



The Investigation of the Impact of Participation in Extracurricular Activities on the Students' Academic Motivation and Social Adjustment at Non-profit Schools in Shiraz

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on the students' motivation for achievement and social adaptation at non-profit schools in Shiraz in the academic year 2011-2012. The samples were selected through multistage random cluster sampling. First, 4 high schools were selected from among girls' schools, then, 4 from among boys' schools. Sixty students (30 girls and 30 boys), who participated in extracurricular classes, and 60 students (30 girls and 30 boys), who did not participate in extracurricular classes, were selected. The research method was quasi experimental. The research project (pretest and posttest), which was carried out through random selection, had a control group. Two questionnaires were distributed among the students to get information. The covariance analysis of the data obtained was analyzed by the use of SPSS software package and application of the statistical methods of T-test for independent groups, and the following results were achieved. The results from covariance analysis showed a significant difference between the amount of motives for achievement in experimental and control groups in the posttest after elimination of the impact of pretest and the results from the T-test showed a significant difference between the social adaptation level of the students who had participated in the extracurricular classes and those who had not.

Key words: extracurricular activities, academic motivation, social adjustment

INTRODUCTION

With the intention of helping the students to achieve their goals such as developing the motives for achievement, social adaptation and similar cases, the students' are expected to participate in extracurricular activities voluntarily.

According to Shoarinejad [1], one of the features of advanced education is paying special attention to students' activities done outside the class. The activities which are nearly freely selected affect students' comprehensive growth and development more than formal or class activities. The word *motive* has different concepts, but all psychologists agree that a motive is an internal factor which stimulates an individual's behavior, leads it to a certain direction and makes it consistent. A motive is not directly observable, but its existence is inferred from the individual's behavior; or anyway, such a concept is necessary to justify the behavior [2].

Feld, Ruhland and Gold [quoted in 3] believe that the motive for achievement means a comprehensive inclination towards evaluation of one's performance given the supreme criteria, attempt for success in performance, and having the feeling of happiness and joy associated with success in performance.

Gage and Berliner [4] believe the motive for achievement means enthusiasm and interest in success in all fields, or a special field, and seeking superiority at work.

In Philadelphia Mental Health Center, Shure and Spivak [5] stated that lots of the problems related to behavioral incompatibility in adolescents and children are to some extent the result of the deficiency in their cognitive skills to solve interpersonal problems. Conducting a study on a group, the two researchers found that the adolescents who have learned the cognitive skills to solve problems made a reasonable expression of excitement, and they were less impulsive or shy [3].

At the age of stress and rapid social changes, adaptation with new and diverse conditions is not easy. The studies conducted by Atinkson [quoted in 3] show that any changes in life, whether pleasant or unpleasant, necessitate a kind of re-adjustment. Adjustment and resistance to the impacts of stressors stimuli are basic requirements for living and continuation of life. In this changing community, every day, a human is necessarily of practicing adjustment and compatibility.

It should be mentioned here that experts make a distinction between corresponds and adaptation-adaptation refers to the survival of different species; while, adjustment indicates the dominance of one's self on the environment and acceptance of one's self [6].

The impact of participation in extracurricular activities on the motives for achievement and social adjustment is among the issues ignored by education planners and experts in our country. All the objectives of education cannot be achieved merely through formal training classes; but, most of them such as social objectives, observing individual differences in education, providing normal (good) recreational activities can be realized through extracurricular activities.

The educational value of extracurricular activities is not less than that of formal activities, even, it is more in some cases; because both, the teacher and the students have a special sense of freedom in extracurricular activities. Therefore, their interest and enjoyment are enhanced.

Shoarinejad [1] believes, in their numerous studies, teachers and education experts, especially in modern times, found this obvious principle that indirect (informal) education is more effective than direct (formal) education. The environments and factors that are selected by children and adolescents are also more effective in their behaviors than formal environments.

The efficiency of an individual and his high physical and mental fitness are among the main objectives of a society. The studies indicate that the motives for achievement, as social motives, have a significant impact on the social growth; in other words, the increase in the economic growth is the consequence of the increase in the need for achievement (progress) [7].

Adjustment in general refers to the relation any organism makes with its environment in relation to the existing condition. It also implies that the individual involves in a rich and continuous process of showing his talents, a reaction towards the environment and also changing it to a normal and effective form [8].

