage of time and the overall load of the course's content.

The participants also agreed that providing students with assignments that should improve students' analytical skills and receive constructive feedback is another vital source of learning. Such hopes are still not considered at the higher education institutions in Ethiopia.

Figure 1 summarizes the current state of student-teacher belief conflict in the Ethiopian higher education system. Hence, this calls for an immediate change in university teachers' professional development and preparation for higher education.

Figure 1. Student-Teacher Belief Conflict Model in Ethiopia's Higher Education

Student-Teacher Belief Conflict Model in Ethiopia's Higher Education

Teachers believe they have and/or need
- Moral competence
- Communicative competence
- Social competence

Students believe a good university teacher is
- Knowledgeable
- Have instructional skills
- Motivating
- Provides feedback professionally
- Manages successful rapport with them
- Considers their psychological states

Effective teaching occurs when
- Students' needs considered
- Testing students' previous knowledge
- Engagement of students in course preparation
- Teachers implement what they know about effective teaching
- Providing engaging games and activities

Students can be helpful if they
- Know and apply classroom interaction ethics, rules, and techniques
- Know and apply students role
  - Taking notes
  - Answering questions
  - Active participation

The current conflict is
- Lack of knowledge should be tested and or trained
- Students believe the teacher should transfer knowledge and they just receive
  - Hinder switching to student-centered teaching and learning
- Use applied teaching methods, other than lecturing
- Focus on theory, and no preparation for work environment
- No technology integration
- Memorization based teaching
- Dominated by teacher talk and no space for the students
- No practical assignments
- No constructive feedback

Discussion

This article reports on the beliefs of instructors and students on effective teaching and the perceived impact of these beliefs on implementing the student-centered approach in the classroom. The shared beliefs of instructors and students on the qualities of an effective instructor represent the reflection of the university's teaching and learning culture. In the context of the studied university, instructors' content knowledge and personality traits were considered essential qualities of an

effective instructor, while the instructor's pedagogical skills were de-emphasized in characterizing the instructor's quality. Some of the personality traits are believed to be fundamental in assuring effective teaching and learning; these include politeness, knowledge, updating oneself, respecting oneself and their profession, upholding professional ethics, establishing friendly approaches with their students, showing a welcoming face to the students, answering students' questions correctly, skillfully understanding the students' psychological state, understanding the needs of students, treating all students as equals and being able to acknowledge that every student has the potential to learn. It should be noted that the relationship between instructors and students needs to be limited to a good working relationship. In this regard, instructors should inform students of expected behavior in the classroom to make students feel at ease to approach them.

As a quality measure of the effective instructor, instructors' subject knowledge was represented by their theoretical and practical knowledge in their discipline. This necessitates professional development for individual instructors; the university should regularly update instructors' subject knowledge. For instance, instructors may update themselves through regular reading of up-to-date books and articles related to their teaching. It is equally important to enhance instructors' knowledge of their pedagogical skills for delivering quality instruction (Brown & Atkins, 1988; Dunne & Wragg, 1994; Muthanna, 2011). This may include strengthening existing training programs concerning active-learning approaches, students' assessment, and classroom management. Otherwise, students and instructors may believe that instructors' pedagogical skills are secondary in a university context.

Besides instructors' overall subject knowledge and ability to link theories with practice, English helps students understand a lesson. The study student participants regarded instructors as knowledge transmitters, hoping for a change in their teaching approach. The change should allow students to take part in reflecting thoughts during the class. Further, the assignments should improve students' analytical skills and encourage various sources to broaden students' knowledge. Providing feedback on students' assignments is essential.

Additionally, developing course objectives based on students' needs is the main factor for effective teaching. This finding is consistent with (Creţu & Rogoz, 2014). While different teaching approaches and techniques are helpful, the observations show that the lecturing mode is the institution's dominant teaching approach. While instructors and students prefer to employ the centered-teaching approach, the lack of teaching aids hinders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a need to include students' skills in the national curricula to balance theory and practice. Considering students' needs and current knowledge is essential for designing the course syllabus and selecting appropriate teaching approaches and techniques. This also emphasizes training instructors on the importance and use of the student-centered approach, which is beneficial for

instructors and students. Finally, a continuous sharpening of an instructor's personality helps effective teaching-learning activity in higher education.

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The Effect of Nutrition Educational Programs on the Composition of Home Prepared Children's Breakfasts

By Ayala Raviv[*] & Ester Aflalo[±]

The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of two intervention programs in improving dietary habits in two groups of preschool and fifth-grade students. The programs were tailored to the target age group. The composition of each of the children's breakfasts that were brought from home was recorded both before and after the intervention program. Every food item received a score according to its nutritional quality, and each meal was summed accordingly. T-tests were performed in order to determine the significance of differences between the nutritional quality of the children's breakfast items before and after the intervention. It was found that the nutritional quality of all breakfast components and its overall health quality improved significantly in both age groups. The study's results indicate that the intervention program is effective for a range of young ages. It is recommended to conduct such programs starting in preschools, and subsequently in schools.

Keywords: nutrition educational program, health education, meal components

Introduction

Correct and balanced nutrition is one of the main factors necessary for healthy growth and development in children, from both physiological and psychological perspectives. Fostering healthy dietary habits in children has been found to be effective in preventing nutritional and developmental problems, as well as in preventing acute and chronic diseases (Sharma, Chuang, & Hedberg, 2011; Nicklas & Hayes, 2008). One of the main health problems facing parents and pediatricians in many countries is an increase in the average weight of children and young adults. In the last 30 years the percentage of American children suffering from overweight has tripled (Schmitt et al., 2019) and recent statistics show that one in five American children aged 6-19 suffers from obesity, while one in three are overweight or obese (Sildén, 2018; Durbin, Baguioro, & Jones, 2018). According to the World Health Organization, the obesity epidemic in children is exists in Western as well as in Eastern (Qian et al., 2017) and Middle Eastern countries (Albataineh & Badran, 2019) including Israel (Eilat-Adar et al., 2011). In Israel, a three-fold difference in prevalence of overweight was reported in second and fifth graders between 1990 and 2000 (Eilat-Adar et al., 2011) and higher rates of overweight in the youngsters may reflect the occurrence of an obesity epidemic in Israel.

