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EDITORIAL

Greetings and welcome to the first edition of JIRSEA for 2014.

Trust you had a wonderful and fruitful period since we met last in our previous edition. Of course we have been busy looking at articles you sent in, reviewing them and finally deciding which to be published and which regrettably had to be rejected. So thank you to everyone who submitted articles. If I could summarize the sort of shortfalls authors had that made us reject their articles, I could say that two equal firsts are that the articles fall outside the scope of the journal and also that the proper evidence to support claims, perhaps statistical, was not convincing. Other common problem has been the level of English of the articles. Admittedly a lot of the articles we received are not from English speakers and writers. Therefore it is understandable if the level of English is not perfect. However, let me say that we have never and will not stop authors to get their papers' English checked by wordsmiths before submitting to us. Indeed this will not only help the authors but also help us in terms of preparing the new edition of JIRSEA. As far as English writing is concerned, particularly for them, my advice is to write short sentences. A very good example of a book using short sentences is Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* which despite its simplicity won a Nobel Prize many years ago.

In this edition, an eclectic collection of topics and coverage are published, as usual. For example, one paper discusses *information literacy*, another about *learned helplessness*, yet another about *academic boredom*, *choice preference theory* to *management consulting attitudes*.

In my opinion, such a collection enriches all of us and the sources of these articles further provide us with insights of the various researches and interests in higher education in the various countries. Such is the contribution of JIRSEA's to improving higher education. With the rapid political and trade development in South East Asia especially in the next year or so, the role and importance of education and higher education there is heavily underlined.

Finally, a little reminder. As JIRSEA is indexed in the Directory of Online Journals it allows readers to download any part of the contents without breaching copyright provisions. However, please quote the source of the article you downloaded if you use it elsewhere or refer to it in your articles.

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Happy reading!

Nirwan Idrus

Editor

GOVERNMENT POLICY TO MEASURE AND ENHANCE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION

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Study Connections

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Abstract

In an increasing competitive higher education context, and with a new regulatory framework in Australia, the measurement and enhancement of student experience are considered vital for internal quality assurance and external assessment of quality. Understanding students' perceptions of their study experience is becoming more important. Governments and the national regulator are using the results of student surveys to assess potential risks, benchmark across similar institutions, and are eager to publish the results in the public domain. A number of survey instruments have been developed to strengthen the measurement and reporting of student experience. They include the introduction of the new University Experience Survey (UES), the current review of the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS), and the introduction of the MyUniversity website.

To date none of the recent policies related to student experience are aimed at the non-university higher education provider (NUHEP) sector. This is despite the growth of the private higher education sector, and the student experience now being used by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) as a risk indicator.

This article outlines the current dilemma in the consistent measurement and reporting of student experience, and it argues the need for the government to revisit its policies with the view of a 'one tertiary education' approach that may be adopted by all types of providers including Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education, and dual sector providers.

Keywords: non-university higher education providers, government policy, student experience, student engagement, student surveys

Introduction

The Australian tertiary education sector comprises various types of providers, other than universities, registered and accredited to deliver degrees and award higher education qualifications. Over the last 30 years, the government has been gradually deregulating the higher education sector, with the aim of transforming it from an elite system to a mass education system, a phenomenon referred to as the *massification* of higher education (Scott, 1995), aiming at improving Australia's future prosperity, well-being, and competitiveness world-wide (Bradley et al., 2008; Taylor & Pick, 2008). In 2009, the then Prime Minister Gillard asserted:

Other comparable nations have set exacting targets for participation in recent years. For Germany the target is 40 percent. For Sweden and the UK it is 50 percent. For the Irish it's 72 percent. The Government accepts this challenge for Australia. [...] our ambition is that by 2025, 40 of all [Australian] 25-34 year olds will have a qualification at bachelor level or above. Not just to have enrolled in higher education, but to have completed an undergraduate degree. Today that figure stands at 32 percent (Gillard, 2009).

More recently, following the recommendations stemming from the Bradley Review of Higher Education (2008), which established that Australia was lagging behind other developed countries, the government reformed the funding of higher education by introducing a demand-driven model, shifting the funding from the institutions to the students, allowing student demand to determine where the funding goes. As a consequence, there has been a growth and consolidation of the non-university sector in Australia, with an increase in the variety of non-university higher education providers (NUHEPs), and a growth of domestic student enrolments in such institutions (Edwards, 2013). NUHEPs include private for-profit providers offering higher education courses (some being dual providers offering both higher education and vocational courses), as well as a number of public TAFEs offering higher education courses. This sector is fast-evolving, in size, diversity and quality, having experienced an average student growth of 20 per cent over the last three years, with predictions that the sector will contribute 30 per cent of the total higher education enrolment by 2020.

However, research about this sector to date is limited (Nair, Bennett, & Shah, 2012; Shah & Brown, 2009; Shah & Nair, 2011¹, 2011²; 2012², 2012³; Shah, 2012), with new research gradually emerging as the sector begins to embrace and develop a new culture of scholarship and research of its own (Robinson & Hougaz, 2013).

While the private higher education sector has experienced ongoing growth, and the participation of students has been gradually increasing, there has been limited research to date on student evaluation practices in such institutions which are aimed at measuring quality in such institutions by providing key insights into aspects of teaching at the unit/subject/course of study levels, and of the students' interaction with their institution.

A recent analysis undertaken by Shah and Nair (2012)¹ suggests that there is significant inconsistency in how student feedback is undertaken and measured across the different types of providers. For example, the national Australian Graduate Survey (AGS), which includes both the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS), is mostly used in universities, with less than ten private providers participating in the survey. An additional complexity is the inconsistency in student feedback requirements for the vocational and higher education sectors. While registered training organisations (RTOs) and TAFEs that deliver vocational courses are required, under the VET Quality Framework, to participate in a number of annual surveys in order to meet the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) compliance requirements, NUHEPs are not required to participate in any specific national surveys such as the AGS and UES, but may use various kinds of internally developed survey instruments, without any national benchmarking.

With the increasing number of higher education providers, the growing focus on quality and comparability of standards, the establishment of the new national regulator (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency - TEQSA), and the ongoing revision of the Higher Education Standards, there is an increasing national responsibility on the government and institutions to ensure that all higher education providers have effective systems and processes to determine quality and outcomes on student experience.

Transparent and reliable survey instruments that provide clear and useful information on student satisfaction with the quality of course delivery and institutional support would be beneficial to NUHEPs and to the higher education sector, and would promote participation and benchmarking. The use of standard survey instruments would therefore provide a robust and consistent approach to measure and report student experience across the sector, and ensure that the student voice is heard.

The Australian government considers student feedback an important tool for ensuring the quality and reputation of its higher education sector. The government has, however, been silent on whether NUHEPs will be included in the delivery of government-funded national UES and AGS surveys currently offered to universities only.

The Student Experience Matters

The growth in student numbers in higher education has become a major force shaping the sector. The voice of the student has gradually become more prominent and important in higher education as the system has become less elite and more mass. Students' perceptions are important parameters of the social and psychological aspects of the learning environment. Their experience is used to assess the quality of teaching and learning, and of the course curriculum. They are capable of providing reliable feedback on the teachers' approach, class and assessment structure, learning support and numerous other factors that affect their experience in higher education.

Students are well equipped to judge the quality of certain aspects of higher education... Students can be expected to be reasonable arbiters of the

impact on them of the availability of computers, the quality of teaching spaces, the teaching skills of academic staff, and so on... They expect the fundamentals of effective teaching – clear goals, feedback on progress, and transparent assessment requirements and grading practices – and they welcome personal interaction with teaching staff and being treated as individuals by staff who show concern for their progress... (James, 2002, p.79)

The global trend is the use of student feedback to develop and renew courses, review courses, to assess the quality of teaching and course quality, and assess support services. Academics can use this information to improve their teaching approach, senior managers can use the data collected to benchmark their institution and set future targets for improvement, and governments and regulators will make use of the information to measure the quality of education being delivered nationally.

Student feedback is used in the assessment of quality, linking funding with the outcomes, and in some cases the results are used in rankings and league tables. According to Shah and Nair (2012)⁴, there is a growing trend of student survey results used in academic staff performance development and review process. The prominence of the student voice, and the importance of gaining and retaining students in a highly competitive environment requires tertiary education institutions to measure the early student expectations and experience of all cohorts of students in order to implement targeted strategies, so as to enhance student engagement and retention. The need to gain and retain students in tertiary education has financial imperatives, and, more importantly, it is the moral purpose of institutions to ensure that students succeed in education and contribute to the social and economic development of a country (Grebennikov & Shah, 2012). Ensuring that relevant information is collected and processed effectively is an important step in quality assurance and continuous improvement.

The Student Experience Survey in NUHEPs

One of the recommendations of the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education (2008) advised that a comprehensive set of measures of the quality of teaching and learning should be developed. These should include measures of the student experience and form part of a broader accountability framework focused on the achievement of outcomes.

Recommendation 7: That the Australian Government require all accredited higher education providers to administer the Graduate Destination Survey, Course Experience Questionnaire and the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement from 2009 and report annually on the findings. (Bradley Review, 2008, Ch 3.4).

Prior to the establishment of the national regulator Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) carried out audits of both public and private higher education providers. AUQA reports

recommend, among other findings, the need for improvement of student feedback and measurement of the student experience (Winchester, 2010 and 2011).

To date, however, only a handful of NUHEPs have participated in the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) and/or other surveys implemented by the Australian government, and have, instead, developed and implemented their own individual survey instruments. These surveys, comprising internal semester-based unit and teacher evaluation surveys, are however inconsistent across NUHEPs as there is no standard survey instrument used to measure and capture the total student experience in this sector. This sector, therefore, has no mechanism to ensure comparable standards of student experience, and there is a lack of benchmarking of student experience. Achieving benchmarking across the sector is no simple task, due to the diversity of providers, students, courses and experiences offered through increasingly flexible modes of delivery, with new partnerships, nationally and internationally, and varying articulation arrangements.

Some of the issues related to the student experience surveys currently administered by/in NUHEPs include: the relevance of the survey instruments; the interpretative analysis of the survey data, the use made of the data collected, and how the data is used in ‘closing the loop’; ethical concerns related to data collection and processing; lack of triangulation of survey data (qualitative /quantitative) along with other academic outcomes measures; how effectively student surveys are embedded in institutional strategic and operational plans.

As the government considers new policies related to performance plans to introduce a number of policy instruments to evaluate, and possibly reward, universities that participate in the administration of student experience measures, it appears unclear if the new policy direction will be inclusive of NUHEPs. This important issue will need careful consideration and discussion, in particular as it is linked to potential performance based funding for the universities, while NUHEPs would not be eligible for such funding.

The extension of the FEE-HELP loan scheme to NUHEPs and the use of public funding, however, require the government to monitor the student experience in such providers. How this is done, at a national level, is an issue that remains to be discussed. In addition, the consistent increase of student enrolments in NUHEPs despite high tuition fees requires the need to monitor student expectations and experience and to improve the reputation of such providers in Australia and internationally (Nair & Bennett, 2011). This will ensure that stakeholder expectations are met and institutions are accountable to provide value for money education for all students.

The Student Experience at Risk

In the current policy context, the overall picture in relation to student surveys in higher education, across both public and NUHEPs sectors, shows some inconsistencies and gaps, demonstrating potential weaknesses for the quality of Australian tertiary education.

Firstly, the surveys are currently only administered in universities, with a lack of implementation in NUHEPs. The survey instruments have been designed and developed specifically to provide information about the student perception of their university experience alone. The surveys are administered to domestic and onshore undergraduate students only; there is no standard tool to measure the offshore student experience, despite this being rated as high risk by TEQSA. In addition, considering that NUHEPs actively work in creating growing pathways of students from VET to higher education, the changing expectations and experience of these students can only be assessed and improved if the measurement of student experience is consistent across university and non-university providers.

A further weakness lies in the measurement and reporting of the student experience with underrepresented groups such as students of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), low socio-economic backgrounds (LSES), and vocational pathway students with different degrees of preparedness and expectations (Asian Development Bank, 2012; Levy, 2009; Oketch, 2009). NUHEPs have provided access and opportunity in specialised areas of study to many of these groups, and such feedback through the national student experience surveys would provide critical information for national policies to improve the overall student experience in both sectors.

The newly introduced University Experience Survey (UES) measures student experience with first and final year onshore undergraduate students in universities only. The development of such an instrument was not undertaken in collaboration with, or involve consultation with the NUHEPs sector. If its use were to be extended, its relevance and usefulness for NUHEPs would need to be considered and analysed, and most likely, this instrument would need to be reworked into a new, well researched and flexible instrument in order to cater for differences of student experiences across both sectors. It is yet to be seen how TEQSA assesses the risk level using student experience measures, given that the UES and AGS are used only in universities.

Studies undertaken by Bennett, Nair and Shah (2012), and Nair, Bennett and Shah (2012) have shown that students' perception of their teaching and learning experiences in NUHEPs is not only positive, but often superior to the student experience in universities. Given this finding, anecdotal evidence suggests that if measurements were systematic across the higher education sector (both public and NUHEPs), the student experience would be more positive in NUHEPs. Factors that influence student choice to study in NUHEPs include small classes, ease of entry, quality teachers from industry, easy accessibility to teachers, one to one interaction with the teacher, practice based learning, and the ability to transfer to university studies.

However, the NUHEPs sector has evident gaps in measuring and enhancing the student experience. Some of these include a lack of capacity in many small and medium providers to systematically measure and enhance the student experience, a lack of accountability on academic leaders to track and monitor student experience appropriately; and a lack of culture in 'closing the feedback loop', i.e communicating the results of the student experience surveys and actions taken, for example into course development,

assessments, reviews, and student support services. Moreover, due to the tight regulatory framework, there is increased pressure to participate in surveys to meet compliance requirement, rather than aiming at improvement and enhancement of the student experience.

Some of these inadequacies are due to the lack of infrastructure that exists in NUHEPs, which in turn is due to inadequate resourcing because of a focus on profit, with limited progress on systematically listening and engaging with student feedback.

The Way Forward

With the establishment of the new national regulator TEQSA, and the ongoing revision of the Higher Education Standards, focused efforts are being witnessed to improve the quality of delivery of higher education by improving teaching and learning, evaluation, professional development, scholarship and research. Student engagement is linked with the quality of student experience in higher education and the management of academic risk. Highly engaged and motivated students are more likely to achieve optimal outcomes with their learning, and complete their studies; this in turn will enhance their future career, and make a contribution to improving Australia's future prosperity and competitiveness. It is therefore vital to understand the level of engagement of students with their learning environment, and appreciate why they may not engage.

With student experience surveys already regularly implemented in Australian universities as part of institutional performance appraisal and staff promotion processes, there is need to embed an effective evaluation culture in the NUHEPs sector.

The quality culture in many private for-profit providers is the compliance driven 'tick box and quick fix' inherited by vocational educating auditing arrangements rather than an improvement led approach to quality assurance (Shah & Nair 2012³).

In order to enhance quality in education and of educators in the NUHEPs context, student evaluation is an area that needs further development. In view of growing demands for effective student evaluation in the NUHEPs, consideration and discussion need to occur so that the sector may have access to an effective student experience survey program that is relevant to its specific characteristics and needs.

In order to achieve this, the following measures are suggested to determine and improve quality of education in NUHEPs:

- develop a single survey tool that is relevant to the requirements of NUHEPs (the AGS or UES may be considered), aimed to determine student experience in learning at teacher and unit levels;
- benchmark the student experience;
- embed student evaluations in institutional strategic and operational plans, increasing accountability at all levels;

- make effective use of data in improving the overall student experience;
- introduce regular mandatory evaluations to be implemented at the end of each teaching period;
- build the capacity for data design, collection, analysis, reporting, and ‘closing the loop’;
- build the internal capacity for quality assurance;
- link the survey results to the annual academic staff performance review, and academic promotions;
- increase accountability on senior academic staff to improve teaching quality outcomes;
- increase the use of qualitative data.

The pursuit of enhancing quality in higher education requires an effective process of student feedback to be in the forefront, with an open, consistent and transparent approach to collecting and using student experience data which in turn will inform quality improvements in the higher education sector (Nair, 2013). NUHEPs have developed individual surveys that cater for their own diversity of programs and students, and their own specific requirements. This paper proposes that there are advantages for NUHEPs and the whole higher education sector in having national surveys which provide the ability to benchmark with similar institutions, and compare data to enhance performance across the sector.

There is currently some discussion in this direction to include NUHEPs in the use of national survey tools. The initial national report for the inaugural administration of the UES included a set of recommendations for the further development of the survey. One of the recommendations articulated the need for NUHEPs to be included in future implementations of the survey (Radloff, Coates, Taylor, James, & Krause, 2012). This recommendation recognizes that the sector should be considered as a whole, and that the pursuit of enhancing quality in higher education is a responsibility of all providers. The development and implementation of appropriate student survey instruments relevant for all providers across the higher education sector will significantly assist in enhancing the experience of all students studying in Australia, and ensuring that their voice is heard, regardless at which institution they study. With government support this may be achieved more effectively.

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FIELD TEACHING STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR MAJOR AND RELATIONSHIPS TO THEIR ACADEMIC BOREDOM AT HASHEMITE UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This research aimed at investigating the attitudes of field teaching students towards their specialty, and its relation to their degree of academic boredom at the Hashemite University. For the purpose of collecting data, the researchers used two valid and reliable instruments to survey students' attitudes and the exposure degree for academic boredom. The sample of the study composed of (240) university students with a major in teacher education. The results of the study indicated that students' attitudes towards their specialty were medium. The results also showed that there was no statistically significant impact for the variables gender and studying year on students' attitudes in general, however, differences were found within the dimensions. Further, students' exposure degree to academic boredom was high, and that boredom relates highly to the instructional methods, the curriculum content and assessment styles. Also, the relationship between the students' attitudes towards their specialty and their exposure to academic boredom was counteractive with a high statistical significance.

Key words: Attitudes, academic boredom, university students, and Jordan.

Introduction

The teacher is seen as the most important component of the educational system (Guneyli & Aslan, 2004), and in order for him to be successful in performing his future roles, it is necessary to well-prepare him before service. Daniel (2006) sees that the teachers' success is derived from 3 major factors: knowledge of the instructional content, educational competencies and the positive attitude towards education. Because of the importance of attitudes for the teacher, student and educational process, many studies addressed these through researching and analyzing.