When experiencing biological, cognitive and physical changes, adolescents must also make themselves compatible with the expectations of their parents, those of their age group, and their teachers. For this same reason, with intense and rapid changes, the compatibility of the individual is questioned; and consequently, contrast, conflict, stress, and bewilderment are inevitable in this period [quoted in 6].

Zahedi [9] states that today's trainees are the administrators to come. On the condition that students participate in school activities and believe in the current methods practiced there, qualified and self-made people will step into society. Students' participation in some extracurricular activities can lead to intimate educational relations. Participation is not only morally and socially acceptable, but also it is an essential need in modern societies.

Hosseini [10] believes that among different strata in a society, students are considered human capital of that society. Given the capacities and available possibilities, any state or nation spends a part of its capacities and energy in educating this huge human capital, and requires them to learn and be educated. So, it is no exaggeration if improvement in education systems be regarded as comprehensive quality improvement of life and human civilization. Conducting research in the field of education, especially students' motives for achievement and social adjustment, is an essential need due to their importance.

Developing the motives for achievement and also social adjustment in students to prepare them for adulthood and living in the society makes the importance of the impact of participation in extracurricular activities on the motives for achievement and social adjustment more clear.

Nancy Simeroth says that in 1937, McCown wrote the first book on extracurricular activities and clearly specified the objectives of these programs and presented recommendations for their realization. According to John P. Strain, Friedrich Froebel established a school in a city in Germany for 3-8 year old children. There was no formal education there. Play, entertainment, poetry, and song were the most important activities done for the children's spontaneous efforts [10]. Based on previous and theoretical studies, the main questions of the present research are:

- Is there a significant difference between the motives for achievement among the students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not?
- Is there a significant difference between the social adjustment among the students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In 2011, the statistical population of non-profit high schools in Shiraz was 135, from which 65 were girls' school and 70 boys'. The samples were selected through multistage random cluster sampling. First, 4 high schools were selected from among 65 girls' schools, then, 4 from among boys' schools. Sixty students (30 girls and 30 boys), who participated in extracurricular classes, and 60 students (30 girls and 30 boys), who did not participate in extracurricular classes, were selected.

The data required for the project was collected through questionnaires (inventories) on extracurricular activities, the motives for achievement, and social adjustment.

The questionnaire questions- extracurricular activities

The questions of extracurricular activities questionnaire were divided into two main parts, the first of which was related to the students' personal information and the second of which, with 26 questions, concerned the students' viewpoints on extracurricular activities. The above questionnaire was formulated based on the Likert scale. To complete the information in extracurricular activities questionnaire, each subject (participant) selected one of the options of *I agree completely, I agree, I am not sure, I disagree, I disagree completely* for each question in the questionnaire. The validity of this scale was determined by the use of the formal validity through getting the experts' views. Moreover, in the present study, a group of 30 students were appropriately selected in terms of the gender, the field of study, and the area of education, consistent with the case study, and were tested according to the retest method in the interval of 20 days. The correlation coefficient between the two tests was achieved 0.79, which indicates the validity of the test. In addition, the scales' Cronbach's alpha was 0.081, which is an indication of stability and internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Assessment tools of educational achievements motives

To measure achievement motives in the project, Ghiselli's achievement motives scale was used. Ghiselli's self-description inventory consists of 64 items, which measure 13 variables. Each item in the inventory embodies two adjectives. Thirty two items in the first part of the inventory have two desirable adjectives and in any item, the subject should specify the adjective which describes him more. In the second part, the 32 items include two undesirable adjectives and in any item, the subject should specify the adjective which describes him less. Ghiselli's achievement motives scale includes 20 items of 64 items of self-description inventory. In this scale also, each item consists of two adjectives. In half of these compound items, the subject should specify the adjective which describes him more; and in the other half also, he should specify the adjective which describes him less. Scoring Ghiselli's achievement motives scale is done according to a special key. For example, in answering the first question of the test that has the two adjectives *efficient* and *astute*, if the subject selects *efficient* (that is, the adjective above), he gets no score. But, if he selects *astute* (that is, the adjective below), he gets 1 score. In this manner, a score is achieved for achievement motives within the range of 0 to 66 for each subject. As Ghiselli's achievement motives scale includes 20 items of 64 items of self-description inventory, just 20 items were used for evaluation in the present project. So, the range of scores was between 0 and 20. This scale has been used in several projects. Pervious researches got the reliability coefficient 0.72 through Cronbach's alpha, and the reliability coefficients 0.63 and 0.64, respectively, through Gutman and split-half methods. In relation to this scale, it's reported the validity coefficients 0.74 and 0.60, respectively.