The dramatic increase in overweight and obesity in children in recent decades is attributed, among other factors, to increasing exposure of children to foods that

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cause weight gain, combined with a decrease in their physical activity (Kranjac & Wagmiller, 2020). There is a significant increase in the consumption of foods rich in sugar and saturated fats and sweet drinks, expressed both at home, school and social gatherings, together with a correspondingly marked decrease in the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

The negative nutritional change that has occurred within the population during recent decades in many countries has led to increasing illness among children. These illnesses include chronic diseases related to obesity, such as type II diabetes, kidney disease and high blood pressure (Fung, 2016). Obesity in children is also manifested in as psychological problems such as negative body image and low self-esteem have also appeared (Durbin, Baguioro, & Jones, 2018), as well as mental health problems such as depression. Overweight children often suffer from teasing and bullying by their peers and from social isolation (Sildén, 2018; Durbin, Baguioro, & Jones, 2018). In China (Qian et al., 2017; Hu, Li, Huang, & Li, 2010), the increase in the standard of living enabled a greater availability of unhealthy foods, yet there is a lack of knowledge about healthy nutrition and its importance. Qian et al. (2017) concluded that educational and intervention programs must begin being implemented at a young age, since such programs improve knowledge, and subsequently, nutritional habits among children, primarily among those in elementary school. The nutritional behavior and knowledge of Children have been identified as significant mechanisms contributing to weight increase. Some children do not even consume fruits or vegetables on a daily basis, and it turns out that these same children did not undergo an appropriate process of developing a preference for healthy food during early childhood (Escobar, 1999).

Studies that examine education for healthy nutrition among children emphasize the need for and the advantages of conducting intervention programs designed to encourage appropriate dietary habits beginning from a young age (Aktaç Kızıltan, & Avcı, 2019). Researchers agree that intervention programs should be designed for both children and their parents. According to Durbin et al. (2018), educational programs make positive changes and have further influence in encouraging the acquisition of healthy lifestyle habits. Since dietary habits and food preferences develop at a young age (Xu & Jones, 2016), the guidance and influence of programs on food preferences at this age can serve as an effective and promising approach to promoting the consumption of healthy food,

Moss et al. (2013) and Keiko, Todoriki, and Sasaki (2017) found that children's knowledge about food has an influence on their choices, their preferences, and their food habits in practice. There was an unequivocal relationship between children's knowledge about healthy nutrition and increased vegetable consumption. Teachers showed interest in implementing short intervention programs within the framework of health and science lessons (Schmitt et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, many schools avoid implementing of nutrition education programs due to a lack of space, resources and experience (Moss et al., 2013) and only few teachers actually integrate these programs in their classrooms.

Many families lack information and are not sufficiently aware of the importance of healthy nutrition and physical activity, and some even intentionally

avoid being aided by educational programs to promote their children's health (Kranjac & Wagmiller, 2020; Povey, Cowap, Scholtens, & Forshaw, 2020).

Many of the studies described above report on the children's actual nutritional knowledge and declared preferences (Lewis, 2017; Eilat-Adar et al., 2011; Pirouznia, 2001). In the current study, we aimed to examine the direct effect of two intervention programs on the dietary habits of the children, as expressed by the actual composition of their breakfast that was prepared at their home and they brought to eat at school. The research questions were:

a. Will short nutritional education programs improve the overall nutritional and health quality of breakfast among preschool children and fifth-grade children, and if so, to what extent?
b. If these programs indeed have an effect, in which food components will we find a significant change in consumption following exposure to the program?

The research hypothesis was that the intervention programs will improve the nutritional and health quality of the components of breakfast prepared at home of children in both ages.

Methodology

Research Population

The study was conducted in three classes:

1. A preschool class in the south of Israel, comprising 31 children aged 4-6. The preschool population is heterogeneous with an intermediate socioeconomic status. The children bring their meal from home and eat it at preschool at 10 am.
2. Two fifth-grade classes in an elementary school in the south of Israel with a total of 44 children aged 9-10 with an intermediate socioeconomic status. The children bring breakfast from home and eat it in the classroom at 10 am.

The Intervention Programs

The intervention programs were tailored to the children's ages. For the preschool students, the program was developed by the preschool teacher with professional academic guidance by an expert in curriculum development, and in collaboration with a naturopathic dietician. The program comprised 12 weekly sessions of 20 minutes each. The study themes included the components of the food pyramid, diverse eating, healthy eating habits and the importance of familiarity with different food products (such as fruits and vegetables, grains, plant and animal proteins, vitamins, natural food and processed food, types of oils and fats, dietary fibers, water and soft drinks). The program familiarized participants

with methods to identify food types, and accompanying eating habits such as increased chewing, hygiene and esthetics in eating. The children established a vegetable garden, prepared fruit and vegetable salads and soups, prepared healthy sandwiches, baked pastries and cookies using whole wheat flour and coconut oil, squeezed citrus juice and produced oil. Each activity also included games, songs and stories about healthy food. The parents were asked to cooperate with and be supportive of the intervention program. They came to the preschool for a "health day". The parents enjoyed a healthy breakfast prepared by the children, heard a lecture from a nutritionist and received recommendations on the composition and the types of foods that should be sent with the children to preschool. Parents were weekly informed about what was being learned in the preschool, experiments that the children did, new concepts that were learned, and the health benefits of different foods, as well as recipes that were prepared in preschool.

For the fifth-graders, the intervention program was based on the Israeli Ministry of Education program called "Food and Nutrition". The program comprised 15 sessions of two hours each and included four components: a. human nutrition – familiarity with the main food groups; b. health, food and nutrition– technological aspects, means and behaviors for wise and healthy nutrition; c. the structure and function of the respiratory and the digestive system; d. the body as a system –the relationship between the body's systems and its health. Experimentation by the children included planning healthy menu, self-monitoring of meal components and familiarity with food processing methods.