Studying attitudes has had a long and wealthy history in the domain of social psychology (Eagly & Chiken 1993) since attitudes are orientations towards specific topics that could be a thing, an action, or even a value or belief. The attitude is composed of 3 components: a cognitive or intellectual component, an emotional or sentimental component, a behavioral or skill component towards a specific topic or what is related to it (Moody, 2010). Mcmillan (2000) sees that attitudes are a mental tendency for responding positively or negatively towards specific things like persons, events, or the attitude topic, and Ustuner (2006) sees attitudes as the individuals' tendency that forms their thoughts, feelings and behaviors around a psychological issue. Within the educational literature, the attitude is defined as the core of the human individuality and the regular organization of his emotions, motives, implications, and mental operations towards events and psychological issue (Bohner & Wanke 2002). So, attitudes, as seen by Robbins (1994) are evaluative statements either positively or negatively, around issues, or people, or events, and they are expressions of how the individual feels towards anything.

Attitudes differ from thoughts, values and beliefs in many aspects, although they appear sometimes similar, but they are more general regarding their impact on the individual responses towards people or events. Thus, people are usually aware of their own thoughts, but they might be unaware of their attitudes (Tezbasaran, 1997).

In light of what has been mentioned regarding definitions of attitudes and comparing them to others, it can be determined that attitudes are characterized by the fact that they revolve around a psychological issue, they include readiness for a reaction, and that they are powerful motives. They can also be stable, including assessment, and they can't be noticed directly, but they represent a tendency that could be recognized through the individual's observed behavior (Skalli, 2001).

Identifying and studying attitudes is an important thing, and studies indicated that the people's attitudes towards their careers have an influence on their achievement which is true for the career of teaching (Duatepe & Akku-cikla 2004). Ustuner (2006) sees that the nature of the teacher's attitudes towards the teaching profession is the most important factor that determines his behaviors in the educational situations. Thus, it was necessary to form positive attitudes among teachers during the preparation period, and according to

(Richardson 2003), attention to attitudes seems to be continual within teachers' education. Educating teachers in the colleges of Education include studying specific specialties like field teaching which requires supplying teachers and students with the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes that could enable them to teach the first three classes most of the studying courses.

The educational literature points out many factors that are related to the teacher's attitudes towards his majors, and according to what has been stated by (Bardley, 1995), these factors are: the inappropriateness of schools' finance, lack of parents' and society's support, and inadequate salaries. Merchant (1992) added the role of expertise the teacher student is exposed to. Also, Oral (2004) added the department of the major studied. Many studies investigated the impact of some variables on the attitudes of the teacher students towards their specialty. Some of these variables are: gender (Davran, 2006, Ustin et al., 2004), class or studying level in the college (Moody, 2010). Also, the personal factors such as qualification, experience, the family background (Abonu, 1994), the social and economic level, the reasons behind choosing that career, problems that might appear at the beginning of the career, the education's efficiency at the college, and the studying course pattern (Guneyli & Islan 2009, Ustuner, Demirtas and Comert, 2009). Other variables that might have an impact on the teacher students' attitudes towards their major are the academic boredom they may be exposed to during studying.

Boredom is defined as an unpleasant state characterized by severe lack in interest and difficulty in energy and vitality (Fisher, 1993). Generally, boredom appears as an emotional state related to unpleasant feelings and lack in motives as well as low level of psychological excitement (Gana, Delating & Metais, 2000). Studies came up with the finding that boredom during free time or during educational situations is positively linked to the low academic achievement, and to a high degree of school sneaking, corrupted behavior and dissatisfaction. Hence, boredom tends to be related to negative results, and is linked to several negative behaviors and attitudes (Wegner, et al. 2008, Mann & Robinson, 2009). Some studies referred to the effects of boredom and their reflections upon learning since boredom has got a negative effect on learning motivation and activation of knowledge resources as well as the self-regulating learning and achievement outcomes (Goetz, pckrun, Hall & Hag, 2006). Also, other studies addressed the reasons for boredom, and found that it has many causes. According to what has been mentioned by (Fisher, 1993), boredom has got interior causes related to the individual's personal traits, as well as exterior reasons ascribed to the mission/task and the environmental effects. Mann & Robinson (2009) stated that most of the description of the exterior situations that cause boredom focus on the lack of motives or incentives in the task or environment. Goetz, pckrun, Hall & Haag (2006) found that the common cause for boredom exists in the school and its instruction features like lack of variety in the instruction strategies, the teacher's personality, instruction design, and the students themselves.

In summary, boredom is considered a trouble at school, and the best understanding of how students face this negative emotion or feeling is an essential matter (Vodanovich, 2003). Therefore, some studies addressed the students' strategy for facing tedium (Nett,

Goetz & Daniels, 2011). According to (Kanevsky & Keighley, 2003), the single state having no boredom at all is the state of real teaching. So, a lot of educational researchers are looking for methods of using teaching strategies that are not boring as well as creating non-boring learning environments.

Because of the negative effects of boredom on learning, and its relation to many negative attitudes, there is a relationship between it and the attitudes of field teaching students towards their specialty. So, revealing this relationship is a necessity that requires study and research.

Related studies

After reviewing the previous related literature, it was revealed that some Arabic and foreign studies have investigated the attitudes of students towards their specialization through studying some variables and examining their relation to these variables. Abonu (1993) found in his study of female and male students' and teachers' attitudes in (40) Nigerian Secondary schools after applying the questionnaire among them that there were no significant differences between the means of male and female attitudes. Abusharbain & Tan (2013) investigated the effect of gender on the difference of English Language teachers' attitudes in the basic stage in Gaza towards teaching, and it was found after applying the questionnaire among (50) male and female teachers that there were significant differences between the English language male and female teachers' attitudes and for the benefit of female teachers. Guneyli & Aslan (2009) tried to study the attitudes of teacher students of the college of Education in one of the Turkish universities towards learning the Turkish language and its relation to the variables of gender, class and studying level. It was revealed after applying the scale among (117) male and female students that there were significant differences between the male and female attitudes for the benefit of female students, and that there were no significant differences ascribed to the effect of class or studying level.

The study of (Ustuner, Demirtas & Comert, 2009) addressed the attitudes of teacher students towards the teaching profession in one of the Turkish universities and its relation to some variables. After applying the questionnaire among a sample, it was revealed that there were significant differences between their attitudes according to the variables of gender and studying course pattern as well as the family's social and economical level. But, there were no significant differences according to class or studying level or reasons for choosing the profession.

The study of Al-Basheer, Khasawneh & Abu-Teeneh (2007) aimed at investigating the reasons and factors that pushed the Hashemite University students of field teaching in Jordan to choose that major. After applying the questionnaire among (248) male and female students, it was found that the most important factors are related to the profession's social aspect as well as the profession's distinctions, whereas the effect of interior factors like the interest in that specialty came in the last rank. The study of (Sawalha & Zou'bi, 2012) investigated the attitudes of female students of child care at Al-Balqa' University towards their academic specialty, as well as identifying the impact of

the students' college and studying level on these attitudes. After applying the questionnaire among (370) female students in the colleges of Irbid and Ajloun, it was revealed that there were no significant differences between the female students' attitudes ascribed to the variables of studying level or college.

Hindi (2006) attempted to study the troubles of field application that face the students of field teaching at the Hashemite University in Jordan. After applying the questionnaire among (53) male and female students, it was revealed that these problems are arranged as the following: problems related to the cooperative school, the practical education supervision, the programs of practical education, the school curriculum textbooks, and the students of the cooperative schools. It was also revealed that there were no significant differences between the means of the problems estimations ascribed to the students' gender and their accumulative averages.

Moody (2010) conducted a study of the students' attitudes towards their major specialty in management, music, and psychology in the University of North Carolina and its relation to the studying level, as well as identifying whether their attitudes will become more positive when progressing in the college studying. After applying the questionnaire among (99) students, it was revealed that there were no significant differences between the students' attitudes towards their specialty on any studying level, and that these attitudes don't increase throughout the studying years.

Al-Surti (2008) investigated the degree of Hashemite University field teaching students' exposure to academic tedium and its relation to the students' gender, their absence average, their acceptance type, and their academic year. After applying the questionnaire among (216) male and female students, it was revealed that the sample participants have been exposed to a high degree of academic boredom, and that the sources of that tedium were the assessment methods, then the instruction methods, and finally the content of curriculum textbooks. Also, there were no significant differences in the exposure degree ascribed to the variables of acceptance type and academic year, but there were significant differences ascribed to the variables of gender and absence average.

The study of Nett, Goetz & Daniels (2011) addressed the exploration of different strategies students can use to overcome boredom, and after applying the questionnaire among (976) male and female German students from 5th to 10th grade, it was revealed that the group of students who used the behavioral-cognitive strategies were the least exposed to boredom, choosing most of the emotional positive patterns and the cognitive outcomes and motives, unlike the students who used strategies of avoiding or fleeing from boredom.

The previous Arabic and foreign studies revealed the amount of their interest in identifying the teacher students' attitudes towards their studying specialty, and its relation to some variables like gender, studying level and others. But, among them, there is no single study that attempts to investigate the relationship between the students' attitudes and academic boredom. Based on that, the current study' problem appears as well as the need for discussing it.

The research problem

Like other Jordanian universities, the Hashemite University works on preparing teachers, incorporating its role within the public education, and executing the Ministry of Education's educational development plan. Since the beginning of instruction at the university in 1996, the college of educational sciences has handled the program of teacher-preparation in many specialties like the major of field teacher (Hindi, 2006). Despite the university's exerted care for promoting this major and providing its students with the needed information and trends, the teacher students' attitudes towards their major and its relation to some variables like academic boredom hasn't been identified, particularly that a previous study for (Al-Sourati, 2008) revealed the exposure of Hashemite University Field Teaching students to a high degree of academic boredom. Because of the negative effects academic boredom has on the specialty students, the need for this current research emerged so as to investigate the field teaching students' attitudes towards their major and its relation to their degree of academic boredom exposure, particularly that the studies related to this topic are rare-within the limits of the researchers' knowledge- and that what has been asserted by other studies like the study of (Goetz, 2004).

The current study could help lecturers realize the relationship between the students' attitudes and the academic boredom they are exposed to, and that could be the first step for improving the major's teaching through developing the students' attitudes towards their major and setting instructional strategies that help students correctly deal with boredom so that they become more active, happier and more self-confident inside the Hashemite University and other universities that share the same educational conditions. Moreover, this research presents a scientific and practical implication for the students' attitudes towards their major and the affecting factors, regarding the control over these factors, either reinforcing the positive ones or treating the negative ones to decrease their impact. It is hoped that this research could help and benefit those who are responsible for field-teacher preparation programs' execution and follow-up at universities, as well as the scholars and researchers through opening horizons for them to conduct other studies.

The purpose of the current research is to investigate the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major, and its relation to academic boredom at the Jordanian Hashemite University. Specifically, this research aims at answering the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major in the Hashemite University?
2. Do the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major in the Hashemite University differ according to gender and studying level?
3. What is the degree of field-teaching students' exposure to academic boredom at the Hashemite University?

4. Is there a relationship between the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major and the degree of exposure to academic boredom in the Hashemite University?

Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive approach for surveying the field-teaching students' attitudes towards their major, and the degree of being exposed to academic boredom and its relation to their attitudes.

Participants

Data was collected during the 1st semester of the year 2013, and the number of participants was (240) who were chosen using the randomly-layered method from the total number of field-teaching male and female students in all levels (1256). They were classified in light of the accredited hours they passed into levels. The number of participants in the 1st level was (124), whereas the 4th level has got (116) participants. Table (1) shows the distribution of participants according to the research variables: gender, studying level and academic year.

Table (1)
Participants' distribution according to the research variables

Variable	Levels	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	29.2
	Female	170	70.8
	Total	240	100%
Academic year	1 st	124	51.7
	4 th	116	48.3
	Total	240	100%

Instrumentation

For collecting data related to the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major, the researchers prepared a questionnaire of (26) items distributed among four domains: curricula (6 items), teachers (12 items), major's importance (4 items), and the social view of the major (4 items). Lickert scale was used, graded from (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) hesitant, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly. So, the students' attitudes towards their major are measured through the total of their degrees on the questionnaire items.

For the purpose of gathering data, the researchers used the questionnaire prepared and applied by (Al-Sourati, 2008) in his study. It was composed of (32) items, distributed among three domains: instruction methods, curriculum content, and assessment patterns. Thus, the field-teaching students' exposure degree to academic boredom is measured by the total of their degrees on the questionnaire items. After consulting some professors

specialized in statistics, the agreement degrees in the two tools were classified according to the following scale: high (5-3.5), medium (3.49-2.5), and low (2.49-1).

The validity & reliability of the attitude scale

The scale for measuring attitudes was prepared in light of the review of the previous related literature, and the number of its first version items was (32 items). For examining its validity regarding its linguistic formulation appropriateness and the items' belonging to their domains, it was reviewed by (10) members from the teaching faculty who agreed upon the tool's validity, but 80% of them saw that some items needed to be deleted. In light of their notes, 6 items were deleted, so the number of items in its final version was (26). For checking the scale reliability, it was applied on a sample of students (20) outside the research participants, pre and post application with a time interval of 10 days. Then, the scale reliability was calculated as a whole and for each domain as well by extracting Cronbach Alpha coefficient and re-testing coefficient. The value of Cronbach Alpha was (0.71), and the re-testing coefficient was (0.73), and these are acceptable reliability values for the purpose of research based on what was stated by (George & Mallery, 2003, p.231) in that the reliability values which start from (0.70) to (0.80) are considered acceptable for the research purpose, and this result was also asserted by (Shiarella & Mccarthy, 2000, p.290).

Data Analysis & Results

The tool of attitude-measuring and the tool of measuring the exposure degree to academic boredom were applied among the research participants, and SPSS application was used for calculating the descriptive and conclusive statistics related to the research questions.

The first Question:

What are the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major in the Hashemite University?

To answer this question, descriptive statistics were used to work out the mean and standard deviation for the scale as a whole and for the items of each of the four domains. The overall mean for the scale was (3.05), which indicates a medium agreement degree for the students' attitudes towards their major, whereas the details of the results related to each field are as follows:

Results related to the first domain: Curricula

To measure the degree of the students' agreement related to this field, students were asked to register their responses to six items, and Table (2) shows the values of means and standard deviations for the students' responses on these items.

Table (2)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' responses on the first domain:
Curricula

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	4	I think the major courses are related to my professional future.	3.67	1.229
2	6	I feel satisfied with the major courses.	3.28	1.168
3	3	I see most of the major courses are weakly related to the society's needs and demands.	3.17	1.149
4	2	I feel that the major courses are easy and enjoyable.	2.89	1.01
5	5	I believe that the major courses are often characterized by lack of activities and practical application.	2.34	1.247
6	1	I see that most of the major courses are dominated by repetition and overlapping.	1.9	0.905
overall			2.87	.6512

It is clear in table (2) that the overall degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (2.87), which indicates a medium degree of agreement towards the role of curricula in the students' attitudes towards their major, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (3.67) to (1.90).

Results related to the second domain: Teachers

To measure the degree of agreement related to this field, students were asked to register their responses to 12 items, and Table (3) shows the values of means and standard deviations for the students' responses on these items.

Table (3)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' attitudes on the second domain:
Teachers

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	1	I see my major's professors a model for me to imitate in future.	4.15	0.943
2	4	I see that most of the major professors treat students respectfully.	3.87	1.01
3	2	I see that most of the major professors are proficient in their instruction.	3.82	0.989
4	11	I see that most tests take care of the students'	3.38	1.183

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
		performance and activity.		
5	7	I see that most professors' instruction methods arouse my interest.	3.16	1.088
6	5	I see that most professors' instruction methods are interesting.	3.13	1.12
7	3	I feel that most field professors are not liked by students.	2.99	1.071
8	9	I see that tests are the suitable decision for assessing students.	2.75	1.355
9	10	I feel most professors are less objective in assessing students.	2.61	1.057
10	6	I feel most professors use boring instruction methods.	2.57	1.107
11	8	I feel most instruction methods used by the professors are theoretical.	1.95	0.952
12	12	I feel annoyed that most tests focus on memorization and recalling.	1.81	1.151
overall			3.0158	.72950

It is clear in table (3) that the overall degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (3.01), which indicates a medium degree of agreement towards the role of professors in the students' attitudes towards their major, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (4.15) to (1.81).

Results related to the third domain: Major's importance

To measure the degree of agreement related to this field, students were asked to register their responses to four items, and table (4) shows the values of means and standard deviations for the students' responses on these items.

Table (4)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' attitudes on the third domain:
Major's importance

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	1	I see my major helps me teach my kids and deal with them.	4.01	1.164
2	2	I feel this major doesn't supply me with life skills.	3.12	1.238
3	3	I believe this major is demanded, providing me with job chances.	3.17	1.348
4	4	I see this major doesn't provide its workers with job and professional promotion chances.	2.75	1.25
overall			3.2625	.53238

It is clear in table (4) that the entire degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (3.26), which indicates a medium degree of agreement towards the importance of the major in the students' attitudes towards their major, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (4.01) to (2.75).

Results related to the fourth domain: Major's social view

To measure the degree of agreement related to this field, students were asked to register their responses to four items, and Table (5) shows the values of means and standard deviations for the students' responses on these items.

Table (5)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' attitudes on the fourth domain:
Major's social view

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	2	I feel that people ridicule the field-teaching major.	3.87	1.342
2	1	I feel my parents are satisfied with field-teaching major.	3.55	1.256
3	4	Parents prefer for their kids a specialty rather than field-teaching.	2.46	1.247
4	3	I believe that field-teaching major offers me a social status and respect.	2.35	1.261
overall			3.0575	.76600
The overall for the Test			3.0527	.16019

It is clear in table (5) that the overall degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (3.05), which indicates a medium degree of agreement towards the social view of the major in the students' attitudes towards their major, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (3.87) to (2.35).

The second Question:

Do the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major in the Hashemite University differ according to gender and studying year?

To answer this question, t-test was applied according to the variables of gender and studying year to find out the existence of statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha=.05$) between the students' attitudes towards their major, as seen in Tables (6,7).

Table (6)
T-test results according to the variable of gender for the participants' responses

Domain	Levels	No	Mean	SD	f-value	Degree of Freedom	t-value	Statistical significance
Curricula	Male	70	18.09	3.937	0.588	238	2.309	*0.022
	Female	170	16.89	3.503				
Professors	Male	70	37.24	5.632	0.479	238	2.002	*0.046
	Female	170	35.78	4.949				
Major's importance	Male	70	12.80	3.582	4.178	238	-.795	0.427
	Female	170	13.15	2.919				
Major's social view	Male	70	11.27	3.239	0.515	238	-3.032	*0.003
	Female	170	12.64	3.137				
Entire	Male	70	79.40	12.968	2.923	238	.613	0.541
	Female	255	314.2588	46.63322				

It is clear in Table (6) that there were no statistically significant differences for the test as a whole, whereas there were statistically significant differences between the males and females means and for the favor of males within the domains of curricula and professors, and for the favor of females within the domain of major's social view, but there were significant differences between the genders within the domain of major's importance.