To measure social adjustment, the questionnaire includes 90 questions, which examines social adjustment. The questionnaire is developed as it is explained below:

- It consists of 6 scales including:

Social forms- Social skills- Anti-social tendencies- Family relationships- School relationships- Social relationships

- It has 90 Yes/No sub-test questions.

- By the use of Cronbach's alpha computation, the reliability has been reported 0.95.

- Validity. In order to examine the validity of the test, the method of factor analysis with the principal component was used.

The results of this factor analysis indicate the existence of 6 factors, which totally explains 0.68 of the entire test variance. The first factor, with social forms and 61 questions, has explained 44.6% of the entire test variance. The second factor, with social skills and 8 questions, has explained 63.5% of the entire test variance. The third factor, with anti-social tendencies and 8 questions, has explained 5.75% of the entire test variance. The fourth factor, with family relationships and 4 questions, has explained 5.3% of the entire test variance. The fifth factor, with educational (school) relationships and 6 questions, has explained 4% of the entire test variance. The sixth factor, with social relationships and 3 questions, has explained 2% of the entire test variance. To measure and analyze the data, T-test for independent groups and covariance analysis test were used.

RESULTS

The first question: Is there significant difference between the motives for achievement among the students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not? To investigate the question, covariance analysis test was used. According to the studies conducted, its assumptions were observed. As it is observed in the second row, the amount of *f* was 47.886, which became significant at the level of 0.001 with the freedom degrees (1,117). The acceptable level of significance is less than 0.05; therefore, we conclude that there is a significant difference between the amount of motives for achievement in experimental and control groups in the posttest after the elimination of the impact of the pretest. As it is observed, the achievement motives average of the experimental group was 17.51 after the elimination of the impact of the pretest, and it was 14.58 for the control

group. It is also observed that the achievement motives level of the students who attended the extracurricular classes was higher than that of the students who did not.

Table1. The covariance analysis of academic motivation in experimental and control groups

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P.
Pretest	783.62	1	783.62	146.45	0.001
Extracurricular activities	256.12	1	256.12	47.88	0.001
Error	626.03	117	5.35		

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation in posttest of academic motivation of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	Adjusted Mean
Experimental	60	17.37	3.16	17.51
Control	60	14.73	3.72	14.58

The second question: Is there significant difference between the social adjustment among the students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not? To review the question, the independent T-test was used and its result is in the following Table.

Table 3. The comparison between the experimental and the control groups in social adjustment variable

Groups	N	Mean	SD	T value	DF	P
Experimental	60	120.4	7.59	1.31	58	0.19
Control	60	123.1	7.81			

As it is observed, the *t* amount was 1.312, which became significant at the level of 0.195 with the freedom degree of 56. The acceptable level of significance is less than 0.05; therefore, we conclude that there is a significant difference between the social adjustment level of the students who attended extracurricular classes and that of the students who did not.

DISCUSSION

The first question: Is there significant difference between the motives for achievement among the students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not? Given the Tables 2 and 3, we conclude that there is a significant difference between the amount of motives for achievement in experimental and control groups in the posttest after the elimination of the impact of the pretest. Additionally, it is also observed that the achievement motives level of the students who attended the extracurricular classes was higher than that of the students who did not. The review of the research background shows that there has not been a project on the investigation of the achievement motives among the students who participated in the extracurricular activities and among those who did not. To explain this assumption, it can be said that the reason for the significant difference between the achievement motives in the students who participated in the extracurricular activities and those in the students who did not is that the students in extracurricular activities participate actively and voluntarily in the activities, and this increases their achievement motives.

The second question: Is there significant difference between the social adjustment among the students who participate in extracurricular activities and those who do not? As it is observed in Table (4), the *t* amount was 1.312, which became significant at the level of 0.195 with the freedom degree of 56. The acceptable level of significance is less than 0.05; therefore, we conclude that there is a significant difference between the social adjustment level of the students who attended extracurricular classes and that of the students who did not.

To explain this assumption, it can be said that the reason for the significant difference between the social adjustment in the students who participated in the extracurricular activities and that in the students who did not is that the students who participated in the extracurricular activities, which were done in informal groups, socialized more because they selected these groups freely on their own will. Therefore, they respect the rules of the groups, and this is a practice for acquiring different social skills, which increase their social adjustment. Additionally, the results of the previous research are consistent with the results of the present research [11].

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