The Research Process

In each class, all the breakfast items that the children brought from home to eat in school were monitored and recorded by the teacher, before and after conducting the program (in Israel, it is customary to bring meals from home to school). In the preschool class, the monitoring took place over approximately six weeks (six school days per week); data were processed and analyzed from 30 days with complete data of every child's breakfast in each day. In the school classes, the monitoring could only take place over approximately three weeks before and after the intervention program, from which 12 days with complete data for each student were chosen. Most of the children usually brought a sandwich comprising two slices of bread with some kind of spread, extra protein comprising egg, cheese, salami etc., and either a fruit or a vegetable. The children often also brought a snack as part of their breakfast, namely, an item of processed and packaged food rich in sugar or salt, such as a cookie, chocolate, wafer, fried or fat-rich snack based on potato, peanuts or corn.

Each of the food items brought by the children was classified into one of four groups –type of bread or grain, sandwich filling or spread, fruit or vegetables, drink (see Table 1) and received a health score. The score was higher when the food item was healthier and contained less undesirable components. Items that contained simple sugars, sweeteners, processed or preserved food and a high content of saturated and trans fats received the lowest score. Items that contained whole grains, high proteins and vitamins content, fruits and vegetables and water to drink received the highest score. The score, that was determined in consultation

with a naturopathic dietician, followed an integrated approach that places importance on including components from the different food groups while avoiding or reducing the abovementioned undesirable components. In the preschool, only water was provided by the teacher and she did not permit the children to bring snacks for breakfast, both before and after the intervention program. In contrast, some fifth-grade children were free to bring sweetened drinks and snacks from home.

The lowest score for an item of food or drink was 1, indicating poor nutritional value. The highest score was 6 and expressed high nutritional value without negative ingredients. All the scores were positive (>0) for the statistical analysis. We treated snacks like any component with poor nutritional value, and counted the number of children who brought a snack during each of the monitoring days. A positive nutritional value for this component would be considered not bringing it at all, meaning, a low average daily number of snacks brought by the children would be preferred to a high number.

To test whether the nutritional quality of the children's breakfasts would improve after the intervention program, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the scores of each component before and after the program. A t-test was also conducted on the overall scores (before and after the program) of the nutritional quality of the breakfast, comprising the sum of its four scores (bread/grain, spread/filling, fruit/vegetable and drink).

The Study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Hemdat College of Education and appropriate consent procedures were followed.

Table 1. Scores of Children's Breakfast Items

Score	Type of bread/grain	Type of spread/filling	Vegetable/fruit	drink
1	High polyunsaturated trans fat baked pastry (such as Bourekas, Malawach)	Smoked salty preserved processed meat (such as Pastrami, Kabanos, cold cuts) Chocolate spread		Sweetened juice Cola Carbonated drink
2		Strawberry jam		Chocolate milk
3	White bread Pizza Crackers	High fat cheeses (25%-40% fat) Yellow hard cheeses of 30-50% fat Butter		
4	Rice cakes			
5		Omelet/herb omelet Tuna spread Tuna and egg spread Tahini	One vegetable or fruit	Milk
6	Whole wheat bread	White low fat soft cheeses such as Cottage cheese, Feta, Mozzarella, Goat cheese Hard-boiled egg Avocado Carob spread	Two vegetables or fruits	Water

Results

Preschool Children

Table 2 presents the average scores given to the preschool children's breakfast items, for 30 days before and for 30 days after the intervention program. In accordance with the research hypothesis, we found a significant difference in the quality of the meal between the first measurement before the intervention program and the second measurement after it, with a strong effect size (t=16.09, p<0.001, d=2.89). The overall nutritional quality of the breakfast was lower before the intervention program (M=10.34, SD=1.69) than after it (M=13.02, SD=1.60).

The intervention program significantly improved the nutritional quality of three components: bread/grain, spread/filling and fruit/vegetable (t=7.96, p<0.001; t=6, p<0.001; t=5.39, p<0.001; respectively, Table 2). An improvement in the nutritional quality of the preschool children's breakfast means that more children began bringing sandwiches made with whole wheat bread, increased the amount of fruit and vegetables they consumed, and consumed more healthy spreads/ fillings in their sandwiches, such as healthy cheese, avocado or egg, and less salami or chocolate spread.

Table 2. Nutritional Quality of Preschool Children's Breakfasts Before and After the Intervention Program (N=31)

	Before		**After**		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	$t_{(df=30)}$
Bread/grain	2.97	0.09	4.05	0.74	7.96**
Spread/filling	3.25	0.75	3.78	0.59	6.00**
Fruit/vegetable	2.14	1.30	3.12	0.78	5.39**
Overall nutritional quality	8.35	1.70	10.95	1.60	16.66**

**p<0.001.

Fifth Grade Children

Forty-four 5th-grade children were monitored using the same method that was used for the preschool children, but the number of days was less – 12 days before and after the intervention program. In accordance with the hypotheses, we found a significant effect of the intervention on the fifth-grade children (Table 3), with a very strong effect size (t=21.35, p<0.001, d=3.21).

Table 3. Nutritional Quality of 5th grade Children's Breakfasts Before and After the Intervention Program (N=44)

	Before		**After**		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*
Bread/grain	2.86	0.47	3.58	0.52	7.79**
Spread/filling	2.66	0.81	4.85	0.48	16.39**
Fruit/vegetable	2.69	1.44	6.59	1.48	12.39**
Drink	2.80	1.03	4.75	0.72	13.77**
Overall nutritional quality	11.03	2.25	19.79	1.96	21.35**

**p<0.001.

We found a significant and positive effect of the intervention program on each of the components that comprise the overall score (bread/grain, spread/filling, fruit/ vegetable and drink). The smallest effect was found on the bread/grain component (t=7.79); more meaningful effects were found on the spread/filling (t=16.39), type of drink (t=13.77) and fruit/vegetable (t=12.39) components. Regarding the drink component, the school children tended to replace sweetened or carbonated drinks with water following the intervention program. For three of the meal components – bread/grain, spread/filling and amount of fruit/vegetables – the score was higher among the fifth-grade children than among the preschool children. Similarly to the preschool children, the school children transitioned from consumption of white bread and fillings such as pastrami and chocolate spread to consumption of whole wheat bread and spreads with improved nutritional value and healthier ingredients, such as cheese, egg, avocado or carob spread.