Table (7)
T-test results according to the variable of studying year for the participants' responses

Domain	Levels	No.	Mean	SD	f-value	Degree of Freedom	t-value	Statistical significance
Curricula	1 st	124	17.71	3.499	2.045	238	2.058	*.041
	4 th	116	16.74	3.790				
Professors	1 st	124	36.52	4.729	4.700	238	.988	.324
	4 th	116	35.86	5.640				
Major's	1 st	124	12.94	2.993	1.298	238	-.586	.559

Domain	Levels	No.	Mean	SD	f-value	Degree of Freedom	t-value	Statistical significance
importance	4 th	116	13.17	3.266				
Major's social view	1 st	124	12.25	3.222	.001	238	.062	.951
	4 th	116	12.22	3.233				
Entire	1 st	124	79.42	10.233	1.154	238	1.018	.312
	4 th	116	78.00	11.372				

It is clear in table (7) that there were no statistically significant differences for the test as a whole and for all domains, except for the domain of curricula where there were statistically significant differences between the 1st year and 4th year students' means, and for the favor of those in the 1st year.

The third Question: *What is the degree of field-teaching students' exposure to academic boredom at the Hashemite University?*

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were worked out for the students' exposure degree to academic boredom for the scale as a whole and for each of the domains related to boredom which are: instruction methods, studying curricula content, and assessment techniques. The overall scale mean was (3.79), indicating a high degree of students' exposure to academic boredom, whereas the results related to boredom sources within the 3 domains were as the following:

Boredom related to instruction methods:

To measure the students' agreement degree related to this domain, students were asked to register their responses on (13) items, and table (8) shows the values of these items' means and standard deviations.

Table (8)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' responses on the first domain:
Boredom related to instruction methods

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	5	I feel lectures are burdensome because they depend on dictating.	3.91	1.045
2	3	The university instruction methods make me feel that lecture time passes very slowly.	3.86	1.096
3	4	Most of the university instruction methods are traditional causing tedium.	3.84	1.063
4	1	Having too many obstructions between me and professors at lectures annoys me.	3.77	1.128

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
5	2	Many professors use boring instruction methods that decrease my motivation towards learning.	3.73	1.084
6	8	The limited interaction between me and my professors at lectures worries me.	3.73	1.085
7	6	Most of the university instruction methods make me angry, distressed and suffering.	3.71	1.118
8	7	The boring instruction methods make the lectures seem like a torture trip that lacks persuasion.	3.68	1.175
9	9	I often miss contact with my professors at lectures as a result of their boring instruction methods.	3.61	1.155
10	10	I don't feel comfortable in university because of its theoretical and lifeless instruction methods.	3.57	1.177
11	11	Often professors are far away from students during lectures because they are boring.	3.56	1.207
12	12	The university lifeless instructions methods make me hate studying.	3.49	1.186
13	13	I have limited benefit from lectures because of their boring instruction.	3.38	1.183
overall			3.6800	.15341

It is clear in table (8) that the entire degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (3.68), which indicates a high degree of relation between the academic boredom and instruction methods, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (3.91) to (3.38).

Boredom related to curricula content

To measure the students' agreement degree related to this domain, students were asked to register their responses on (11) items, and table (9) shows the values of these items' means and standard deviations.

Table (9)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' responses on the 2nd domain:
boredom related to curricula content

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	2	The university curricula content is dominated by repetition and overlapping.	4.14	0.879
2	9	The university curricula's lack of activities, work and application annoys me.	3.95	1.102
3	3	The content of most instructional courses is boring.	3.92	1.013
4	1	Most of the university curricula content is old and solid, inactive.	3.87	1.046

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
5	8	Most of the university curricula content is dominated by boring elaboration.	3.81	1.108
6	10	The university curricula's focus on foreign ideas, principles and theories worries me.	3.79	1.228
7	4	The relation between the university curricula content and my desires is weak.	3.64	1.119
8	5	Most of the university curricula content doesn't arouse my interest.	3.53	1.171
9	11	I feel far away from the studying curricula because of its content remoteness from our religion and culture.	3.46	1.39
10	7	The link between the university curricula content and my life is weak.	3.27	1.238
11	6	The content of most university curricula is weakly connected to my professional future.	3.23	1.241
overall			3.6918	.29134

It is clear in table (9) that the entire degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (3.69), which indicates a high degree of relation between the academic boredom and curricula content, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (4.14) to (3.23).

Boredom related to assessment techniques

To measure the students' agreement degree related to this domain, students were asked to register their responses on (181) items, and table (10) shows the values of these items' means and standard deviations.

Table (10)
Means & Standard Deviations for the participants' responses on the 3rd domain:
Boredom related to assessment tools

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	8	The focus of most tests on memorization and recalling bothers me.	4.18	1.156
2	7	That the university's goal is preparing students for the exam bothers me.	4.13	1.07
3	5	The questions of most tests make me annoyed.	4.05	1.11
4	3	My first aim at university has become being successful in exams.	4.04	1.093
5	4	That the university's assessment depends mainly on tests makes me intensely distressed.	4.01	1.117
6	1	The university's tests are a permanent source of worry for me.	4.01	1.159
7	6	Fear from failure in tests makes me frightened.	3.95	1.247
8	2	My professors' lack of objectivity and equality in	3.85	1.091

Order	Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
		assessing arouses my fears and tension.		
overall			4.0275	.10181
overall for the test			3.7998	.19731

It is clear in table (10) that the entire degree of the students' responses mean for all items was (3.79), which indicates a high degree of relation between the academic boredom and assessment techniques, and that all of the items have had a mean ranging from (4.18) to (3.85).

The fourth Question:

Is there a relationship between the attitudes of field-teaching students towards their major and the degree of exposure to academic boredom in the Hashemite University?

To answer this question, Pearson Correlation coefficient was worked out between the entire degree of field-teaching students' attitudes towards their major and the entire degree of their exposure to academic boredom. The value of Pearson coefficient was (-.488) with a high level of statistical significance (.000). The Pearson Correlation coefficient indicates a reverse relationship between the students' attitudes and their exposure to academic boredom, in that as boredom increases, the attitude towards the major decreases, and vice versa.

Discussion and Applications

The basic purpose for this research is to investigate the field-teaching students' attitudes towards their major, and its relationship to their exposure to academic boredom at the Hashemite University. The research findings revealed that all of the male and female students' attitudes towards their major were medium. Also, their attitudes towards the role of curricula, professors, major's importance and the social view of the major as factors forming their attitudes towards the major were also medium. This result could be ascribed to the similarity between the teaching conditions to which Hashemite University field-teaching students are exposed.

What can be concluded is that the students' attitudes towards their major need improvement through activating the factors which affect these attitudes like the role of the curricula, professors, importance of the major, and the major's social view. These factors as a whole, if they are re-activated with the other factors related to the students' attitudes towards their major, they may contribute to the improvement of these attitudes (Guneyli & Islan, 2009, Ustin et.al, 2004, Davran, 2006).

Some of the factors that may affect the students' attitudes towards their major are the factors of gender, and studying level. This research's results revealed that there was no impact for gender on the students' attitudes in general, whereas gender has had an influence within the domains of curricula and professors for the benefit of males, and

within the domain of major's social view for the benefit of females, but it has no impact within the domain of major's importance.

The existence of an impact for gender upon the students' attitudes within the domains of curricula and professors for the benefit of males could be explained that male students see that the curricula and professors are the most affecting factors on their attitudes towards their major unlike female students, since their means for these 2 domains were higher than females. Regarding the existence of an impact for gender within the domain of major's social view for the benefit of females, that reflects the impact of the Jordanian social and cultural view which sees the teaching profession as the most appropriate for females getting the social acceptance. Whereas the existence of no effect for gender within the domain of major's importance, that could be ascribed to the agreement between males and females on the importance of this major which they have chosen willfully. The result of having no impact for gender in general on the students' attitudes towards their major agrees with the study of (Hindi, 2006, Abonu, 1993), but disagrees with other studies like (Abusharbain & Tan, 2013, Guneyli Aslan, 2009, Ustuner, Demirtas & Comert, 2009).

Regarding the impact of the variable of students' studying year on their attitudes towards their major, the findings of this research revealed that there was no impact for this variable in general, and for all domains except for the domain of curricula for the benefit of 1st year students, in that their mean on this domain was higher than the 4th year students' mean. This result could be explained that the 1st year students are having their first experience, especially with the curricula they are studying.

This result agrees with what some studies have come up with regarding the existence of no impact for the studying year on the students' attitudes, like the study of (Guneyli Aslan, 2009), the study of (Ustuner, Demirtas & Comert, 2009), and the study of (Moody, 2010). What can be concluded is that the field-teaching students' attitudes don't increase throughout their studying years, and that requires universities to look for the impact of variables that stand behind this result as well as activating the teaching procedures which contribute to improving and increasing the specialty students' attitudes.

One of the factors which might affect the students' attitudes is their exposure degree to academic boredom, and the results of this research revealed that students are generally exposed to a high degree of academic boredom, and this boredom is highly related to the instruction methods, the studying curricula content and the assessment strategies.

This result could be explained that the academic boredom has got negative effects upon the students' mentality, learning motivation and achievement. It is also related to non positive behaviors towards teaching. It resides in the school and its instruction features like lack of variant instructional strategies, the teacher's personality, and the instruction design. That what has been indicated by the studies of (Wegner, et al. 2008, Gana, Delating & Metais, 2000, Goetz, pckrun, Hall & Hagg, 2005, Mann & Robinson, 2009). This research agrees in this result with what has been achieved by (Al-Surti, 2008) in that the Hashemite University field-teaching students are exposed to a high degree of academic boredom. What can be concluded is that the sources of academic boredom for

the Hashemite University field-teaching students are the instruction methods, studying curricula content and assessment techniques. That is evident through the means of this domain's items. Consequently, facing academic boredom requires setting educational strategies for dealing with the academic boredom sources as well as following good teaching strategies.

The risk of academic boredom increases regarding this research's result which revealed the existence of a reverse statistical significant relationship (0.000) between the students' attitudes and their exposure degree to academic boredom, in that as boredom increases, the attitude toward the major decreases, and vice versa. That asserts that academic boredom is an educational problem at the Hashemite University as well as other universities which are similar to it in the whole educational conditions, and that demands treating this problem using tight scientific ways.

In light of what has been mentioned, we can conclude the following educational applications for the educators and the suggested researches:

- The practical need for different researches to investigate the needed classroom strategies for the sake of improving students' attitudes towards field-teaching major.
- The necessity for investigating the answer for this question: why and when do students' attitudes towards field-teaching major start to change?
- The necessity for reconsidering field-teaching program within the followed instruction methods, the studying curricula content, and assessment tools since they are the sources of academic boredom students are exposed to.
- The need for examining the good teaching strategies that could be followed when dealing with the problem of academic boredom as well as decreasing its effect on the whole educational conditions, and particularly the students' attitudes towards their major.
- Studying the academic boredom states field-teaching students are exposed to at the Hashemite University, and its relation to some variables.
- Studying the relationship between academic boredom and university violence.

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DEVELOPMENT OF CHOICE PREFERENCE THEORY IN RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This theoretical article atlases the theory of choice preference in research. This is initially induced from my experiences and supplemented with: (1) confession of other researchers; and (2) available literature. I exploited classical and pragmatic grounded theory (GT) that is modified to suit the need of the study. This type of GT is coined as “experience-based theory building”. Initially inductive, it amalgamated: (1) deduction; (2) abduction; and (3) retroduction. It obtained: (1) 13 Level I basic concepts: monetary, time, formal education, non-formal training, informal learning experience, exposure to alternative form of research, no exposure to the alternative form of research, acceptance, respect, disrespect, denial, open and close system; (2) 7 Level II subcategories or constructs: personal, socio-cultural, economic, educational, learning exposure, continuum of exposure to the alternative form of research tradition, action and acceptance system; and (3) 5 Level III theoretical categories: philosophical stance, influences, exposure, preferred research tradition and judgment. Choice preference was identified as the core category that interlaced the different theoretical categories, constructs and basic concepts. Choice preference is an individual process and cannot be imposed. The interaction between the acceptance system and exposure curbs the actions: (1) respect; (2) acceptance; (3) denial; and (4) disrespect. This is categorically interpreted as: (1) true wisdom; (2) informed; (3) ignorance; and (4) elitism. Choice preference engages with the: (1) expenditure to the preferred form; and (2) judgment to the alternative form. This is the synergy of learning exposure, spelled in its formal, informal and non-formal form, and philosophical stance that is shaped with personal, economic, educational and socio-cultural influences.

Keywords/phrases: *choice preference, experience-induced, grounded theory, research*

Introduction

This theoretical article enunciates choice preference theory in research. This theory was induced from the: (1) researcher's experience as a qualitative researcher being challenged by quantitative practitioners; (2) available literature regarding the debate between and within research traditions; and (3) experiences and insights of other practitioners. This theory is an attempt to put the quantitative-qualitative divide in academia to an end. Though argumentation helped in the development of both disciplines, it also crops deleterious outcomes. This aim to curtail this circumstance with the foresight of budding knowledge uncompromised with unwarranted confinements. It is hoped that knowledge, theory and technology building will no longer be boxed-in unnecessarily.

The divide between and within research paradigm/tradition had been observed since time immemorial. The hype of the quantitative-qualitative debate is centered in the diversity in philosophy and methodology (Reichardt & Cook, 1979; Bryman, 1984; Krantz, 1995; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird & McCormick, 1992) and the discordancy in both paradigms (Gelo, Braackmann & Beneka, 2008; Rosenberg, 1988; Noblit & Hare, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each paradigm/tradition claim superiority over the other compromising utilization of outputs. This had caused confusion on the part of novice researchers and consumers. Though some would resort to a more pragmatic locus (Gelo, Braackmann & Benetka, 2008; Tasharkkori & Teddlie, 1998), others still sustain the dogma of its pure nature. This debate is also observed within a specific research tradition. Glaser together with Strauss discovered grounded theory methodology (1967/2006). They both diverge after disagreeing in some procedural stances (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992). This also happens with Wacquant (2002), Anderson (2002), and Duneier (1999) with their opinions in the use of *a priori*, *posteriori* or a combination of both.

Currently, no theory is fashioned to describe, predict and control this circumstance in research. Though pragmatic approaches are available, others still do not subscribe to this idea. The reason may lie behind the failure to understand the dynamics, process and meaning of each position. This paper may be able to bridge the gap hoping to limit, if not stop, this unfavorable circumstance.

Domain of Inquiry

The purpose of this study is to develop a substantive theory grounded from the: (1) challenges I experienced as a qualitative researcher from quantitative adjudicators; (2) quantitative-qualitative debate; and (3) debate within specific research traditions. Furthermore, it attempted to transcend the substantive theory to formal theory.

Method

This utilized *Experience-induced Grounded Theory* as a research tradition. Specifically, this is an off-shoot of classical (Glaser & Strauss, 1967/2006) and pragmatic (Charmaz, 2006) Grounded Theory (GT). What makes this method novel is that it commenced from

the researcher's experience as a starting point. Initially, one would think that it is not GT but a specialized form of autoethnography. However, this does not deviate from the principle of classical GT. The autoethnographic feature of this research provides descriptive data for abstracting a theory. The autoethnographic part is only a portion of what I coin as "Experience-induced GT". The descriptive portion: (1) is not yet GT but a means of organizing data for initial GT analysis; and (2) can be reported separately as autoethnography. The actual GT is when the descriptions of the autoethnography is reanalyzed in a GT process.

Table 1. Sampling Frame

Source	Unit sampled	Sampling Design	Remarks or Sampling Frame
Personal Experience n = 1	• Incidents	• Autosampling (purposive)	• Commencing point only • To draw initial concepts with or without properties
Interviews or Brain Storming Activity n = 6	• Incidents • Philosophical Assumptions of Researchers	• Theoretical Sampling	• To draw more concepts or develop properties of the identified concepts • Criteria based from previous conceptualization • Informants must have experienced or observed the philosophical debates between or within research paradigms
Literature n = 231 • Books • Journal Articles	• Incidents or cases • Philosophical Arguments	• Theoretical Sampling	• To draw more concepts or develop properties of the identified concepts • Criteria based from previous conceptualization • Cases or philosophical debates between and/or within research paradigms

Sampling. The challenges I encountered as a qualitative researcher with quantitative researchers were culled purposively as a commencing point. Theoretical sampling allowed me to engage in: (1) informal interviews with individuals who had similar experience and deviant viewpoints with mine; and (2) culling secondary data from books and articles regarding quantitative-qualitative debate, and debates within specific research traditions.

"Retroductive data analysis is like dancing the *cha-cha-cha*. The inductive processes are the forward *chasses*, the deductive processes are the backward *chasses*, and the abductive processes are the non-directional *chasses*. Each step taken fostered the theoretical *finesse*."

Brian A. Vasquez, 2013

Data Analysis. Data analysis was patterned from the recommendation of Glaser and Strauss (1967/2006), and Charmaz (2006) with modification to: (1) suit the need of my exploration; and (2) incorporate my personal philosophical stances. Open coding was done to analyze the autoethnographic data to induce concepts for theoretical exploration. Constant comparative analysis was done to related entries in the autoethnographic narrative. Along with the coding process, memos were drafted to document the analytic process. Induction was only an initial process of the analysis. Along the way, the

researcher (Hillier, 2010): (1) verified data deductively; and (2) explored the data abductively (Kapitan, 1992). I personally believe that abducting data broadens knowledge by making sense from nothing (data collected without *a priori*) objectively (Habermas, 1978) culminating in the introduction of new ideas (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013). In other words, a retroductive process was employed (Wallace, 1971). The *chasse* of induction and deduction nourished the theory-building process.

Theoretical sampling of other pertinent data was done to: (1) arrive in data saturation; (2) validate or confirm concepts; and (3) deduce frameworks memoed from induced concepts. These transcripts were derived from: (1) multiple formal and informal interviews; (2) brainstorming exercise; and (3) existing literature. These printed resources were not considered as a review material but as data for GT analysis. Constant comparative analysis was done as narratives; existing texts and transcripts were accumulated. Memoing was engaged at each stopover in the coding process.

Table 2. Formulated Codes

Core Category	Category: Theoretical Constructs Level III	Sub Category: Constructs Level II	Basic Concept Level I
Choice Preference	Philosophical Stance		
	Influences	Personal	
		Socio-Cultural	
		Economic	Monetary Time
		Educational (Equated with Exposure)	
	Exposure (Equated with Educational)	Learning Exposure	Formal education
			Non-formal training
			Informal learning experience
		Continuum of exposure to the alternative forms of research tradition	Exposed to alternative form of research
			Not exposed to alternative form of research
	Preferred Research Tradition		
	Judgment	Action	Acceptance
			Respect
			Disrespect
			Denial/Refusal/ Confusion
		Acceptance Systems	Open system
			Close system

Note: *Educational Influence* is spelled out as *Exposure* for its major contribution in the choice.

There are 3 phases employed in the open coding process (Polit & Beck, 2008). The *in vivo* codes or Level I were uprooted directly from words operated in the transcripts. As recoding progress, initial codes were compacted in Level II. These were transcended into a more abstract form in Level III codes.

Selective or focused coding emerged after the core category was identified (Holton, 2010). Irrelevant codes were dropped and germane codes were retained.

Theoretical coding was then employed to entwine each part of the puzzle. In this study, I employed concept mapping (Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009) to get rid of too much narrative

explanation. This stratagem increased the power of abstraction and relational explanation of concepts in a schematic form.

In the Development of the Choice Preference Theory

The initial focus of the research was on the challenges encountered by qualitative researchers. As data were constantly compared to each other, the substantive theory of choice preference in research was induced. Commencing with induction, saturated with deduction, and enriched with abduction and retrogression, the original focus transcended into the concept of choice preference, which has formal application in learning and personality.

Defining the Concepts in Choice Preference Theory

I would like to begin by defining the following terminologies using its formal theoretical application; its substantive definition will be presented in the discussion:

1. Preference is the psychological evaluative judgment in the awareness of liking or disliking (Scherer, 2005) an idea;
2. Continuum of exposure is the gamut between being acquainted (exposed) or not (not exposed) with an idea;
 - a. No exposure is the state of being not in contact with an idea;
 - b. Exposure is the state of being in contact with an idea;
 - i. Learning exposure is the state of being in contact with an idea that allowed the individual to learn something which can be classified as (OECD, 1996/2010):
 1. Formal education is the system of organized and institutionalized learning that involves predetermined purpose and curriculum;
 2. Non-formal education is a decentralized and organized system of learning earned thru anarchistic (e.g. free schooling), alternative (e.g. trainings, seminars and workshops), autodidactical (e.g. self-directed learning) or vocational (e.g. direct and specific practical training) systems;
 3. Informal learning experience is an unorganized form of learning thru experience;
 - ii. Exposed to the alternative form is the state of being acquainted to another form aside from the preferred form;

- c. Judgment is the appraisal of evidence to arrive in a preferred choice influenced by the acceptance system resulting to an action;
 - i. Action is the process of performing acceptance, respect, disrespect, denial or refusal in the realization of an intention;
 - 1. Acceptance is the action of agreeing or consenting;
 - 2. Respect is the action of regard;
 - 3. Disrespect is the action of disregard;
 - 4. Denial or Refusal is the action of rejection;
 - ii. Acceptance System is the bipolarity between being open or close to an idea;
 - 1. Open System is the openness to an idea rather than the preferred form;
 - 2. Close System is the blindness to an alternative idea and ethnocentricity to the preferred form;
- d. Influences are personal, socio-cultural, economic and educational dispositions or familiarities that have the capacity to produce an effect on the formation of the individual's philosophical stance;
 - i. Personal Influence is the individual's topographies, experiences, inclinations and demographics that contributed his personal philosophical stance;
 - ii. Socio-Cultural Influence is the common agreed inclination or pressure that influence the formation of the individual's philosophical stance;
 - iii. Economic Influence is the willingness of the individual to spend money and time that affect the construction of the individual's philosophical stance;
 - iv. Educational Influence is synonymous with exposure; it is the utilization of what was learned formally, informally and non-formally that influence the formation of the individual's philosophical stance;
- e. Philosophical Stance is the personal way of viewing reality, phenomenon or circumstance (worldview).

The Ideal Scenario

Idyllically, the choice of what research tradition, design and method to use in the conduct of any investigation is dictated by the domain of inquiry or research problem. How to generate the answer to specific research question determines the tasks to undertake. In the ground, researchers and research adjudicators, at times, trail apart from this ideal set-up. The substantive theory discussed below attempts to explain the processes involved in this kind of phenomenon.

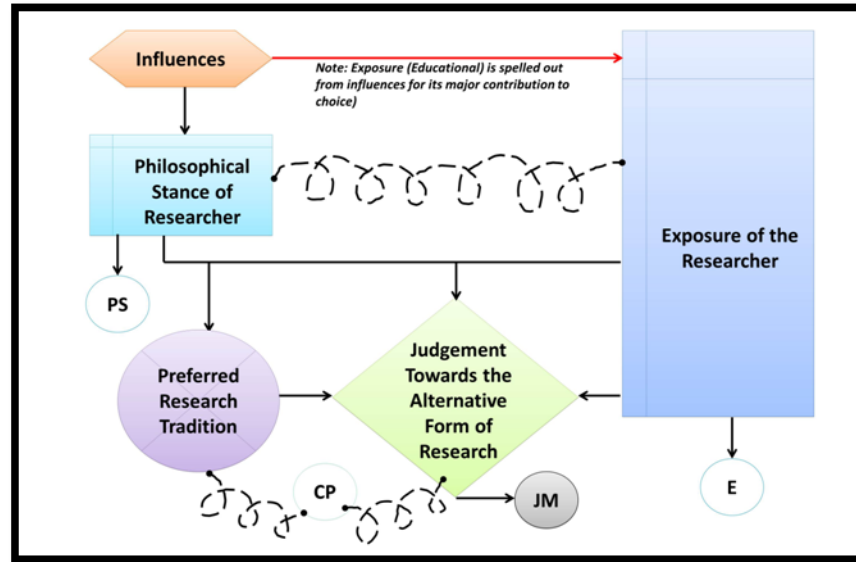


Figure 1. Theoretical Coding: Choice Preference Theory in Research

The Choice Preference Theory in Research: A Substantive Theory

I would like to scrounge some concepts from economics. According to Micheal Peters (2008), the foundation of all choice theory is preference relation. When given two alternatives, one will try to pick one based from preference. Michael Mandler (2000) claimed that rational choice allowed an individual to choose an alternative that can provide him greatest pleasure. This utilitarian concept dwells in the idea that promotes self-welfare.

Although Peter's claim is useful in understanding my own theory, I doubt if the concept of utility and self-welfare, as explained by Mandler, is covered by my theory. While the concept of pleasure is still applicable, the operationalization of pleasure in my theory is defined as inclination, which may not necessarily indicate utility and self-welfare.

The mentioned theories were identified after the conceptualization of the choice preference theory in research. Although there are similarities in the above mentioned, the theory I created have practical and substantive application in the researcher's choice in design and method. Knowledge to the economic concept of choice preference may be necessary in understanding my theory. However, my focus dwells in determinants of the choice and its resultant action, which departs from utility and self-welfare. Rationality is then operationalized as the synergy between philosophical stance and exposure, which does not automatically mean beneficial. Proclivity is emphasized here more than utility. It is the appetite to consume something that gives comfort and pleasure. Pleasure then is not equated with functional welfare, as claimed by most choice preference theory in economics, but cognitive gratification. Cognitive gratification acts towards appetitive results and deny aversive upshots. A more comfortable form of knowledge is preferred over something ambiguous to maximize hedonism and minimize discomfort.

This theory describes and explains the influences that help shape the individual's actions. Additionally, this will help predict certain choices. When transcended to its formal form, this has a practical value to education and psychology since it covers a construct on learning. This can also be utilized in other fields, which I failed to identify.

Proposition 1. *The synergy between the researcher's philosophical stance and learning exposure determines his preferred research tradition*

You will notice that I repeatedly use the word synergy instead of amalgamation in this paper. Amalgamation refers to the summation of components, while synergy is more than just summation. The combined effect is greater than the sum of its components. In Gestalt psychology, we say, "*the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*" (Smuts, 1926).

The preferred research tradition is driven by his personal philosophical stance. A philosophical stance is a personal position that requires the researcher to answer the how of things and demands to riposte the why and what (Holden & Lynch, 2004). The development of this standpoint requires the person to formulate copious central assumptions concerning the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), values (axiology) and methodology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Polit & Beck, 2008; Creswell, 2007). The researcher may not necessarily be conceptually conscious about this. This may operate reflexively as revealed by his belief system on how, what and why to operate things. The synergy of these central assumptions is consequential to each other (Holden & Lynch, 2004) and manifested by the researchers actions. This paper will not dissect the explanation of these assumptions since it is beyond its focus. I will suggest that the reader will do further perusal of available literature concerning these concepts.

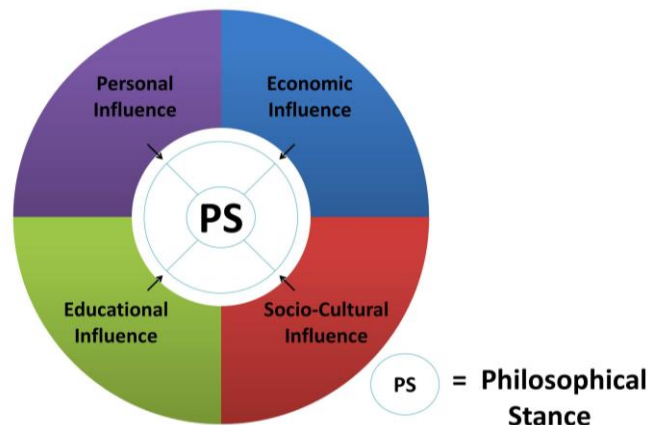


Figure 2. Axial Coding: Influences to Philosophical Stance

Proposition 2. Philosophical stance is the synergy of personal, economic, socio-cultural and educational influences

The philosophical stance is also a synergy of different influences. These are personal, socio-cultural, economic and educational dispositions or familiarities.

Personal. The characteristics of the researcher including his background and inclinations help form his philosophy: (1) personal values illustrate the axiological assumption; (2) personal relations shape the researcher's epistemological and methodologic assumption; and (3) personal belief shapes his ontological assumption. This then moderates in the choice preference to a particular research tradition. ¹If the researcher follows stringent ethical dogmas; he is likely to choose a positivistic over a naturalistic approach. ²If the researcher is more comfortable with interaction; he is likely to choose qualitative over quantitative approach. ³If the researcher is highly empirical and objective, and acknowledges that there is a single reality, he is likely to choose quantitative over qualitative approach. The enumerations are only samples and not the only existing reality. It only provides as an idea on how these influences help shape the researcher's philosophical stance.

Socio-cultural. The society and its culture influence the researcher's philosophical assumption. This then moderates in the choice preference to a particular research tradition. What is communally accepted is commonly cogitated as an agreement reality (Rubin & Babbie, 2001) and most of the time viewed as dogmatic. In an academic culture where quantitative research is a predominantly accepted method, an attempt to do a qualitative research is usually subjected to scrutiny using quantitative criteria. What is preferred is something that everyone else thinks is the only way to do things. If the researcher would like to challenge what is normative, then he would likely desire for an unfamiliar approach and prepares himself for academic argumentation.

Economic. The preferred stance may be motivated by austerity measures in time and resource. If a researcher has the luxury of time interpreting transcriptions, then he might choose qualitative over quantitative. Although it does not follow all the time that quantitative research is speedier over qualitative, the researcher will likely pick a method (qualitative or quantitative) that matches with time expenditure. This also holds true with the alacrity of the researcher to expend resources. If the researcher has the lavishness of funds, then that researcher will pick a method that is high-priced. Otherwise, the researcher will prefer an approach that fits the availability of coffers. The presentation may not directly socket as philosophical stance. But if we try to ground it with axiological and methodological postulations, it would make sense. The choice of method is clearly or indistinguishably driven by economic (synonymous with resource in this study) considerations. How the researcher values time and cost is definitely motivated with his personal axiological conjecture.

Methodological choice may be directly or indirectly predisposed by economic reasons. In sampling for example, the more time and funds you have, the more number of samples you will get. The more time and funds you have, the likely you will design a

methodological frame that will consume more time and expense. Although some would prefer a better option for a method, in some cases, a researcher may opt for the alternative form when time and resource will not allow. This may be one of the reasons why pragmatism in research emerged. Considering the concept of utilitarianism, what can provide much benefit is chosen after cogitating all aspects.

Educational. This segment, though part of the influences, is highlighted for its key involvement in explaining the theory. As you can observe in figure 6, it is singled out from the construct of influences.

The discussion of exposure is subdivided into two subcategories: (1) learning exposure; and (2) continuum of exposure.

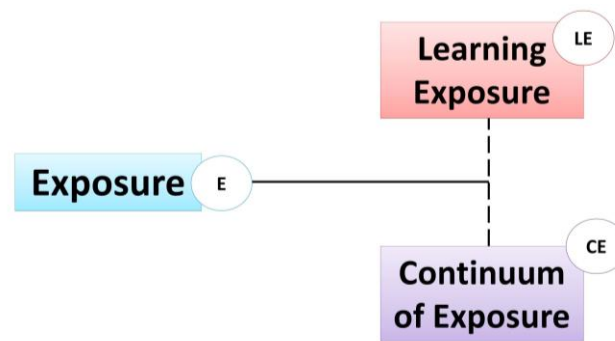


Figure 3. Axial Coding: Exposure

Proposition 3. Exposure to the different form of research tradition is the interaction between the continuum of exposure and synergy of learning exposures.

When abstracting these concepts during one of my memoing sessions, I have realized that this theory is not only a theory of research. It is also a theory of learning and personality. Transcending the conception into its formal form (isolating its substantial application to research), it has practical application to any field especially in education and psychology.

Exposure is a continuum from exposed to not exposed. A researcher is likely inclined to choose a method that he is acquainted. It is practically obvious that few would pick a certain stratagem that is unfamiliar. However, there are instances wherein a person challenges himself to progress utilizing unfamiliar methods. Initially, you may think that the person is not exposed to this scheme. One must realize that this is a continuum. In the process of acquaintance with the new stratagem, learning occurs. Learning as an action directs accumulative exposure to that system. The accumulation of familiarities with the new information leads him to the pole away from ignorance.

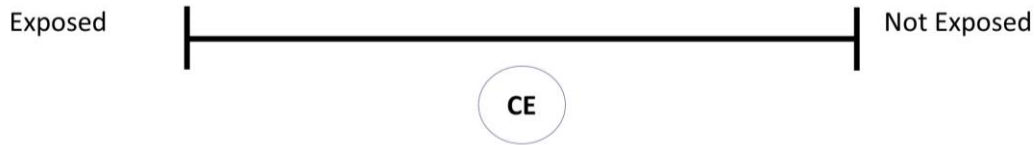


Figure 4. Axial Coding: Continuum of Exposure to the Alternative Form of Research

In adjudicating the alternative form of research, one is likely to renounce it. The acceptability of the other form of research is highly dependent on the individual's exposure to that alternative form. Let us say a researcher is positivistic but has knowledge of naturalistic inquiry, that scientist is likely to respect the legitimacy of naturalism. However, this is not always the case if the knowledge of that researcher is limited or zero. Although exposure of the alternative form can shape its acceptability, other factors may curb the phenomenon that allows the researcher to disrespect the cogency of the other paradigm regardless of exposure. This tends to ensue among purists. This will be explained later in the text.

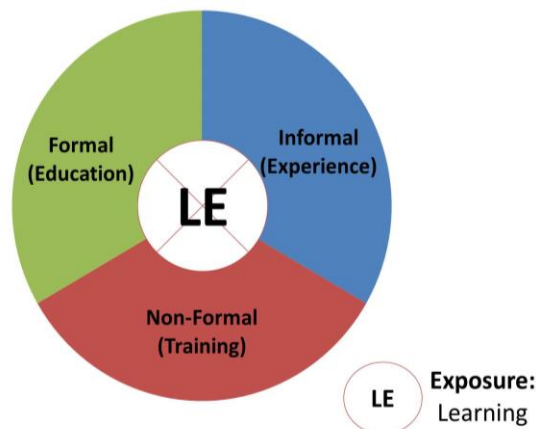


Figure 5. Axial Coding: Learning Exposure of Research

Postulate 1. Learning exposure is the synergy of the researcher's formal, informal and non-formal learning experience.

Exposure is an extensive construct that can be dissected into (OECD, 1996/2010): (1) formal; (2) informal; and (3) non-formal. I will borrow the definition from the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 8 Series of 2009: (1) *informal training* refers to the hierarchically structured and chronologically graded learning organized and provided by the formal school system and for which certification is required in order for the learner to progress through the grades or move higher levels (BP 232); (2) *informal learning* is incidental learning that results from life experiences,

workplace-based learning, volunteer activities, self-directed learning, family responsibilities, and others; and (3) *non-formal learning* is intentional and gained by the individual through participation in organized workplace-based training, non-credit courses and workshops the completion of which does not lead to receiving formal credit.

Learning exposure is the synergy of the researcher's formal, informal and non-formal learning experiences. The theories and practical knowledge derived are more than the amalgamation of the three forms. When new information is derived, it is processed by the individual, which results in either acquiescent to the new knowledge, with or without unlearning previous information, or dismissal to the new gen. The pool of learning then influences the researcher's philosophical inclination. This guides him in picking the preferred research method.

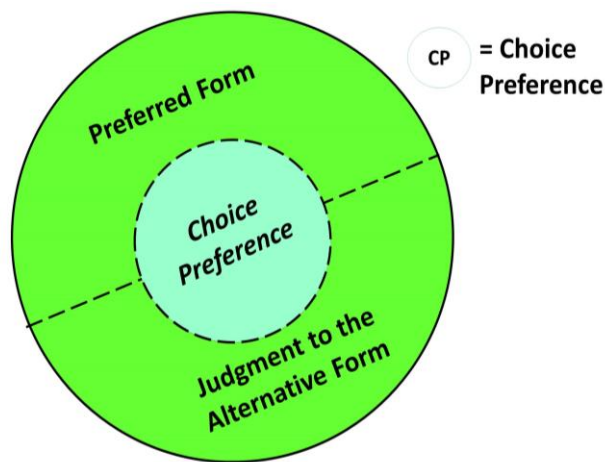


Figure 6. Axial Coding: Choice Preference

Proposition 4. The researcher's preferred form of research tradition and his judgment towards the alternative form contain his choice preference.

There are two basic concepts of engagement that slice-up choice preference, which purports to: (1) expend the preferred form of research; and (2) judge the alternative form of research. This must not be seen as a dichotomy. It is in fact consumed simultaneously. For example, a naturalistic researcher (*preference*) that evaluates a positivistic paper recognizes the rigor of the work (*judgment*) since he is exposed to the criteria in evaluating scientific-empirical papers (most of the time quantitative in nature). Paradoxically, a quantitative researcher (*preference*), who is a pure positivist, magistrates a qualitative report as invalid and unreliable (*judgment*) since he evaluates the rigor of the report based on quantitative criteria, regardless of his exposure to this kind of work. The former example is further supported with:

Proposition 5. The exposure of the researcher to the alternative form of research determines his action towards it.