Monitoring of snack consumption could be done only among the fifth-graders, since the preschool children were not permitted to bring snacks. For the category of snacks, we only tested whether the children brought processed snacks enclosed in packaging, such as sweetened breakfast grains, cookies and chocolates, as well as fried snacks with a high content of fat and salt. Another disadvantage of such snacks is that they were mostly consumed between meals, which may disrupt the consumption of healthy components during the children's meal. Snack consumption decreased significantly following the intervention program (t=7.08). The average consumption decreased from 0.45 snacks (SD=0.22) per child per day before the program to 0.18 snacks (SD=0.12) per child per day after the program. Some children stopped consuming this component entirely. In parallel to the decrease in snack consumption, we observed an increase in the number of fruits and vegetables consumed by the fifth-grade children following the intervention program. We assume that some children replaced consumption of snacks with consumption of fruit or vegetables.

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the effects of educational nutrition programs on the actual consumption of the breakfast components that students brought from their homes to eat in school, as it is customary in Israel. Two age groups were studied: preschool children (aged 4-6) and fifth-grade children (aged 9-10). The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that it examined actual consumption of the meal components, in contrast to many other studies that examined reports or attitudes expressed by the subjects about their food consumption (for example Schmitt et al., 2019; Qian et al., 2017; Xu and Jones, 2016; Keiko, Todoriki, & Sasaki, 2017; Lewis, 2017; Eilat-Adar et al., 2011, Pirouznia, 2001).

The research results demonstrate that in both age groups the intervention programs were found to be effective. In three food components, the type of bread/ grain, the type of spread/filling and the fruit/vegetable, there was a significant improvement in both groups. For the bread/grain component, the effect in both groups was similar and we observed a transition from consumption of white bread

to consumption of whole grain bread. For the spread/filling component, we observed a transition in both groups from sugar-rich spreads such as jam and chocolate spread to healthy spreads based on cheese, egg, avocado or carob spread. This change in the type of spread was greater among the 5th graders compared to the preschool children. Similarly, we observed a significant increase in both groups in the consumption of fruits and vegetables following the intervention program, and in this case too, the improvement was greater among the school children than among the preschoolers. Furthermore, the overall quality of the breakfast increased significantly in both groups, once again to a greater extent among the school children than among the preschool children. It is possible that the higher effect sizes of nutritional quality of the breakfast components among school than among preschool children (d=3.08 vs. d=2.89) stems from the fact that school children have a greater influence than preschool children on the foods items they consume. Nevertheless, both age groups consisted of young children, and in most cases the parents prepare the children's breakfast or at least are involved in choosing the meal items. In any case, since parents have an essential role in shaping the knowledge and nutritional behavior of their children (Stage et al., 2018), it is suggested to promote an intervention program for those same parents in order to achieve ongoing, continued involvement in maintaining healthy nutrition throughout their children's childhood and adolescent years (Payas, Budd, & Polansky, 2010).

Regarding the other two groups of items, the snack and the drink components, no change in consumption was found for preschool children in this study since even before the program the children received water to drink from their teacher and were not permitted to bring snacks to class. In contrast, the school children were free to bring whatever drinks or snacks they wanted for breakfast. Our results show that the intervention program managed to change habits related to drinking sweetened drinks and consuming snacks among the school children –they began to consume more water at breakfast and reduced their consumption of sweetened or carbonated drinks. Similarly, they reduced their consumption of cookies and sweet snacks.

Our findings about the effectivity of the intervention programs on healthy nutrition are in line with previous reports (Sharma, Chuang, & Hedberg, 2011; Moss et al., 2013; Eilar-Adar et al., 2011). The extent of parental involvement was different in the programs. The preschool teacher involved the parents actively by inviting them to a joint breakfast activity in the preschool and to a lecture from a dietician, and sending them weekly relevant information. In contrast, the fifth-grade teacher did not initiate direct activity with the parents. In relation to this, our results showing that the improvement in the nutritional value of the breakfast components among school children was greater than that of the preschool children, needs further investigation to demonstrate that this change for the good can be credited mainly to the children.

Nonetheless, the fact that the preschool children also managed to change and improve certain nutritional habits shows that it is important to instill healthy nutritional habits already in early childhood (Aktaç, Kızıltan, & Avcı, 2019; Xu & Jones, 2016), but it is also important to continue to educate for healthy nutrition at older ages, as correct guidelines and effective programs have an important effect

and even more significant potential for improvement in nutritional habits at school age.

The intervention programs were relatively short, lasting only 12-15 weeks. The main reason for this is that this type of program is part of the science and health study program and the Israeli education system does not allocate more hours for nutritional education. The monitoring of the changes that occurred among the children was also relatively short and lasted only a few weeks. Therefore, it is possible that the nutritional improvement found here might not last long, since long-term behavioral change is a complex process and is not usually achieved after such a short intervention (Gao et al., 2014). There are reports showing that teachers prefer to conduct relatively short intervention programs for nutritional change (Schmitt et al., 2019) but other reports indicate higher effectiveness of long-term programs (Koning, Voelker, & Haque, 2011; Gao et al., 2014). There is evidence that year-long and even six-year programs have a more significant effect on improving the nutritional habits of children and reducing their weight (Koning, Voelker, & Haque, 2011; Price, Cohen, Pribis, & Cerami, 2017). It is therefore recommended to re-examine the effect of short-term programs on nutritional changes and eating habits after more time has elapsed, to assess whether the new habits have become established and to what extent they have become permanent.

Another limitation of this study relates to the difference in the study period for the two age groups. It is possible that because the monitoring was shorter among the fifth-graders, we found a greater improvement in the meal components shown by these children in comparison to the preschool children. A longer monitoring period would enable better examination of the extent of the effect of the intervention program. A further limitation of this study is that the monitoring was carried out only on the breakfast that was brought to class, and not on the meals the children ate in their homes. We do not know whether a change also occurred in the children's nutrition in the other meals consumed in the home. Future studies will test the students' reports on lunches and dinners as well as on food consumption between meals. We also note that the food items consumed received quality scores according to the accepted nutritional value of breakfast components, but it is possible that other nutritionists would evaluate the food components differently.