Before discussing Proposition 5, allow me to enumerate the following properties so as to avoid confusion and dogmatic interpretation:

1. Researchers and research adjudicators operate in both system;
2. No researcher and adjudicator solely observe a single system;
3. There is always a dominant system operating; and
4. The system operating at a certain time-point is primarily dependent to certain conditions.

The following conditions are identified:

1. Person-referent condition – How credible is the source of information?
2. Context-referent condition – How credible is the information?
3. Self-referent condition – I know better than you!
4. Combination of all or any of the identified conditions.

A researcher always has a preferred form of research shaped by his philosophical stance. It does not necessarily follow that if a researcher has a preferred form, he is likely to dismiss the alternative. Judging the alternative form is shaped by his learning exposure. The more exposed the researcher to it, the less likely it is dismissed. Take note that I use the word less likely since there is another construct that curbs the phenomenon. The model as shown below will explicate this:

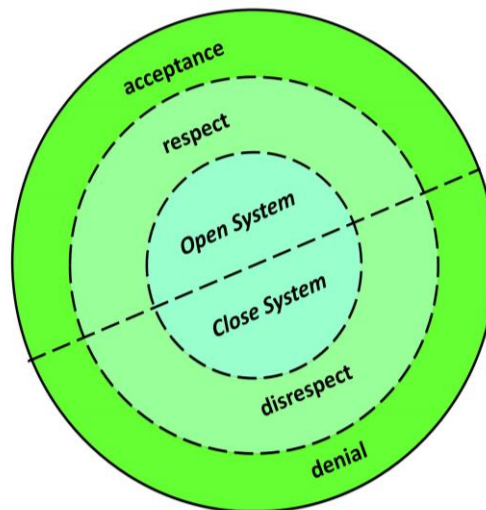


Figure 7. Axial Coding: System of Acceptance or Denial of Alternative Research Tradition

Postulate 2. An open system ranges from respect to acceptance of the alternative form of research.

Postulate 3. A close system ranges from disrespect to denial of the alternative form of research.

Human being operates in two types of systems: (1) open; and (2) close. When a researcher is open to the alternative form of research tradition he may respond by: (1) respecting; and/or (2) accepting the alternative. In respecting, the researcher maintains his personal preference while recognizing the rigor of the other form. In accepting, the researcher tends to assimilate in practice the alternative form without discounting the preference. In some rare cases, the researcher may partially disengage to the initial preference. Considering that the person is open-minded, disengagement to the previous preference does not necessarily imply total rejection, but only a change in *panache* and still with credence of the reputation of the former. When the researcher is close-minded to the alternative form, the initial reaction is disrespect towards total denial. In disrespect, the researcher is acquainted with the rigor of the alternative form but still dogmatically insist with his bias. Denial happens when the researcher denounces the integrity of the other form. In denial, the researcher may have full to partial acquaintance or totally ignorant to the alternative form. Nonetheless, all operates in a mechanism wherein information is thrown either by: (1) not recognizing the legitimacy and rigor of the alternative after conceptually learning and understanding it; or (2) closing the door to learn and understand the alternative.

According to Hare (2003), the axiology of open-mindedness is acknowledged since the time of Socrates:

“I am not speaking dogmatically from the certainty of assured knowledge. I am simply your fellow-explorer in the search for truth, and if somebody who contradicts me is obviously right, I shall be the first to give way.”

Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*, 506

Hare (2003) further claimed that this Socratic philosophy is reverberated by several philosophers like: (1) John Stuart Mill (1859), who asserts that judgment is trusted from people open to criticisms; (2) C. S. Peirce, who suggested to throw our personal belief the moment new learnt elements are inconsistent (Hartshorne, C., & Weiss, P., 1931); and (3) Bertrand Russell (1950), who claimed that dismissing openness is dangerous. These statements are further dissected in the subsequent models.

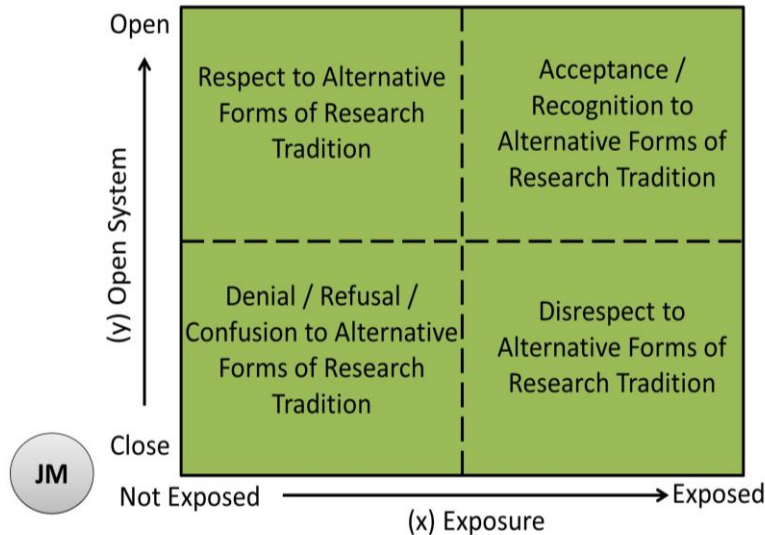


Figure 8. Pre Metric Modeling: Judgment Matrix of the Alternative Form of Research Tradition (Substantive Form)

Let X axis be the range of exposure and Y axis the close-open system continuum. This will produce four quadrants: (1) respect; (2) acceptance; (3) disrespect; and (4) denial. These quadrants represent the actions taken by the researcher. With this model, we can derive the following qualitatively verified hypotheses (as per Glaser and Strauss' [1967/2006, p.39-40], this must be noted as a suggestion, confirmed with theoretically sampled and constantly compared evidence; this is not statistically tested with excessive pile of proof):

Hypothesis 1. The more open and exposed the researcher to the alternative form of research the more he accepts or recognizes it.

Hypothesis 2. The more closed and unexposed the researcher to the alternative form of research the more he denies or refuses it

Hypothesis 3. The more closed and unexposed the researcher to the alternative form of research the more he is confused and thus denies and refuses it.

Hypothesis 4. If the researcher is open but unexposed to the alternative form of research he tends to respect it and eventually accepts and recognizes it.

Hypothesis 5. If the researcher is closed but exposed to the alternative form of research he tends to disrespect it and eventually denies and refuses it.

Choice Preference: A Formal Theory

Figures 9 and 10 are the translated models for formal use. The theory can be utilized in areas other than research, *exempli gratia* preferred teaching method among teachers. The preferred form is shaped by the teacher's background, philosophical stance and learning exposure, and his judgment on the applicability of a certain method is dependent on the synergy of all factors *vis-à-vis* his open-close system spectrum and learning exposure continuum. This theory can also be consumed to explain the preferred: (1) school of thought; (2) counseling technique; (3) therapy; (4) mode of treatment; and (5) many more.

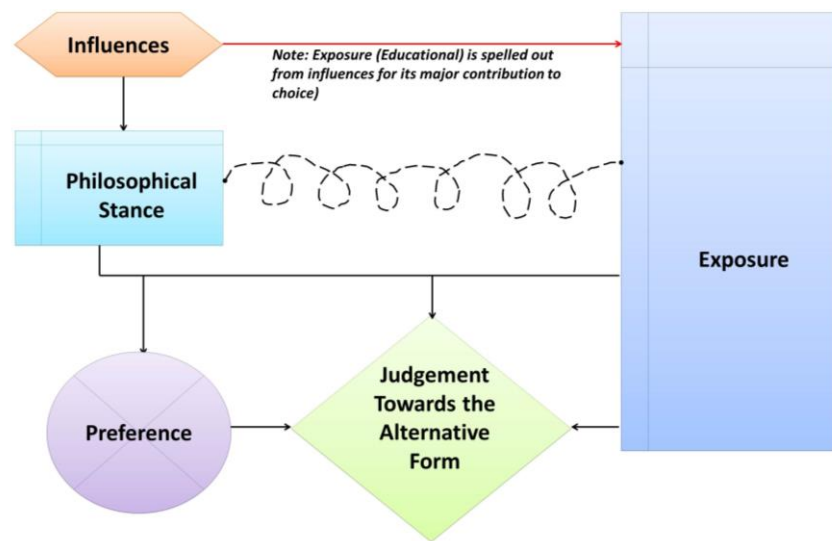


Figure 9. Choice Preference Theory: The Formal Theory

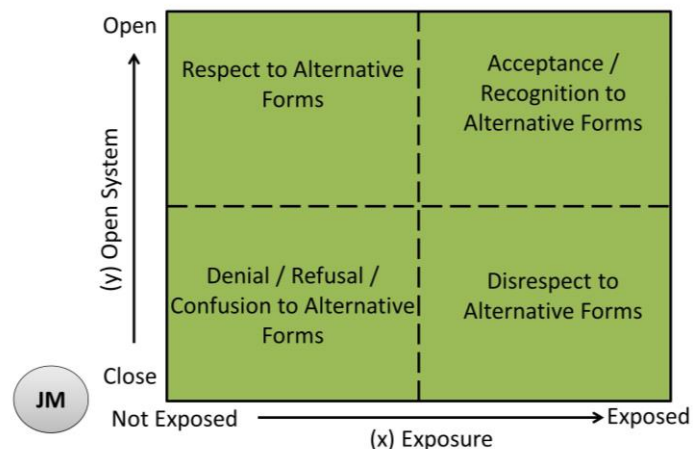


Figure 10. Pre Metric Modeling: Judgment Matrix (Formal Form)

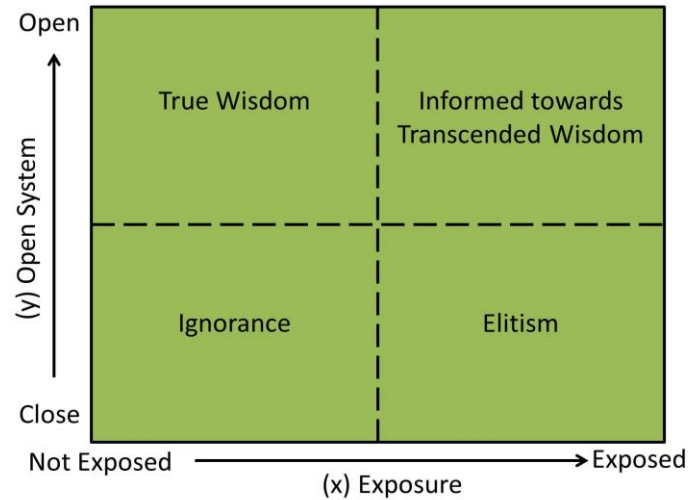


Figure 11. Categorical Interpretation Based from the Judgment Matrix

Although humans operate in both, there is always a dominant system functioning. We can then classify individuals based from their dominant system. The following are the hypothesis with explanation of the interpretation:

Hypothesis 6. When the person is open and unexposed, that person exhibits true wisdom

In true wisdom, a person is able to process the information and learn from it even though he has no previous exposure to the information. The selective analysis, as a result of the value of respect without disregarding bias, allows the person to comprehend rationally which assists him to become more informed.

“The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.”
Socrates

I recalled one of my lecturers shared that the only way to understand something new - is to empty the demitasse. A full cup can no longer accommodate something new. This does not imply that our cups need to be empty. Along the interspaces between the matters in our cups are gaps that accommodate new learning. If we insist that our cups are full, it can no longer sip new ideas and learning does not occur. This wastes the chances of utilizing something relevant. Information may not be pertinent at the first squint; it will be when understood well. It may not be significant now, but may be in the near future.

Hypothesis 7. When the person is open and exposed, that person is well informed and is able to transcend the information to practice

Well-informed individuals tend to judge accordingly and are able to compartmentalize personal biases with existing logical alternative systems. This individual can segregate information with respect and values the alternative forms as valid and reliable options to

undertake. Although there are always preferences, the ability to put on an alternative lens to be able to see the rigor of the other form is appreciated. This type of individual is able to effectively and selectively appreciate the value of the information and transform this evidence into practice.

Being well-informed is not the same as know it all (Swain, 2009). Swain added that being knowledgeable implicates awareness about loads of diverse information, while being a know-all may implicate knowing all there is to know about a phenomenon. When one broadens interest to something beyond the boundaries of his interest allows the person to be well-informed. This provides him a chance of providing good insights and judgment and not boxed in to an exclusive system.

Hypothesis 8. When the person is close and exposed, that person overly accentuating elitism

“A society’s attitudes to innate intelligence are closely correlated with its levels of inequality.”

Danny Dorling, 2010

A word first known in 1947, elitism is defined by Merriam-Webster (2013) as “consciousness of being or belonging to an elite”. This consciousness leads to exclusivity. These groups looked only after their own interest and encouraged powerlessness and unresponsiveness to the non-affiliates (Wasserman, 2006). Dorling (2010) believed that IQism influences this phenomenon. IQism defines elitism with its history, but I personally believed it had changed over time. I would like to see elitism now as a claimed privilege among established groups. Although in antiquity, this was fashioned among intellectuals, with the advent of knowledge-for-all, a number of clued-up individuals with differently inclined school of thoughts groomed. Those who prefer the most well established and accepted thought will compromise the elite group while the rest are marginalized. Given this scenario, IQism still played a role. However, it is no longer a divide between the knowledgeable vs the rest, but is already a combat between who is more: (1) intelligent; and (2) legitimate scholar. When elitism is highlighted, this leads him to look as if he is ignorant to the alternate form. Ignorance here is not defined as “not knowing anything”, but is the failure to appreciate the authenticity of the alternative form and demonstrating “as if he is ignorant”. This type of ethnocentrism (Leininger & McFarland, 2005) is the plaintiff of the “know-it-all” group (Swain, 2009). The claimed superiority of knowledge is actually the ignorance or cultural-blindness of the realities beyond their preferred boundaries.

Hypothesis 9. When the person is close and unexposed, that person is ignorant

Ignorance may lead to judgment from uncertainty. Perry (2008), Kahneman and Tversky (1996), and Lichtenstein and Fischhoff (1977) suggested that individuals engaged in empirical studies often trust that they are knowledgeable beyond what they actually do. This type of mindset would usually direct to unfavorable consequences. Overconfidence about their knowledge and ability shaped the partialities in judgment and decision-making. Perry (2008) suggested that ignorance trails the individual to be less cautious in

their decision-making. In most cases, what is unfamiliar is less accepted and what is familiar is preferred as the superior form. As cited by Smithson (1997), empirical studies in the late 70's regarding the "Catch-All Underestimation Bias" (Fischhoff, Slovic & Lichtenstein (1978) signposted that when alternatives are unclear people tend to underestimate it. Individuals verge not to face risk of committing error. They avoid in gambling on an option especially when there is lack of information (Frisch & Baron, 1988).

"Open-mindedness is properly thought of as a kind of critical receptiveness in which our willingness to consider new ideas is guided by our best judgment with respect to the available evidence. Genuine open-mindedness requires finding some middle ground between being ready to entertain every idea seriously and being excessively resistant to reasonable possibilities. This line of thought suggests a natural connection with an Aristotelian account of virtue as involving a mean[s] between two extremes to be determined by the use of practical wisdom (Nichomachean Ethics, 1107). We may go too far in the direction of critical skepticism and lose sight of open-mindedness; but it is no mark of open-mindedness to be willing to embrace absurdity, to be unwilling ever to draw a conclusion, or to be ready to abandon a promising line of inquiry merely to pursue some other possibility. There may be a sense in which the merits of open-mindedness are obvious, but the confusions outlined above suggest, as Oliver Wendell Holmes (1921) reminded us, that there are circumstances in which what is needed is an education in the obvious (Hare, 2002)."

Hare, 2003

Reflection

The debate between research traditions will only stop when scrutinizers have an open mind. This is probably the reason why Glaser constantly emphasized the concept of "open-mindedness" (Lillemor & Hallberg, 2010). Although, Glaser (1992) argues with the prescriptions of Strauss and Corbin (1996), I acknowledged the motivation of the argument. Prescriptions hinder the researcher's scholarship. Glaser and Strauss (1967/2006) emphasized that one, "should not curb anyone's creativity... they should encourage it". This includes creating original methods and ideas. Glaser (2006) emphasized that a researcher, especially a PhD candidate, must observe total autonomy, originality and contribution. Scholarly contribution is limited or slayed when autonomy and originality is compromised.

Conclusion in Metaphor

Choice preference is the synergy of formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences together with the individual's philosophical stance. Judgment is shaped by the synergy of exposure and the openness or closeness of the individual to the new information. It is stressed that choice preference is a personal process and it must not be imposed to another individual. This statement is best captured in the Gestalt Prayer:

"I do my thing and you do your thing.
I was not born in this world to live up to your expectations
And neither are you to live up to mine...
If by chance we meet up, it is fine and beautiful.
But if not, it cannot be helped.
Because I am simply I and you are simply you."

Fritz Perls, 1969, p. 4

Although the metaphor emphasized on multiplicity of realities that causes differences in preference, it also stresses the importance of acknowledging the alternative form. It is not an egotistical standpoint that pressures self-absorbed sovereignty. Just like the Gestalt Prayer, it teaches us not to ineptly impose our own stance to others nor allow others to impose their stance to us. In that way, debates are prevented. In any facets in life, whether choice of research methodology or strategies in teaching style, one must realize the importance of dissimilarities as a mode for development: (1) disagreements allow each perspective to see opportunities towards competitive improvement; (2) diverse opinions permit the emergence of new ideas that help improve practice in any profession; and (3) dissimilar schools of thought break the monotony in knowledge. In totality, it signals more explorations to expand, refine and develop a body of knowledge.

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68-83.

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING ATTITUDE: A WAY TO ENHANCE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Management education is facing various challenges in terms of teaching pedagogy, research, and consultancy. Students need to get practical experience on implementing management concepts and they should be able to apply them in real industrial scenarios. Business Faculty Members put in meager effort towards management consulting oriented activities and most of them prefer to focus primarily on teaching. But teachers seems to be more effective when they involve themselves more towards only teaching oriented activities, rather than involving in research and/or consultancy. This paper tries to understand the attitude of business faculty members towards consulting practices exploring their attitude towards management consulting and perception towards consulting practices and relationship with teaching and research performance. The exploration involved conducting interviews with 317 faculty members who teach M.B.A. at 97 institutions affiliated to Anna University in Tamilnadu, India. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data for the survey, which had three components: demographic information, management consulting experience status, and attitude towards management consulting. As a result of the study, the respondents showed a moderately positive attitude on management consulting, this indicates that they were willing to involve in management consulting initiatives, provided they should be motivated. Having Doctoral degree, Area of specialization, and management consulting experience status had proportionate effect in such involvement. Suggestions are proposed to motivate such initiatives.