This study was conducted before the COVID-19 crisis and was written during its occurrence. The current crisis empowers and emphasizes the importance of health education among children, and no less among parents, since the parents are the primary actors in preparing and determining the composition of children's food and drinks. During this crisis, schools in many countries were closed. In many countries, there are programs for subsidized meals at school (Rollins, 2020). Due to lockdown periods, all responsibility for meals was transferred to the family, as children were confined to their home. This may be comparable to periods of summer vacation, where it has been found that when children leave the school environment, their food composition tends to deteriorate and they experience a decrease in nutritional quality (Lewis, 2017). Seeing that children's nutrition is so dependent on their adult caregivers, we thus propose that nutritional education be provided to both children and adults. Such programs were tested in the United States (Lewis, 2017), and China (Gao et al., 2014); it was found to be effective and

led to an improvement in nutritional habits, namely, an increase in the consumption of fruits and vegetables and a decrease in the consumption of sweets and foods rich in salt.

It is important to conduct follow-up studies on educational intervention programs intended to improve children's nutrition (Khan and Bell, 2019), in order to promote correct nutritional habits among children and their families and to ensure the persistence of children's healthy nutritional habits for optimal development, disease prevention, and well-being.

Conclusions

The main finding of the current research show that as early as in kindergarten, and later in school, children managed to change and improve certain nutritional habits. This implies the importance to begin the implementing of nutrition educational programs as early as in kindergarten, and re-teach them in higher classes accordingly. The nutrition intervention programs should be implemented in cooperation with the children's families, as they play an important role in the preparation of healthy meals for their children and are to be encouraged to apply the principles of healthy nutrition both in and outside the school. The development and carrying out of the programs should involve experts from various fields such as science, nutrition, medicine and cooking, that will contribute from their expertise and experience. The learning process itself should include not only academic knowledge but rather involve experiencing the preparation of healthy meals, so to encounter the children to practice healthy diet and make its application into their important habit over time.

Finally, our main conclusion is that the instillation of healthy nutritional habits should start already in early childhood and extend later on at older ages, as correct guidelines and effective programs have a significant potential for improvement of nutritional habits at any age.

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An Examination of Factors Predicting the Academic Success of Undergraduate Second-Language Learners in the United Arab Emirates

By Surhan Fatima Qureshi[*] & Sharon Kay Waller[+]

The study examined factors contributing to the academic success of second-language learners at an English-medium public university in the United Arab Emirates in their first- through fourth year of study. The research utilized a quantitative approach via correlational analysis. The Pearson r was employed to establish the level of correlation between and among the indicated factors and provide perspectives on the strength of the relationships. Findings suggest that relationships do exist between or among the identified variables and the cumulative grade point average. The analysis found that males tend to have lower CGPAs during all four academic years. For both genders the initial IELTS scores for correlated with academic performance in the first two years, that high school track did not correlate with academic success, and that secondary academic performance had a positive correlation with academic success at the university level.

Keywords: academic success, gender, English proficiency

Introduction

The acquisition of higher education has always been difficult for those studying in a non-native language. Civan and Coşkun (2016) point out that second language learners of English certainly encounter hindrances and challenges as they pursue degrees in English medium institutions scattered across the world. Academic success becomes a challenge in and of itself (Al Hebsi, Pettaway, & Waller, 2015). This study examines the relationship of factors contributing to the academic success of second-language learners at an English-medium public university in the United Arab Emirates.

Literature Review

Researchers around the world have identified various factors influencing academic success. Bloemer, Day, and Swan, (2017) assert that academic success is measurable via assessment of acute and continuous standards. Acute academic performance includes such issues as grades and completion rates. Continuous academic performance includes such issues as student persistence and institutional retention. Camara (2013) advocates academic preparedness as a factor that

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influences student academic success, specifically a student's preexisting level of preparedness upon entering postsecondary education. Preexisting measures of preparedness are typically associated with standardized college entry exam scores and secondary grade point average (GPA). First year college GPA can be predicted using a combination of high school GPA and SAT scores, as credited by Kobin et al. (2008). Moreover, Burton and Ramist (2001) validate that the predictive validity of both factors is also useful for college honors, college leadership, and earning potential after graduation.

Saunders-Scott, Braley, and Stennes-Spidahl (2017) compared traditional factors such as ACT scores and secondary GPA with non-traditional factors such as the student's perceived degree of stress tolerance and fortitude as a means of predicting students' academic success. These researchers measured academic success using the traditional definitions of college GPA and retention. After a detailed and longitudinal study of 1.5 years, they concluded that ACT scores and secondary school graduation GPA's have a high positive correlation with the students' final university cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

Barclay et al. (2018) studied a group of *Scholars* (students with higher GPA's, higher SAT/ACT scores) and *Non-Scholars* (at-risk students coming to college with low high school GPA and low SAT/ACT scores) to examine the mental mindsets of these two groups and to compare their academic performance. These researchers examined the psychological variables of 327 incoming freshman and found that the psychological variables played an important role in establishing student mindset and in impacting academic success.

A recent study (Comer, Schweiger, & Shelton, 2019) of a first year PharmD program identified the critical thinking skills, critical thinking dispositions, and personal strengths that are likely to contribute to student success and academic excellence. These researchers concluded that non-traditional factors such as critical thinking skills, open-minded critical dispositions, and the signature strengths of consistency, achievement, and learning are associated with the highest level of performance in the first year of a PharmD program. A similar study by Krol, Dobson, and Adesina (2019) examined the relationship between prerequisites and academic success at a Canadian university's pharmacy program. These researchers assert that certain courses are required to develop higher level learning skills such as knowledge organization, skill mastery, and knowledge synthesis/ application. These skills were found to be strongly correlated with the academic success of students in the Pharmacy program at University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Hepworth, Littlepage, and Hancock (2018) identified a strong positive correlation between social integration, perceived institutional commitment to academic success, and scholastic preparedness with academic success. These researchers concluded that scholastic preparedness is a significant potential predictor of academic success of students. They concluded that academic preparedness continues to take priority when considering student admissions. They also suggested that additional support should be provided to ensure that potential students are well-prepared for university at the time of admissions.

Clifton, Perry, Roberts, and Peter (2008) found that social support is another contributing factor to academic success. These researchers isolated students exhibiting higher levels of interactions with other students and exhibiting stronger coping strategies. The researchers found that these attributes were beneficial to promoting academic achievement. Funham (2012) also identified strong correlations between conscientiousness and academic performance. Moreover, Gifford, Briceno-Perriott, and Miaanza (2006) assert that students with identified study skills achieve greater academic success than students lacking identified study skills. Pettaway, Waller, Khodr, and Waller (2015) also identified the importance of social support for engaging academic success.

Gutiérrez, Sancho, Galiana, and Tomás (2018) surveyed 2,034 Angolan students and 2,302 Dominican Republic students in order to examine predictors of academic success. These researchers isolated the role of teachers' supporting autonomy style, the students' basic psychological needs satisfaction, and the students' school engagement and found them to be predictive of academic success. Likewise, Suleman et al. (2019) identified an association between emotional intelligence and the academic success of students. These researchers focused on 186 students enrolled in undergraduate degree programs at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), Pakistan. They assert the need for improving students' emotional intelligence to enhance academic performance.

The above presented review of literature clearly illustrates the pursuit of students for academic success in higher education. On the other hand, the struggles of international students to succeed in higher education increase as they face multifaceted problems while trying to study in their non-native languages, at foreign places. Marr (2005) and Sakthivel (2003) identify cultural and language shock, lack of language proficiency, lack of study skills, and homesickness as some common problems that non-native speakers of English face when studying at international universities. Robertson, Line, Jones, and Thomas (2000) supplements that the most crucial problem that international students face in their social and academic skills is language difficulty in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Studies also associate the difficulty in academic success of international students with an insufficient knowledge of the second language such as errors in written drafts (grammar skills, correctness, and academic writing skills), in listening comprehension and understanding of lectures, in class participation, in presentation delivery, in communication with teachers and supervisors, and so on (Bretag, Horrocks, & Smith, 2002; Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000; Sakthivel, 2003; Storch & Hill, 2008; Wong, 2004).

Multiple studies presented above have analyzed the factors associated with the academic success of students. Major findings in the field assert that various traditional factors such as academic preparation, entrance test scores, high school ranking, second-language proficiency, and psychological factors such as stress tolerance, tenacity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence can have significant impact on the academic success of second-language learners as evidenced in institutions all around the world. Therefore, it is important for researchers to empirically study the factors that may affect the academic

performance of students, to identify the ones that help predict their academic success, and present recommendations to accommodate their learning experiences accordingly.

Statement of Problem

English as a medium of instruction has been a common practice in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for a long time now. Official policy documents from 1970s issues by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research indicate a conscious attempt to internationalize higher education in the country by stating that "qualified faculty that meet international standards would be employed and that instruction would be predominantly in English" (MOHESR, 2007). Belhiah and Elhami (2014) advocate that the implementation of English as a medium of instruction in UAE was ensured by hiring "native speakers of English from Anglophone countries in order to replace Arab teachers." Likewise, Rogier (2012) specifies that thousands of native English-speaking teachers were employed in Abu Dhabi to "reinforce, in English, concepts that had already been learned in Arabic."

Moreover, another interesting educational endeavor is observed in the UAE with the arrival of campuses of various international universities. Weber (2011) calls it a "strategy of moving from an oil-based to a knowledge-based economy through which American, Australian, and British campuses in the Middle East almost doubled (from 140 to 260) within a 9-year period (between 2000 and 2009)" (Weber, 2011). These international campuses with English as a medium of instruction, welcome students from all over the world. Civan and Coşkun (2016) indicate that second-language learners face unique challenges and obstacles in the pursuit of their studies. These researchers found that second-language learners with mediocre second-language skills often fail to master course topics not taught in their mother tongue. Additionally, Rose et al. (2019) identified the need for students to obtain "critical threshold" for language level proficiency in order to obtain content knowledge in an English medium university when their native language is not English (p. 4). The study conducted by Rose, Curle, Aizawa, and Thompson (2019) found that variables associated with English language proficiency strongly predicted student success. A further study by Holi Ali (2020) found that students a lack of English proficiency perceived their understanding of lectures in an English medium university as problematic. This study aims to analyze the factors that impact the academic success of second-language learners of English. Zhang and Mi (2010) believe that "while international students are welcomed for their contribution to the local economy and to the internationalization of the curriculum in the host institutions, it is recognized that in order for them to succeed in their academic study and for the host nations to continue to attract students from overseas, the difficulties and problems facing international students must be addressed" (p. 371).

The public university selected for this study delivers an integrated, American-style undergraduate and graduate education to an extremely diverse student body.

Over fifty nationalities from five continents attend the university. The university is licensed in the United Arab Emirates with all programs holding accreditation. Additionally, the university is regionally accredited in the United States. English is the medium of instruction for all programs and courses. This study aims to analyze the factors that impact the academic success of second-language learners of English. The subject university provides a suitable data source as the institution is composed primarily of second-language learners of English (96.6%). Fourteen-point-three percent (14.3%) of the undergraduate student body were on academic probation at the time of the study.

The study examined the academic success for the identified second-language learners of English in light of gender, IETLS (International English Language Testing System) scores at the time of admission, high-school track, and high-school rank. One hundred percent (100%) of the subjects were second-language learners of English studying in an English medium university. The study identified the relationship of the indicated factors with the subsequent academic success of students in their first through fourth years of study. Findings of the study may guide future practice and research. Findings may also be extrapolated to similar universities in order to provide a framework for to review and improve admission policies and procedures, student retention, and student success.

Research Questions

The study examines the following two research questions. Question one is descriptive in nature while question two examines the relationships between or among identified factors and the cumulative grade point averages.

1. What are the genders, IETLS English proficiency scores, high school tracks, high school percentiles, and cumulative grade point averages for first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year English second-language learners pursuing higher education at a licensed and accredited university in the United Arab Emirates?
2. Do relationships exist between or among the genders, IETLS English proficiency scores, high school tracks, and high school percentiles with the cumulative grade point averages first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year English second-language learners pursuing higher education at a licensed and accredited university in the United Arab Emirates?

Research Hypotheses

The following null and alternate hypotheses were examined in support of research question two.

Ho: No relationships exist between or among the genders, IETLS English proficiency scores, high school tracks, and high school percentiles with the cumulative grade point averages for first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year English second-

language learners pursuing higher education at a licensed and accredited university in the United Arab Emirates.