Keywords: Business Faculty, Management Consulting, Consulting Attitude

Introduction

Along with changing market conditions and global competition, business world today becomes more volatile in terms of creativity and knowledge base (Storey, 2007). The effect of globalization has its impact on even small business firms too in terms of their business development oriented issues (Brewster et al., 2005). To compete at these conditions, corporate world requires strong commitment towards long-term strategies and they need to concentrate much on recruitment, development and retention of their manpower, who are their supreme assets. So, they have to focus on their human resource function to accomplish these activities (McCauley & Wakefield, 2006; Storey, 2007).

Thus, institutions teaching Management Education focus much to shape their students on practical knowledge and expertise development. Businesses are increasingly looking to universities as sources of innovation and competitive advantage, as they seek to address the competitive pressures inherent in their operating environment. At the same time, universities, and business schools in particular, are becoming more aware of the value of knowledge and seek more opportunities to interface with business. While one might expect a high degree of mutual interdependence between educational institutions and business organizations. The literature is highly critical of the extent of business-academia alignment, suggesting that much of the teaching and research carried out in universities fails to meet the needs of business (Hughes et al, 2009). Mintzberg (2004), in a highly provocative article, argues that business schools and, in particular, MBA courses tend to reduce practically useful areas like student-based consulting projects, research and consultancy oriented courses, which as a result often fail to achieve relevance for the organization. The gap between theory and practice has become wider than ever, with blame being apportioned between business and academia.

Research on management consulting by academicians is an area largely unstudied (Cohen et al, 2002; Goldfarb; Henrekson, 2003; Hall, 2004). There are a number of rationales for discovering the phenomenon in detail. In the broad context of the debate about the rising 'sell-out' of the 'ivory tower' (Thursby & Thursby, 2002), it is pertinent to investigate the role of management consulting by academicians by investigating their attitude towards management consulting.

Various challenges and threats have weighed down management education in India and there is a need to analyze what lies ahead for this country, in the field of management knowledge development in the next decade (Glin, 2008). Students need to get practical experience on implementing management concepts and they need to be given a chance to put them in real industrial scenarios. India needs to develop a trend that, outstanding personalities who are managers in various industries should be placed in academic boards and also as teachers for management education (Glin, 2008).

In Indian management education sphere, performance of the faculty members in majority of the institutions is evaluated on the basis of teaching and research. This context is true even in many other countries, for example, while investigating the effort allocation of business faculty members among class room teaching, research activities, and

management consultancy and analyzing the relationship between their job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness, it was found out that, they put only less effort towards management consulting oriented activities and most of them prefers to be primarily as teachers (Boya, Robicheaux, & Dotson, 1992). On contrary to what envisaged by Perkmann and Walsh (2006), teachers are more effective when they involve themselves more towards research and consulting oriented activities.

Management teachers gain experience through consulting activities, and use them in class rooms as real examples. This enhances the quality of learning of the students. Research by Clow, Ken, and Wachter (1995) proved that consulting may benefit teaching and does not impair research. Consulting experience enhances the quality of class discussions and class projects. To involve in such activities business faculty members require certain management consulting skills. Faculty members who involve in consulting follow certain procedure in solving their clients' problems, identify the solutions with the help of alternative approaches available, and play multifaceted roles in analyzing the situation and they overcome all these tasks by developing certain required skills which enables them to go through the consulting assignment without any hurdles. A few examples on consulting activities by the faculty members of Indian Institute of Management, Ahmadabad (www.iimahd.ernet.in) are given below,

- Majestic Hospital at Ahmadabad had the problem of unnecessary delays in patient discharge. Prof. K.V.Ramani conducted a thorough study on the processes and procedures followed for hospital patient discharge and offered sole suggestions to address the unnecessary delays.
- The principal of Government Industrial Training Institute, Jalgaon wanted to understand the factors that helped to create a culture of innovation among the staff. This task was performed by Prof. Vijaya Sherr Chand and offered some suggestions before increasing the intake capacity of the institute.
- Noida Toll Bridge Company Limited had some financial difficulties and has to be restructured. This task was successfully performed by Prof. Sidharth Sinha.

This study seeks to investigate the attitude of business faculty members towards management consulting by exploring their consulting experience status and perception towards consulting practices and relationship with teaching and research performance. The study involved conducting interviews with 317 business faculty members.

Review of Literature

Management Consulting

Business Management is a dynamic discipline and is in constant need for reassessment (Thursby & Thursby, 2002). A few pertinent questions are raised by viewing the way

management education is offered in Indian educational system: Is the role of the business educators solely to prepare business graduates for employment? Seen from the view of teaching and learning practice, are there problems with the business curriculum, the students, or the academics? How do business educators make sure that their teaching is appropriate and up-to-date?

One such field where they need to be in is Management Consulting by Faculty Members. A limited review of the studies on management consulting in India shows that there is very little or no effort from private institutions/colleges in providing management consultancy by business faculty members. Business faculty, as disciplinary experts, they are responsible for the content of their students' business management knowledge and related skills development (Perkmann, 2006).

Consulting by faculty refers to a service by academics to business organizations on commercial terms based on their knowledge in specialized areas. This could involve giving advice or solving problems in various functional areas in an organization (Perkmann, 2006). Providing consulting services to external business organizations, social organizations, and government has an extensive role of academicians within economy and society (Boyer & Lewis, 1985). However, rarely people are interested in this area as it is still viewed as a tool which is not successful by many managers to utilize consultants.

Management Consulting by Business Faculty

A number of studies in the review mentioned the relevance of consulting experience for teaching. Although there are very few researches in this area, all of these researchers agree that consulting was important for teaching and professional development (Dallimore & Souza, 2002; Cameron, 2007; Vroom, 2007). Consulting makes better teachers, because the things that they do when consulting are the things that they teach. It gives examples and at the same time because they have to use these things that they teach, they learn them better. Teachers understand the practical application of them in a way that they wouldn't know if they weren't out there consulting, and it makes much sharper in the classroom. It gives the students a way to identify with their teachers better in gaining practical knowledge. Thus, it is clear that consulting experience not only provides with real-life examples to use in teaching but also enhances expertise in the eyes of the students.

Businesses are increasingly looking to management teachers as sources of innovation and competitive advantage, as they seek to address the competitive pressures inherent in their operating environment. At the same time, universities, and business schools in particular, are becoming more aware of the value of knowledge and seek more opportunities to interface with business. While one might expect a high degree of mutual interdependence between the two sides, the literature is highly critical of the extent of business-academia alignment, suggesting that much of the teaching and research carried out in universities fails to meet the needs of business (Hughes et al, 2009). Mintzberg (2004), in a highly provocative article, argues that business schools and, in particular, MBA courses tend to

reduce practically useful areas like student-based consulting projects, research and consultancy oriented courses, which as a result often fail to achieve relevance for the organization. The gap between theory and practice has become wider than ever, with blame being apportioned between business and academia. Business and education must cooperate to create more real world opportunities for students. Neumann & Banghart (2001) listed some tangible benefits of faculty consulting involvement as follows,

❏ Opportunities for practical learning

❏ Research linkages

❏ Knowledge dissemination

❏ Faculty development

❏ Improved relationship network

❏ Effective change management

❏ Financial benefits

Attitude

A person's attitude explains his/her behavior (Allport, 1937). For example, a person may have a positive attitude toward work or a negative attitude toward work. While speaking about a person's attitude, it also refers to the emotions and behavior of the person. There are many researches that investigated the association between attitude towards job oriented activities and performance. Also some studies proved the relationship between job involvements as a job related attitude (Sagie, 1998). Gellatly (1995) also revealed that behaviour of a person is a result of his/her work-related attitudes. According to Blau (1986), Blau & Boal (1989), Mathieu and Kohler (1990), work related attitudes have positive relationship with work behaviours.

Measurement of attitudes helps us to understand certain situations and how a person behave toward the situation or object. Even though feelings and beliefs are internal components, a person's attitude can be understood from his or her resulting behavior.

Measurement of Attitude

Thurstone and Chave (1929) published a procedure popularly known as 'Thurston Procedure for Attitude Assessment' has been widely used in many organizations for employee survey. This procedure helped the organizations to understand their employees'

attitude towards their working environments. Morrel-Samuel (2002) proposed some guidelines for such employee attitude surveys. They are listed below:-

- ❑ Questions should be about observable behavior and better not about motives or thoughts.
- ❑ Independently verifiable items should be included
- ❑ Response scale should offer odd number of options
- ❑ Ranking questions should be avoided
- ❑ Maximum time for completing the survey by a respondent should not exceed 20 minutes

Business Faculty Attitude towards Management Consulting

As far as recent research is concerned, there is no study conducted in India studying the attitude of faculty members towards management consulting oriented activities. Many empirical evidences have proved the necessity of teaching, research, and consultancy services among management faculty members with reference to performance measurement under varied settings. Even though research is considered as important by the teachers (Burnett, Amason, and Cunningham 1989), many other researchers argue that, there are ample amount of empirical evidences that shows differences between teachers who involve in consultancy oriented activities and those who are not. Teachers' effectiveness improves in a considerable manner when they involve themselves in consulting oriented activities. (Kuhn & Lee, 1976; Twomey & Twomey, 1998; Shugan, 2004; Markus Perkmnn, 2006).

The question that has acknowledged only little awareness, however, is what management faculty members in India, perceive about involving themselves in consultancy oriented activities and in what way their individual and work environment factors affect their effort allocation among teaching, research and consulting.

A study conducted by Twomey and Twomey (1998) shows that, teachers of UK business schools seems to continue the pursuance by remarkable journal publications, teaching their students with practice oriented relevance, and supports the idea of mutually contributed learning of teachers and practitioners together. Often, Academic Research and Management Consulting have different objectives in terms of conceptual teaching, practicing, and data collection. Involving in consultancy oriented activities accentuates certain merits, specialized applications, and the focal point here will be key variables only (Shugan, 2004).

Attitude towards sharing the information that is inherent in the mind of individuals and assembled through experience with others plays a critical role (Osterloh & Frey, 2000; Suppiah & Sandhu, 2010). The benefit from this positive attitude towards sharing information is that, it allows institutions to develop and make the most of on knowledge-based resources (Damodaran & Olphert, 2000; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005).

Research on management consulting was studied as applicable technique that keeps teachers with updated knowledge on industrial happenings. Such a technique may satisfy professional requirements of academicians. University research centers and non-profit organizations can avoid their budget problems by getting assistance from these service providers (Degaris & Pettinga, 2010).

Teachers involving in consultancy activities makes their research more applied oriented. Consulting and academic research can go hand in hand. But, this fact depends upon what is the driving force behind these consulting intentions (Perkmann, 2006).

Training professional level students by involving them in consultancy activities has its own benefits and pitfalls. Teachers can utilize their students' efforts and skills by involving them in their consulting projects which may be a invaluable opportunity for learning. This also may guide them in deciding their career path (Schneider et. al., 2007). Sas (2009) presented a methodology for transfer of knowledge that utilizes both teaching and research expertise. Making students involve in business driven assignments proves to be beneficial for all stakeholders in the sphere. Industrial firms get solutions through research, students get better learning experience inculcated with various professional skills, and academics get a better teaching-learning process.

Thus based on the literature reviewed, and the gap identified for this study, the following research questions are framed:

1. Are there any significant differences in attitude towards consulting among the faculty members based on their demographic variables, and management consulting experience status?
2. What is the attitude of business faculty towards management consulting?

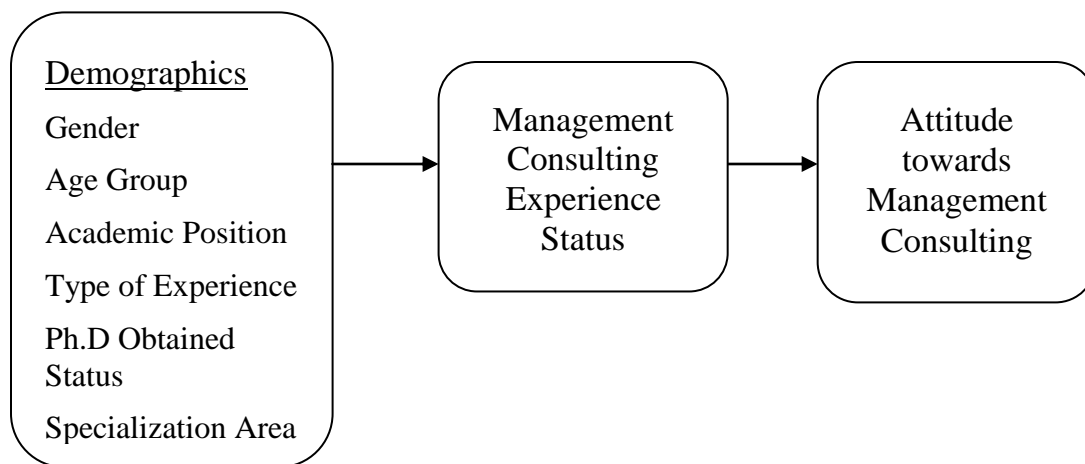


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Methodology

In this research paper, the measurement, sample size, data collection and method of data analysis, will be employed, as specified by Cooper and Schindler (2003). This study formulates the use of quantitative research design, where findings are mainly the product of statistical summary and analysis (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2005). Furthermore, Descriptive research using a cross-sectional study is employed here because it provides information that allows for identifying relationship between two variables (Aaker, Kumar & George, 2000).

Data for this study was collected from Faculty Members teaching M.B.A at Anna University affiliated institutions in Tamilnadu, India. Anna University is a technical university in Tamil Nadu, India. The university is one of the oldest technical institutes in the world with a history spanning 218 years (As of 2012). Simon & Goes (2012), describes that the sample size for a study may be decided with statistical precision. The size of a sample should be large enough so that it will be the representative of the target population. A pilot study was conducted among 50 respondents and then the standard deviation of the average of the question ‘attitude towards management consulting’ was calculated to determine the sample size. This question was particularly selected for this purpose as this is the dependent variable for this study.

$$\text{Sample size } n = (ZS/E)^2 = (1.96 \times 0.445 / 0.05)^2 = 304.2931 = \mathbf{304}$$

Where,

Z = Standardized value corresponding to a confidence level of 95% = 1.96

S = Standard deviation of the dependent variable (attitude towards consulting) = 0.445

E = Acceptable error = 5% = 0.05

Simple random sampling method was used in this study to select the business faculty members of Anna University affiliated institutions in Tamilnadu. Among the institutions affiliated to Anna University, 281 institutions offers M.B.A programme. A structured questionnaire was mailed to the official address of 97 institutions which are randomly selected. 317 filled questionnaires were received back, which are above the determined sample size of 304.

The data collected are comprehensively analyzed with the help of IBM SPSS 20.0, based on the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistical analyses are performed and then ANOVA (analysis of variance) is done to compare the group means with the attitude of the sample of respondents.

Results

The collected data from the respondents were coded, entered to SPSS spreadsheets, and analyzed. Thus the response had 224 male respondents (71%) and 93 female respondents (29 %). Among the respondents, 116 (37%) of them belong to age group 26-35 years, 105 (33%) of them belongs to age group 36-45 years, 65 (21%) of them belongs to age group 46-55 years, and 28 (9%) of them are above 55 years. Among the respondents, 186 (59%) are Assistant Professors, 79 (25%) of them are Associate Professors, and the remaining 52 (16%) are Professors. Among the respondents, 24 (8%) have teaching and industry experience, 188 (59%) of them have teaching and research experience, 7 of them (2%) have only teaching experience only, and 98 (31%) of them have teaching, research, and industry experience. Among the respondents, 47 (15%) are doctorates. Most of the respondents are faculty of Human Resources and Organizational Behavior (24%), Marketing (25%), and Finance (25%). Specialization-wise responses are in tune with the percentage of the population, which could be revealed through a chi-square test, $\chi^2 = 0.286$, degree of freedom = 3, $p = 7.81$ at 0.05 significance level. Table 2 reveals that about 90% of the respondents have positive intention towards Management Consulting.

The questionnaire had three components: demographic information of the respondents, management consulting experience status of the respondents, and respondents' attitude towards management consulting. Through extensive review of literature, some potential statements had been indentified for including in the scale for measuring the attitude of faculty members towards management consulting. As there is no inventory available for measuring the consulting attitude of faculty members, a tailor-made inventory was adopted from few sources (Jackson & Brown (1979); Altuhaih (1991); Lee & Field (1991); Twomey & Twomey (1998); and Evers & Sundelius (2009)). Thus, a five point Likert's scale prepared containing 12 statements. The five point scale ranges from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). This scale had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.71, which indicates high internal consistency of items. For consulting experience status, the respondents were requested to mark their status on management consulting.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	93	29.3
Male	224	70.7
<i>Age Group</i>		
Less than 25 yrs	3	0.9
26 – 35yrs	116	36.6
36 – 45 yrs	105	33.1
46 – 55 yrs	65	20.5
Above 55 yrs	28	8.8
<i>Academic Position</i>		
Assistant Professor	186	58.7

Demographic Information	Frequency	Percentage
Associate Professor	79	24.9
Professor	52	16.4
<i>Type of Experience</i>		
Teaching and Industry	24	7.6
Teaching and Research	188	59.3
Teaching only	7	2.2
Teaching, Research, and Industry	98	30.9
<i>Ph.D Obtained</i>		
Yes	47	14.85
No	270	85.17
<i>Specialization Area</i>		
Finance	63	19.9
General Management	19	6.0
Human Resources and Organizational Behavior	75	23.7
Information Systems	15	4.7
International Business & Economics	9	2.8
Marketing	80	25.2
Production and Operations	17	5.4
Strategic Management	13	4.1
Others	26	8.2

Table 2 shows the management consulting experience status of faculty members. From the table, it is obvious that majority of the faculty members (53%) have an intention to do management consulting, but never taken steps for starting, about 21% of the faculty members never have an intention to do consulting.

Table 2: Management Consulting Experience Status of Faculty Members

Consulting Experience Status	Frequency	Percentage
I am doing consultancy and still active	12	3.79
I have an intention but never taken steps for starting	168	52.99
I have been doing consulting but not now	52	16.40
I have taken steps to do but never made it	18	5.68
I never intend to do Management Consulting	67	21.14

Table 3 shows the attitude of the faculty members towards management consulting, measured with five point scale inventory of 12 items. The mean score of the sample's attitude was calculated as 3.85, indicates that the sample of faculty members had a moderately positive attitude towards management consulting.