Ha: Relationships exist between or among the genders, IETLS English proficiency scores, high school tracks, and high school percentiles with the cumulative grade point averages for first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year English second-language learners pursuing higher education at a licensed and accredited university in the United Arab Emirates.

Research Design and Method of Procedure

The study was conducted utilizing a quantitative approach. The associated descriptives of mean, number, and standard deviation were identified for all variables in response to research question one. Frequency was also presented where warranted. Research question two was examined via correlational analysis. The data were examined for normality using skewness and kurtosis to determine whether parametric or non-parametric design was warranted. Values with absolute values above 3.0 were viewed as indicating that the data sets were non-parametric (Lumadue & Waller, 2013). Since a parametric design was deemed more appropriate (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019), the study utilized the Pearson r to establish the level of correlation between and among the associated variables and provide perspectives on the strength of the relationships. Waller and Lumadue (2013) assert that the significance levels for the Pearson r are established as strong ($r^2 > 0.49$), moderate ($0.25 < r^2 < 0.49$), weak ($.09 < r^2 < 0.25$ weak), and negligible ($r^2 < 0.09$).

The data set for the study was obtained via electronic access to the university's student records after securing IRB approval. Names and student identification numbers were removed to maintain anonymity and ensure that no tracking could be done. The data set included year-level, gender, English proficiency scores, high school track of study, and high school percentage rankings. Only designations of year-one, year-two, year-three, and year-four were included in the year-level data.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The study operated under the following assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The research assumed that the IETLS scores of students as presented at the time of admission are an actual measure of the students' level of English proficiency. The study also assumed that subjects were primarily responsible for their own academic success. The study was limited due to the lack of longitudinal data. The data sets for first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth year students were mutually independent and constituted four unique groups of subjects at different stages of their academic progress. The study was delimited to one university only. The data sets were delimited to AY 2018-2019, AY 2017-2018, AY 2016-2017, and AY 2015-2016 as first-year, second-year, third-year,

and fourth-year, respectively. The literature review was also delimited to research findings completed in the last ten years.

Research Findings

The study examined two research questions. Question one was descriptive in nature and examined gender, IETLS English proficiency scores, high school tracks, high school rankings, and cumulative grade point averages for first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year English second-language learners pursuing higher education at the university under consideration. The following tables provide the appropriate demographic information requisite to answering research question one.

Table 1. Gender Distributions by Year of Progress

Year	Male	Female	% Male
First Year	32	41	43.8
Second Year	88	89	49.7
Third Year	57	51	52.8
Fourth Year	39	33	54.2
Totals (N=430)	216	214	

Source: Institutional CampusVue Extraction.

Table 1 provides an overview of the number and genders of students enrolled by their year of study. The Male enrollment increased from 43.8% for first year students to 54.2% for fourth year students. This is consistent with the changing enrollment demographics in the subject university which has experienced significant increases in female enrollment percentages in all programs. Since the data sets are independent by year, the review does not indicate any information regarding the academic success of females versus males.

Table 2. IETLS Score Frequencies by Year of Progress

Score	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year
4.5	0	1	0	4
5.0	27	85	46	30
5.5	15	42	26	17
6.0	17	20	21	12
6.5	6	12	5	6
7.0	4	12	6	2
7.5	4	5	4	1
Totals (N=430)	73	177	108	72

Source: Institutional CampusVue Extraction.

Table 2 illustrates the range of beginning IELTS Scores of students in the four academic years. The largest admission number is in second year with 177 students enrolled in the university. Initial IELTS scores are relatively stable for all four years, ranging from 4.5 to 7.5 with 5.0 and 5.5 predominating throughout. Once

meeting admission requirements, the initial IETLS score is not modified as the test is not retaken through the course of study.

Table 3. High School Preparation Track Distributions by Year of Progress

Year	Advanced	General	% Advanced
First Year	58	15	79.5
Second Year	139	38	78.5
Third Year	67	41	62.0
Fourth Year	50	22	69.4
Totals (N=430)	314	116	

Source: Institutional CampusVue Extraction.

Students in public schools in UAE are currently exposed to two major educational streams: advanced and general. Students choose either of these streams after completing grade 9, and complete grades 10-12 in their chosen stream. The chosen track determines the route of future study open to the student. Those choosing the advanced stream are exposed to higher and more in-depth instruction in mathematics and sciences. Those choosing the general stream do not take the advanced mathematics and sciences. The stream of study may restrict a student's entry into some fields of study. For example, students from the general track must meet strong performance in their high school rankings in order to be allowed into engineering fields of study (U.AE, 2018). Table 3 illustrates that the number of students who pursued the advanced high school track were significantly higher for each cohort. Fewer students pursued the general track. Such would be expected as over 50% of the student enrolled in the target university population are pursuing engineering related fields of study requiring more exposure to mathematics and science.

Table 4 provides the cohort number, mean, and standard deviation for the initial IETLS scores, high school rank, and cumulative grade point average for each of the four cohorts. The initial IETLS scores have remained relatively constant for each cohort though more deviation exists in the high school ranks and cumulative grade point averages.

Table 4. Descriptives for IETLS Scores, HS Rank, and CGPA

	First Year			Second Year		
Category	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
IETLS Score	73	5.7	0.74	177	5.5	0.70
HS Rank	73	86.7	6.44	177	87.7	8.36
CGPA	73	2.67	0.803	177	2.82	0.729
	Third Year			Fourth Year		
Category	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
IETLS Score	108	5.6	0.50	72	5.5	0.64
HS Rank	108	83.8	8.59	72	81.0	8.18
CGPA	108	2.70	SD	72	2.45	0.594

Source: SPSS vs. 24 Analysis of Data Set.

The second research question of the study examined relationships between or among the genders, IETLS English proficiency scores, high school tracks, and high school percentiles with the cumulative grade point averages of first-year, second-year, third-year, and fourth-year English second-language learners pursuing higher education at the subject university. Normality of the data sets was established in order to determine whether a parametric or non-parametric correlation coefficient should be utilized.

Table 5. Skewness and Kurtosis by Year of Progress

Year	Descriptive	Gender	IETLS	HS Track	HS Rank	CGPA
First Year	Skewness	0.254	0.921	1.489	-0.370	-0.556
	Kurtosis	-1.991	0.072	0.221	0.048	0.202
Second Year	Skewness	0.11	1.243	1.402	-0.838	0.021
	Kurtosis	-2.023	0.610	-0.036	0.182	-1.094
Third Year	Skewness	-.113	1.200	0.503	-0.227	0.104
	Kurtosis	-2.025	0.783	-1.780	-0.605	-0.672
Fourth Year	Skewness	-0.171	0.941	0.862	0.144	0.672
	Kurtosis	-2.028	0.604	-1.293	-0.710	-0.336

Source: SPSS vs. 24 Analysis of Data Set.

As illustrated in Table 5, Skewness and Kurtosis scores fall within the acceptable ranges, indicating that the data are approximately normally distributed. For this reason, the parametric correlation coefficient was selected. The Pearson r was utilized to examine the correlation between or among variables.

Table 6 provides the Pearson correlations between and/or among the variables. As weak correlations ($0.09 < r^2 < 0.25$) were identified, the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis. Relationships do exist between or among the variables of gender, initial IETLS score, high school track, high school rank and the cumulative grade point average where $r^2 > 0.09$.

Table 6. Pearson Correlations for CGPA by Variable

Year	Gender	IETLS	HS Track	HS Rank
First Year	-0.25	0.30	0.17	0.35
Second Year	-0.30	0.37	0.13	0.43
Third Year	-0.40	0.15	-0.07	0.41
Fourth Year	-0.33	0.17	0.14	0.31

Source: SPSS vs. 24 Analysis of Data Set.

A weak negative correlation was found between gender and the CGPA for the second, third, and fourth-year cohorts. Of note, the first-year cohort fell just below the minimum expected value with $r^2 = 0.0625$. The negativity of the correlation is prefaced on the manner in which gender was coded: 1 for female and 2 for male. Accordingly, the data indicate that a weak correlation exists between gender and CGPA. Maleness appears weakly correlated to a lower CGPA. The initial IETLS score evidenced a weak positive correlation implying that the initial level of English proficiency impacted the first-year and second-year cohorts but did not

correlate to the third-year and fourth-year cohorts. No correlation was found between the high school track and the CGPA. However, the high school rank was weakly correlated to CGPA for all four cohorts. While the track of study was not found to be significant, the level of academic performance at the high school level was identified as significant.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between or among the factors that contribute to the academic success of second-language learners at an English-medium public university in the UAE. The factors under consideration were gender, IELTS Scores, High School Track, and High School Rank. In the findings section, the correlation between each factor has been exhibited and discussed throughout the four academic years. In this section, the findings of each factor will be discussed in detail.

Gender

The findings suggest that Gender and CGPA have a negative correlation that is meaningful for all four years. It indicates that males tend to have lower CGPAs during all four academic years. The finding matches the research conducted in the past where it has been proved that females do better than males in studies. Wainer and Steinberg (1992) claimed that female students receive higher grades than male students due to their hard work and attending classes more frequently. Likewise, Leonard and Jiang (1999) assert that females have better study skills which leads them to achieve higher academic success as compared to their male counterparts. Hence, it is important to engage males in academics by various means such as clubs, social and cultural events, co-curricular activities, etc. Males tend to spend more time with friends and learn implicitly from each other. If opportunities are created to engage males meaningfully and weave curriculum intricately with co-curricular activities, they are more likely to engage and study. On the basis of the findings, it is strongly suggested to improve engagement of male students at a university level to ensure their academic success.

IELTS Scores

English Proficiency of students at the time of their admissions has a positive correlation with the first two years of study at a university. The IELTS scores of students tend to help them improve their academic performance in the initial two years of their study. This indicates that students with better English proficiency score higher CGPA. Thus, measures shall be taken to provide ample remedial support to the students with low English proficiency with the help of learning centers. Supplementary support to non-native speakers of English will prove beneficial in helping them achieve academic success. At-risk students may be directed to writing center to practice writing with tutors. Moreover, learning

centers for other subjects may also prove significant in working towards a better CGPA.

High School Track

The finding suggests that High School Track does not have a significant impact on the academic success of students. However, it is used to route students to certain degree programs. As per the university's admission policy, students with Advanced High School Track opt for engineering degrees, and students with General High School Track choose other fields at the said university. Hence, the policy can be kept in place, as it does not impact students' academic performance.

High School Rank

The study concludes that students with strong academic record in high school tend to be academically successful in their university life as well. It means that students who have been consistently achieving good results in their academic careers, are likely to continue getting good CGPA in all the years of their university career. The correlation between high school rank and CGPA of students is positively significant for all cohorts. These findings advocate the concept of self-efficacy by Bandura (1997), and highlight the importance of mastery experiences. On the basis of this conclusion, the researchers suggest that universities may provide opportunities for high-achieving students to stay focused on their goals and maintain their results. Moreover, it is also suggested that universities may conduct awareness sessions, training programs, and summer camps for high school students of nearby vicinity as their prospective students and orient them with the programs offered and their entry level preparation. This may prove fruitful for students and universities alike.

Summary

The findings of this study found that generally speaking female students perform better and earn higher CGPAs than male students. Additionally, the study found that limited English proficiency negatively impacted students studying in an English medium university. There was no evidence that the academic track of students in high school had any impact of university academic performance. The study did find that students that did well in high school likewise generally speaking did well in their university courses.

The findings of the study lead the researchers to recommend the provision of academic resources such as language labs, learning and writing centers to support students at risk of academic failure due to their lack of study skills, and/or limited English proficiency. Additionally, universities could have a positive impact on incoming students transitioning from high school into college by offering preparatory sessions prior to the beginning of their first semester for such topics as study skills, test taking strategies and stressing the importance of attending classes and keeping current with assignments.

Implications for Future Research

The study provides a platform for future research that could be carried out. A detailed study of students with similar high school track and high school rank could be carried out to study the factors predicting their academic success in terms of gender. Moreover, studies could be carried out to study a particular high school track for students such as advanced or general. Research can also be conducted to study the impact of learning centers upon academic success. A similar study could be conducted in public sector universities to examine the predictors of academic success for students of other countries.

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