Table 3: Attitude towards Management Consulting

	Mean	Std. Dev.
1) The majority of management consultants are MBAs	3.13	1.129
2) Time devoted to consulting does not affect time that may be devoted to research in a negative way	3.40	1.076
3) There is little, if any, scientific methodology for studying this discipline. Most of them are based on few case studies with few scientific rigor	3.51	1.093
4) Management Consulting is a learned competency rather than an innate predisposition or cultural trait	3.67	0.956
5) My Institution is providing incentives to encourage faculty members to take new initiative relevant for Management Consulting	3.67	1.183
6) An incubator is a part of the environment at the department/school	3.69	0.931
7) There is no unique and widely recognized theory (or practice) of management consulting	3.99	0.916
8) A flair for taking challenges is more important for taking consulting assignments than formal business training	4.07	0.852
9) Recent research gives a paramount role of human behavioural sciences in the field of management	4.13	0.636
10) Consulting improves research performance	4.15	0.784
11) Consulting improves teaching performance	4.34	0.715
12) Research and consulting is an integrated part of the institution's overall approach to education	4.42	0.836

Source: Adopted from Jackson & Brown (1979), Altuhaih (1991), Lee & Field (1991), Twomey & Twomey (1998), and Evers & Sundelius (2009).

Table 3 infers the faculty members' attitude towards management consulting. In the scale, none of the items went up to a mean score of 4.5, indicates that the respondents have moderately positive attitude towards consulting. The item that has high mean score (4.42) is that research and consulting is an integrated part of the institution's overall approach to education, and comes (4.34) the attitude that consulting improves teaching performance. From these two indicators, we can understand that the respondents are accepting the main concept of this research that the experience gained through consulting activities can be used for effective teaching performance.

Table 4: ANOVA for attitude towards Management Consulting and other variables

Variables	df	F value
Gender	1	0.023
Age Group	6	1.583
Position	3	0.502
Type of Experience	6	0.832
Obtaining Ph.D	3	3.634

Variables	df	F value
Specialization Area	3	3.548
Consulting Experience Status	3	3.614

From the Table 4, the F values at 95% significance level, the F value is higher only for “obtaining Ph.D”, “Specialization Area”, and “Management Consulting Experience Status”. The output of this analysis indicates serious concern regarding having a doctoral degree as the pertaining F value was 3.634. Thus, there is significant difference between Ph.D obtaining status of the faculty members with respect to attitude towards management consulting. There is significant difference between area of specialization of the faculty members with respect to attitude towards management consulting as the F value was 3.548. Also there is significant difference between faculty members’ consulting experience status with respect to their attitude towards consulting as the F value was 3.614.

Discussion and Conclusions

Research on management consulting by academicians is an area largely unstudied (Cohen et al, 2002; Goldfarb & Henrekson, 2003; Hall, 2004). There are a number of rationales for discovering the phenomenon in detail. In the broad context of the debate about the rising ‘sell-out’ of the ‘ivory tower’ (Thursby and Thursby, 2002), it is pertinent to investigate the role of management consulting by academicians by investigating their attitude towards management consulting. In this study, an investigation of business faculty members’ attitude towards management consulting was conducted. This is the area which is not much explored in India. As agreed by Dallimore and Souza (2002), Cameron (2007), and Vroom (2007), consulting is important for teaching and professional development. In this context the study seeks to understand the attitude of business faculty members towards management consulting. This research is done among the business faculty members of Anna University affiliated engineering colleges in Tamilnadu, India. This study deals with variables like faculty members’ gender, age group, Ph.D obtained status, area of specialization, experience, management consulting experience status, and their attitude towards management consulting.

The results of the study get along with earlier studies. Many essential findings were brought out that can be used to inculcate management consulting attitude among faculty members who teach business management, which supports the earlier researches done by Kuhn and Lee (1976), Twomey & Twomey (1998); Shugan (2004); Perkmann (2006). As the sample of respondents showed a moderately positive attitude on management consulting, this indicates that they were willing to involve in such initiatives. It is essential that the moderate positive attitude should be effectively pushed towards the positive direction; otherwise, it may end up in a reverse way. Conducting professional development programmes, focusing on improving this attitude and involving them in management consulting would be an effective strategy to attract the fence sitters.

Theoretical Recommendations

This study adds up to the literature on business faculty members' consulting activities and its impact on their teaching performance. Keeping the findings of this study in view, the following theoretical suggestions are proposed,

- This study could be extended to more similar institutions and universities in India as there is a need to improve the way of teaching management concepts.
- Faculty members' attitude towards management consulting could be explored with respect to management consulting skills, personality traits, academic performance, etc.
- A mixed approach of both quantitative and qualitative research could be used to bring out a deeper understanding of various factors that may influence faculty members' attitude towards management consulting.

Practical Recommendations

The following practical suggestions are proposed here, that could be used by universities and/or management teaching institutions considering consulting experience as effective equipment for their teachers,

- Consulting experience can be made as desirable while recruiting faculty members;
- As the respondents are moderately positive towards consulting attitude, they could be motivated with some incentives for involving in consulting activities;
- Exchange of resource persons can be initiated by institutions with nearby industries, which could bring academia and business together (Hughes, Regan & Wornham, 2009)
- Having research experience in direct industry applications should be considered by universities while processing doctoral degree programmes.
- Specialization wise developmental programmes can be conducted for the faculty members for consulting initiation and possessing a doctoral degree could add up better confidence among them in such involvement.

These are the better ways that could enhance the management education quality in India, as reported by Glin (2008), where much research should be conducted in this arena to reach global standards.

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INFORMATION LITERACY: STUDY OF INCOMING ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study is aimed at determining Information Literacy skills and standards among undergraduate's students majoring in English Language at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University (AHU). The participants in this study were 142 Male and Female students. The researchers used a questionnaire developed by Mittermeyer and Quirion (2003) to achieve their aim and objective. The results of this study revealed that information skills are not mastered by AHU students. The study reported here is therefore recommended to students in AHU in order to make them aware of the need to prepare them appropriately.

Introduction

Information Literacy is related to information skills, defined as "*the process of acquiring knowledge of attitudes towards and skills in information, as a major determinant of the way by which people exploit reality, develop, live, work and communicate in an information society*" (Marais in Hepworth (1999). From this point of view, Information Literacy has broader implications for individuals and educational communities, where both students and educators can make use of navigating systems through the internet or data bases to achieve their goals, whether seeking knowledge or saving time throughout the navigating process.

Shapiro and Hughes (1992) discussed Information Literacy as a Liberal Art. Although Information and computer literacy, in a conventional sense, are functionally valuable technical skills, information literacy should be conceived more broadly as a new liberal art that extends from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact. Information and computer literacy is essential to the mental framework of the educated information-age citizens just as the tritium of basic liberal arts (grammar, logic and rhetoric) was to the educated person in medieval society"(Shapiro and Hughes. 1992.p 3).

The higher education students in the Arab world, especially the first year students, are mostly graduated out of the school system with little or no opportunities of seeking information; because they are fanatic with textbooks and have limited time in adhering to a new form of learning which requires more self-steaming and independent in gaining what they advocate for. They may find some difficulties during their higher education, when their teachers asked them to write a report. For instance, to write a report about a problem matter beside the use of search engines in finding the related articles or using the electronic library system, they find it very hard to use the library at first.

Through their experience in the field of teaching in both schools and universities, the researchers feel it important to tag this topic and discuss it for the benefits of our students all over the country in particular and in the Arab world in general. Schools mostly focus on the first levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: knowledge, comprehension and application. Only few skills take into consideration the analysis, synthesis and evaluation aspects. (Al-Btoush, 2012)

Information Literacy Competency Standards

The American Association for Higher Education (1999) endorsed five critical information literacy competency standards for higher education:

- 1) Determining the nature and extent of the information needed,
- 2) Accessing needed information effectively and efficiently,
- 3) Evaluating information and its sources critically and incorporating selected information into the student's knowledge base and value system,
- 4) Using information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose either individually or as a member of a group and
- 5) Understanding most of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the uses and access of information ethically and legally

(American Library Association. 2006)

Therefore, each of the five standards has performance indicators beside what outcomes should be included.

The Australian and New Zealand Institute for Information Literacy (ANZIIL) published the second edition of the 2001 Information Literacy standards to reflect the ways academicians and librarians have used the first edition. They endorsed six standards and examples for information literacy (Bundy. 2004):

Standard One: An information literate person recognizes the need for information and determines the nature and extent of the information needed

Standard Two: An information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently

Standard Three: An information literate person critically evaluates information and the information seeking process

Standard Four: An information literate person manages the collection or generation of information.

Standard Five: An information literate person applies new information to construct new concepts or create good and better understanding.

Standard Six: An information literate person uses information with understanding and acknowledges cultural, ethical, economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information

Information literacy however does not just stand at this point. Similarly with details concerning citation particularly intellectual property as one of the major critical aspects of academic writing that students in higher education must strictly understand and consider in their paper work (Coffey, 2006).

Literature Review

The challenge faced by both educators and new students in higher education is how to adopt the new environment within a new educational system that requires more skills in communication and information technology. Gathering content or preparing research papers resembled in information form, entails collecting those information beyond library's books shelves, it can be found in a soft copies form such as CDs, cell phones, WebPages, and many other multimedia sources which requires skills to be obtained and mastered by first year undergraduate students, while education is responsible in helping the youths in acquiring information and research skills.

The growth of the concept of Information Literacy is highly needed not only in higher education but has become a way of life to humanity. It is not a new field of study in this century, but as Bruce (2004. P 8) stated: "The idea of information literacy, emerging with the advent of information technologies in the early 1970s, has grown, taken shape and strengthened to become recognized as the critical literacy for the twenty-first century" it can be one of the major foundations for learning in institutions of higher education. In the second millennium "Information literacy research is still in its infancy. The number of studies that identifies themselves as belonging to the domain is still relatively small, and the research endeavor is scattered" (Bruce. 2000. P 91)

Hepworth (1999) conducted a study on information literacy and skills of undergraduate students to determine Nanyang Technological University Students' strengths and weaknesses in term of their information literacy and skills. The research derived empirical data which showed that students faced considerable challenges in the area of information literacy and skills. A pragmatic framework was proposed for the incorporation of information literacy and skills into the undergraduate curriculum at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. The implications of these changes were defined and a general framework for change was given. These changes need to take place, but was debated, to ensure that future students leave tertiary education with information literacy and skills which are appropriate to the information age. In Chinese higher education, Sun (2003) discussed the new informational and educational environment in China and the increasing needs for information and knowledge in Chinese higher education. Information literacy is deeply becoming integrated into the Chinese education system with the development of the information society, but in order to realize the established goals in the near future, education needs to be streamlined so that it can include information skills training.

New students in higher education faced some difficulties using the libraries especially and have a lack of competencies regarding information literacy. Mittermeyer and Quirion (2003) conducted a study about incoming first-year undergraduates students in Quebec Universities, to determine students' information skills. The study reached the point of assuring the necessity of implementing the integration of information literacy competencies into the curriculum and affirming the role of university libraries in the development and promotion of information literacy. The study also concluded that there are difficulties among students in: retrieving relevant information, inefficient use of time, and risk of plagiarism due to a lack of knowledge of the principles of the ethical use of information and particularly the use of citations.

In South African higher education institutions, Jager and Nassimeni (2005) discussed the progress made by librarians in establishing partnerships with academicians to deliver quality education and to participate in the transformative agenda. Their study showed how librarians have developed their concept of information literacy education and makes the case that they can accelerate the uptake of information literacy education interventions in the curriculum by more pointed leverage of higher education policy initiatives.

In the Arab world, Information Literacy received some interest through the form of Information Technology skills as a part of using new technologies such as the web and integrating those technologies in e-learning (Tuhairi, 2011). Though, the focus is on educators, but if they already possess the skills and the faculty member has already accepted the idea of integration, the study would show lack of Information Technology skills and applications of e-learning.

3. Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted under the assumption that students admitted into Al-Hussein Bin Talal University (AHU) have no skills to find, use and evaluate information. Therefore, this study is aimed at determining Al-Hussein Bin Talal University Students' information literacy by answering the following questions:

1. Can AHU First-year Students who major in English Language determine the nature and extent of the information needed?
2. Do AHU First-year Students who major in English Language use effective and efficient search strategies?
3. What types of documents that are validated by AHU First-year Students who major in English Language according to its sources?
4. What kind of search tools is mostly trusted by AHU First-year Students who major in English Language in information search?
5. Do AHU First-year Students who major in English Language understand economic, legal, and social issues in using information ethically and legally?

4. Research Methodology

The design of the study is a descriptive study, thus the researchers conducted the survey through a questionnaire as a means of collecting data on the information literacy of students.

4.1 The Study Sample

The sample of this study was taken out of the Registration Department which consists of 145 first year English Literature students in Al-Hussein Bin Tala University. The questionnaire was distributed to all students but only 142 of the students could be reached, which reflect %98 of the population. The researchers' main concern committed to explore the information literacy among the first year students in order to understand the whole picture of their competencies and give recommendations to the administration and teachers in the University for better understanding when responding better to the students needs.

Table (1): Sample distribution according to their gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	48	33.8
Female	94	66.2
Total	142	100

All the students possess the 12th grade certificate which is called in Jordan Tawjihi. None of them hold a diploma or less than Tawjihi, when they came from different districts in Jordan.

4.2 The Questionnaire

Information Literacy Competency categories are not dependent on nationality or race, but on university students so the study employs the questionnaire used by (Mittermeyer & Quirion. 2003) after transcribing it into the Arabic Language.

It shows the information literacy competencies and standards, while analyzing the items contents. The researchers and the 4 referees concurred that those items do not have any cultural biases and are applicable to the AHU Students as they cover the middle eastern context. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was validated by 4 referees. They were from AHU and hold PhDs in Instructional Technology, Information Technology, Curriculum and Instruction, and one of them hold a PhD in Library and Information Sciences. The Reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach's Alpha (.878) over the 40 items of the questionnaire after the conduct of the study.

The items of the questionnaire are based on the information literacy competency standards for higher education which was published by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). Those skills were linked to variables grouped under five themes as shown in the following table (table 2).

Table (2): Questionnaire items distributed onto their variables and themes

Themes	Variables	Questions
Concept Identification	<i>Significant Words</i>	<i>6,10 and 15</i>
Search Strategy	<i>Translation into keywords</i>	<i>4</i>
	<i>Boolean Operators</i>	<i>11 and 18</i>
	<i>Search Indexes</i>	<i>13</i>
	<i>Controlled Vocabulary</i>	<i>14</i>
Document Types	<i>Encyclopedias</i>	<i>5</i>
	<i>Periodicals</i>	<i>17</i>
	<i>Scholarly</i>	<i>22</i>
Search Tools	<i>Databases</i>	<i>3</i>
	<i>Search Engines</i>	<i>8</i>
	<i>Library Catalogues</i>	<i>9</i>
	<i>Meta-search Engine</i>	<i>16</i>
	<i>Catalogue</i>	<i>19</i>
Use of Results	<i>Read in Citations</i>	<i>7</i>
	<i>Bibliographies</i>	<i>12</i>
	<i>Evaluation Information</i>	<i>20</i>
	<i>Ethical use of information</i>	<i>21</i>

Results

To determine the information literacy and skills of AHU students, the research questions were stated according to the five themes that reflect information competencies and standards.

Results of Question 1: *Can AHU First-year Students who major in English Language determine the nature and extent of the information needed?*

This question seeks to reveal students' skills under the standard of Concept Identification by using the significant words of the problem they are searching about. The students were asked to answer questions 6, 10 and 15 (see Appendix A) for the following purposes:

Q 6 Purposes: Selecting the right words and use the right words in the statement of the problem.

Q10 Purposes: Reducing the number of results by using significant words.

Q 15 Purposes: Determining if the students are able to distance themselves from the formulation used in the statement of the problem when selecting search term.

Table (3) shows the students responses to those questions:

Table (3): Students responses at theme 1: Concept Identification

Q.N	Q.A	Male				Female				Total			
		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Q 6	A	9	19	39	81	27	29	67	71	36	25	106	75
Q 10	B	12	25	36	75	34	36	60	64	46	32	96	68
Q 15	D	11	23	37	77	25	27	69	73	36	25	106	75
Mean		11	22	37	78	29	31	65	69	39	27	103	73

Q.A: Question Answer; C.A: Correct Answer; I.C.A: Incorrect Answer; F: Frequency

Observed from the table:

1. About 73% of the students did not know the right answer, while only 27% know the significant words they need to search for related information for the statement of the problem.
2. Male students' percentage of the total mean correct answer was 22%, while the Female students were 31%.
3. Only 27% of AHU First-year Students who major in English Language can determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

It is obvious that AHU First-year Students who major in English Language cannot determine the nature and extent of the information needed, as 73% of them did not know

the correct answers which reflect the ability of concept identification by using the significant words of the problem they are searching about.

Results of Question 2: Do AHU First-year Students who major in English Language use effective and efficient search strategies?

This question seeks to reveal students' skills under the standard of Search Strategy by using the variables: Translation into keywords, Boolean Operators, Search Indexes, and Controlled Vocabulary of the problem they are searching about. The students were asked to answer questions 4, 11, 13, 14 and 18. Table (4) shows the students responses for those questions.

Table (4): Students responses at theme 2: Search Strategy

Q.N	Q.A	Male				Female				Total			
		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Q 4	B	11	23	37	77	32	34	62	66	43	30	99	70
Q 11	D	12	25	36	75	16	17	78	83	28	20	114	80
Q13	C	9	19	39	81	8	9	86	91	17	12	25	88
Q 14	C	6	13	42	87	7	7	87	93	13	9	129	91
Q 18	C	1	2	47	98	0	0	94	100	1	1	141	99
Mean		8	16	40	84	13	13	81	87	20	14	102	86

Observe from the table:

1. About 86% of the students did not know the right answer, while only 20% of them use the effective and efficient search strategy for related information to the statement of the problem.
2. Male students' percentage of the total mean corrected answer was 16% while the Female students were 13% and no search strategies exceed 50% according to the variables.
3. Only 20% of AHU First-year Students who major in English Language use effective and efficient search strategies.

Table (4) shows that AHU First-year Students who major in English Language do not know how to use effective and efficient search strategies, as 86% of them in total failed to use the right search strategy when using appropriate search variables.

Results of Question 3: What types of documents that are validated by AHU First-year Students who major in English Language according to its sources?

This question seeks to reveal students' skills under the standard of Document Types by distinguishing between the validated documents types according to its sources: Encyclopedias, Periodicals, and Scholarly when searching sites. The students were asked to answer questions 5, 17 and 22. Table (5) shows the students responses for those questions.

Table (5): Students responses at theme 3: Document Types

Q.N	Q.A	Male				Female				Total			
		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Q 5	B: An encyclopedia	12	25	36	75	14	15	80	85	26	18	116	82
Q 17	D: A journal	11	23	37	77	18	19	76	81	29	20	113	80
Mean		12	24	37	76	16	17	78	83	28	19	115	81

The table shows:

1. About 81% of the students did not know the right answer, while only 19% chose the right source of the document related information to the statement of the problem.
2. Male students' percentage of the total mean correct answer was 24% while the Female students were 17%.

To explore students' knowledge in distinguishing between scholarly journals and popular magazine, the students was asked Question 22 to describe(s) articles published in scholarly journal, where the right answers are b, c and d.

Table (6): Students responses to question 22

Questions Alternatives						Responses	%
	B	C	D			2	1.41
					F	41	28.87
			D			26	18.31
	B					17	11.97
		C				17	11.97
A						10	7.1
				E		9	6.34
		C	D			6	4.23
A			D			5	3.52
	B	C				4	2.82
	B		D			2	1.41
A	B	C	D			1	0.7
A	B	C				1	0.7
A	B		D			1	0.7
Total						142	100

Table (6) shows that only two students selected a, b and d answers that characterize the scholarly journal, while majority of the students selected the response (f) as indicator of their knowledge, which is “Don't Know”.

According to Table 5 and 6 results, it can be said that AHU First-year Students who major in English Language have no skills under the standard of Document Types in distinguishing between the validated documents types according to its source.

Results of question 4: What kind of search tools is mostly trusted by AHU First-year Students who major in English Language in information search?

This question seeks to reveal students' skills under the standard of trustable search tools by understanding that search engines are not appropriate tools in searching indexes and using the Internet as a search tool. The students were asked to answer questions 3, 8, 9, 16 and 19. Table (7) shows the students responses for those questions:

Table (7): Students responses at theme 4: Search Tools

Q.N	Q.A	Male				Female				Total			
		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Q 3	B	2	4	46	96	4	4	90	96	6	4	136	96
Q 8	A	14	29	34	71	30	32	64	68	44	31	98	69
Q 9	A	4	8	44	92	8	9	76	91	12	8	130	92
Q 16	A	4	8	44	92	3	3	91	97	7	5	135	95
Mean		6	12	42	88	11	12	80	88	17	12	125	88

The table shows:

1. About 88% of the students did not know the right answer, while only 12% chose the right search tool.
2. Both Male and Female students' percentage of the total mean corrected answer was 12%.

To determine whether students know how to query the library catalogue for the types of searches it can be used, they have been asked Question 19, and the right answers are A and D.

Table (8): Students responses to question 19

Questions Alternatives						Responses	%
A			D			14	9.86
A						52	36.62
			D			22	15.49
					F	13	9.15
				E		9	6.34
	B					8	5.64
		C				7	4.94
A		C				5	3.52
A	B					3	2.11
A		C	D			2	1.41
	B		D			2	1.41

Questions Alternatives					Responses	%
	B	C			2	1.41
A	B	C	D		1	0.7
A	B	C			1	0.7
A	B		D		1	0.7
Total					142	100

Table (8) shows that only 9.86% of the students selected A and D answers where available books and journals in the library are indexed in the catalogue, not the other choices.

According to the results from Tables 7 and 8, it can be said that AHU First-year Students who major in English Language have no skills under the standard of an inappropriate trustable search tools.

Results of Question 5: *Do AHU First-year Students who major in English Language understand economic, legal, and social issues of using information ethically and legally?*

This question seeks to reveal students' skills under the standard of Use of Results by understanding Reading in Citation, Bibliographies, Evaluation Information, and Ethical use of information. The students were asked to answer questions 7, 12, 20 and 21. The purpose of question 7 is to determine students' ability of interpreting a bibliographic reference and recognize the document type to which it corresponds, while the purpose of question 12 is to understand the added value of the bibliographic references which was selected by the author. Table (9) shows the students responses for the first two questions.

Table (9): Students responses at theme 5: Use of Results

Q.N	Q.A	Male				Female				Total			
		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A		C.A		I.C.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Q 7	B	9	19	39	81	17	18	77	82	26	18	116	82
Q 12	C	8	17	40	83	18	19	76	81	26	18	116	82
Mean		9	18	40	82	18	19	77	82	26	18	116	82

The Table shows:

1. About 82% of the students did not know the right answer, while only 18% chose the right way of citation and bibliographies.
2. Both Male and Female students' percentage of the total mean corrected answer was 18%.

To determine whether students know how to evaluate information, they were asked Question 19, and the right answers are A and D.

Table (10): Students responses to question 20

Questions Alternatives						Responses	%
A	B	C				1	0.7
					F	42	29.6
			D			33	23.2
A						15	10.6
	B					10	7.1
A			D			10	7.1
				E		8	5.6
		C	D			6	4.2
	B	C				3	2.1
		C				3	2.1
		B	D			3	2.1
A		C	D			2	1.4
A	B		D			2	1.4
	B	C	D			2	1.4
A	B					1	0.7
A	B	C	D			1	0.7
Total						142	100

Only one student selected A, B and D and indicated the date of publication provided, thus, the author is known in the field and the responsibility for the site was clearly indicated. But 29.6% of the students do not know the answer to the question.

To determine whether students are familiar with the principles of the ethical use of information, the students were asked to answer Question 21, and the right answers were A,B,C and D.

Table (11): Students responses to question 21

Questions Alternatives						Responses	%
A	B	C	D			2	1.4
					F	29	20.4
			D			24	16.9
	B					23	16.2
A						18	12.7
		C				11	7.8
				E		10	7.1
A	B					6	4.2
A			D			5	3.5
	B	C				4	2.8
		C	D			4	2.8
A	B	C				2	1.4
	B	C	D			2	1.4

Questions Alternatives					Responses	%
A		C	D		1	0.7
	B		D		1	0.7
Total					142	100

Only two students selected A, B and C answers which shows their familiarity with the principles of ethical use of information.

Results in Tables 9, 10 and 11 show that AHU First-year Students who major in English Language do not understand economic, legal, and social issues of using information ethically and legally.

Therefore, it should be noted that all students' didn't write any comments related to questions alternatives "other".

Discussion and Conclusion

When comparing the results in this study with Mittermeyer and Quirion (2003) it is obvious that there is a lack of standards among AHU students majoring in English according to Information Literacy. Thus, it is hard to say that students who participated in this study have any idea or knowledge about using reliable resources or even understanding the meaning of legal issues. They also use Boolean Operators but they can't differentiate between OR & AND in reducing the results they are searching for via the Internet.

To compare Male students versus Female students without using Chi Square, shows the same distribution between them, but we didn't conduct such statistics because the goal of this study is to determine Information Literacy among first year undergraduate students if they can exceed 50% in answering the questionnaire items. Thus, comparing responses of Males with the Females is just a waste of time.

Some of the students were not able to understand the importance of those skills. Schools have to take the blame of this lack. Libraries in the Jordanian schools do not have any library digital data base despite the introduction of using new strategies of instruction and learning such as projects or writing a report.

Overall AHU students majoring in English Language are not able to identify the concept under search, have no search strategy, have trust on what is written in the Internet, cannot use the results related to the topic or problem under search, and need a lot of understanding of the legal issues.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the study of the results, the researchers recommendations are:

1. Set a separate course or integrate Information Literacy into the curriculum at the school level.
2. Set an orientation period for incoming students to the university concerning Information Literacy by preparing hardcopy and digital copy of a brochure or by conducting workshops for first year undergraduate student to understand and gain those skills.

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Appendix English Questionnaire

Dear Student: This questionnaire covers a variety of topics pertaining to information seeking when you work on an assignment for a course. The goal of this questionnaire is to help us assess your information literacy skills in order to give recommendations to the administration and your teachers in the University for better understanding when responding better to your needs.

1) Last degree completed:

- High School ☐
Cegep/College ☐ Program:.....
University Undergraduate ☐
Program:.....
Other (please, specify):.....

2) In which program will you study in Fall 2013?.....

Your responses are anonymous and it is important to answer all questions without consulting anyone else. If you don't know the answer, circle "Don't know".

For questions 3 to 18, circle only one

3) If I want to find journal articles about "*The popularity of video games*", I will search in:

- a) The library catalogue b) A database c) Yahoo or Google
d) The journals in the library
e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

4) You have used the words "*business letters*" in a library catalogue search. No document is found by the computer. What do you conclude?

- a) The library does not have any documents on this topic
b) I have not used the right words
c) All documents on this topic are already on loan
d) The system is down
e) Other (please, specify):.....
f) Don't know

5) In order to become familiar with a subject about which I know very little, first I consult:

- a) A journal b) An encyclopedia c) A database d) A book
e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

6) You must use a psychology database to find information on "*The effect of family relations on the academic results of primary school students*". Which combination of words will you use?

- a) family relations, academic results, primary school

- b) family relations, academic results
- c) effect, family relations, academic results
- d) effect, family relations, academic results, primary school
- e) Other (please, specify):.....
- f) Don't know

7) Which one of the following citations refers to a journal article?

- a) Miller, A.W. (1997). *Clinical disorders and stressful life events*. Madison, CT, International University Press.
- b) Anderson, K.H. (1999). "Ethical dilemmas and radioactive waste: A survey of the issues." *Environmental Ethics*, 2(3):37-42.
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- e) Don't know

8) Using a search engine such as Google or Yahoo, I would not find:

- a) The books available in the library
- b) Biographical information about famous people
- c) Merchandise catalogues
- d) Information about companies
- e) Other (please, specify):.....
- f) Don't know

9) A friend told me that I should read an article published in the November 2001 issue of Internet Guide, "The Microsoft Xbox Console", by Mark Kenney. To check the availability of this article at the library, I search in the catalogue under:

- a) Internet Guide
- b) Mark Kenney
- c) The Microsoft Xbox Console
- d) Answers (a), (b), and (c) are correct
- e) Other (please, specify):.....
- f) Don't know

10) Using a search engine such as Yahoo to search for documents on "The depletion of the ozone layer and the impact on health", I use the words:

- a) impact, depletion, ozone layer, health
- b) ozone layer, health
- c) ozone layer
- d) skin cancer, ozone layer
- e) Other (please, specify):.....
- f) Don't know

11) In order to find more documents on my topic I can include synonyms in my search statement. To connect those synonyms in my statement, I use:

- a) AND
- b) +
- c) NOT
- d) OR
- e) Other (please, specify):.....
- f) Don't know

12) You have found a book that is right on your topic. Which section of the book will you consult to find other documents on the topic?

- a) The glossary b) The index c) The bibliography
- d) The table of contents
- e) Other (please, specify):.....
- f) Don't know

13) To find all the documents about *Margaret Atwood* in the library catalogue, I would do a search:

- a) By title b) By publisher c) By subject d) By author
- e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

14) When searching a specialized database for documents on my subject, it is recommended to use the terminology specific to the database. To identify these terms I would consult:

- a) An ideogram b) A dictionary c) A thesaurus
- d) An Internet search engine
- e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

15) You must make an oral presentation on the topic “*Measures currently used across the country to decrease the damage to the natural environment*”. Among the following choices, which one describes best the ideas contained in your subject?

- a) Damage to the natural environment, Canada
- b) Measures currently used, environment, country
- c) Damage, environment, measures currently used
- d) Protective measures, environment, Canada
- e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

16) Using a meta-search engine such as Copernic and MetaCrawler, it is possible to:

- a) Launch a search in many search engines simultaneously
- b) Execute a search in all the existing Web sites
- c) Extend the search into foreign language Web sites
- d) Execute the search in all the databases available in the library
- e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

17) To find the most recent information about drug abuse, I consult:

- a) A book b) A journal c) An encyclopedia d) A dictionary
- e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

18) You have to write a paper on the “*Treatment of depression*”. Which search strategy will find the least number of documents?

- a) Depression and psychotherapy
- b) Depression or psychotherapy or antidepressants
- c) Depression and psychotherapy and antidepressants
- d) Depression
- e) Other (please, specify):..... f) Don't know

For questions 19 to 22, you may circle more than one answer.

19) Some of the items that can be found in the library catalogue include:

- a) All the titles of the books available in the library
- b) All the titles of the books available on the market
- c) All the titles of articles found in the journals available in the library
- d) All the titles of journals available in the library
- e) None of the above
- f) Don't know

20) Among the characteristics that are used to evaluate the quality of an Internet site one finds:

- a) The date of publication is provided
- b) The author is known in the field
- c) Responsibility for the site is clearly indicated
- d) The site is rapidly accessible
- e) None of the above
- f) Don't know

21) You found magazine articles and Web pages presenting different views on a current issue. You want to use this information to write your paper. In which case(s) do you need to include a reference to the source of information?

- a) When I copy word for word a paragraph from a magazine article
- b) When I copy word for word a paragraph from a Web page
- c) When I write in my own words what is being said in a magazine article
- d) When I write in my own words what is being said in a Web page
- e) In none of the above cases
- f) Don't know

22) Which of the following best describe(s) articles published in a scholarly journal?

- a) The information is written for the layperson
- b) It includes a list of references
- c) The research method used is described
- d) It has been evaluated by an editorial board before publication
- e) None of the above
- f) Don't know

We thank you very much for your participation.

IMPROVING ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF ENABLING STUDENTS IN UNDERGRADUATE NURSING

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Abstract

Over the last five years increasing numbers of students completing Science courses in the Enabling programs offered at the University of Newcastle have enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing. In 2012, 201 students, or 36%, of the first year intake into Nursing came through the enabling (pre-university) programs. The widening participation agenda and the increased accent on the economic outcomes of higher education have resulted in a greater number of students choosing to enrol in the enabling sciences as a direct pathway to a career in nursing. The performance of these students was monitored in undergraduate nursing. During this process it was noticed that a decline in student performance had recently began to emerge. This paper explores the shift in performance data that resulted in the development of a new course designed to ensure access and more successful participation in undergraduate nursing for enabling students. The results of this study have implications for delivering pre university nursing courses to students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Keywords: enabling education, disadvantaged students, nursing, widening participation

Introduction

Pre-University or Enabling Education courses can provide an excellent opportunity for mature age students to find a pathway into the nursing profession.

Currently in Australia (and worldwide) there is a shortage of qualified nurses in the health care workforce (Blackman, Hall and Darmawan, 2007). With the current need for more health care professionals, particularly nurses (Blackman, Hall and Darmawan, 2007), there are more people considering a career in nursing.

However, as a result of advances in healthcare and a higher level of expertise required in the modern healthcare environment, a University degree is now the minimum requirement for the profession (Australian Government, 2005). Health Workforce Australia's 2025 report highlights the forecasted shortage of nurses that Australia will experience by 2025 (Health Workforce Australia, 2012). This nursing shortage is a well-documented problem that is worsened by demographic factors such as the aging nursing workforce, the aging of the general population, and a declining number of young people in the workforce (Worrell, 2005).

The training program for nursing changed from a hospital based training program into a University degree program between 1990 and 1993 (Russell, 2005). The degree is now offered as a four year university program with clinical placements spread throughout the degree. Mature aged students who may not have completed a HSC, or even considered a nursing career when at school, are now able to pursue a pathway through an enabling program into the degree.

The widening participation agenda set by the Australian Government in 2008 (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent et al., 2008), the introduction of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (Australian Government, 2003) and the related HECS-HELP for students studying nursing and teaching (Australian Government, 2003) are key elements which have lead to the increase in numbers of students pursuing this career path. Another key factor for the increasing number of students is the strong reputation and long history of enabling programs at the University of Newcastle (UoN) which has presented alternative choices for many young and mature age students returning to study. The University of Newcastle offers three enabling programs:- Open Foundation, Newstep and Yapug. The Enabling programs at the UoN have been offering the opportunity to gain entry into a science based career, including nursing, for over 10 years.

Students enrolling in the enabling programs at UoN choose courses that align with their desired undergraduate degree. More than 65% of students successfully completing enabling programs choose to study undergraduate nursing, allied health or teacher education, on either a part-time or full-time basis, to gain access to undergraduate degrees in nursing and health science based programs.

Prior to 2013, students desiring to study nursing at the undergraduate level enrolled in the Chemistry and Life Sciences (CLS) course. The CLS course covered material designed to give students core knowledge in chemistry, human anatomy and physiology. This is the basis for many of the core subjects required in first year science and health science based programs.

The aim of this study was to assess whether the current Chemistry and Life Sciences courses adequately prepared enabling students for successful participation in first year

nursing by analysing institutional data from 2006 -2012 to determine if the academic performance of enabling students was on par with their non-enabling counterparts.

Challenges Facing Enabling Students in Undergraduate Nursing

At the University of Newcastle, the enabling programs include students who are mature age, first in family, from a lower socio-economic or disadvantaged background.

It has been shown that students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds perform comparably to those of higher socio-economic status backgrounds (James, Krause and Jenkins, 2010; Marks, 2007), however, students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds face greater challenges in completing tertiary study (Devlin and O'Shea, 2012). Often students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are the first in their family to attend university and lack the understanding of expectations and roles (Devlin and O'Shea, 2012). This lack of understanding of university culture can impact on the student's academic capability and can limit their ability to demonstrate their capacity (Collier and Morgan, 2008; Devlin 2013).

First year students from lower socio-economic status backgrounds report that they have more difficulty coming to terms with university teaching styles than those from higher socio-economic backgrounds. They also report having trouble understanding materials and assessment requirements (James, Krause and Jenkins, 2010). This is particularly true of nursing students and their study of the biosciences (McKee, 2002).

Nursing students have reported bioscience subjects to be a source of anxiety and that the language and terminology used in these courses was difficult to comprehend (Jordan, Davies and Green, 1999; Whyte, Madigan and Drinkwater, 2011; Craft, Hudson, Plenderleith et al., 2013). One of the reasons that students leave first year undergraduate nursing is because of the level of science contained in nursing courses and the fact that the content was too hard (White, Williams and Green 1999).

The enabling programs at UoN aim to address these imbalances. However the preparation for a career in nursing is complex and challenging and a student's education has to be tailored to embed a range of skills and expertise capable of dealing with a vast range of technology, complex legislative requirements alongside many difficult human situations (Australian Government, 2005).

Method

Data from students entering nursing through enabling programs and non-enabling programs were compared. Students were considered to be enabling students if they were successfully accepted into an undergraduate nursing degree after completing one of the three enabling programs at the University of Newcastle, that is either the Open Foundation program for adults aged 20 years and over, Newstep, for people aged 18-20 years or the Yapug program, the UoN Indigenous enabling program. Data from the Ourimbah and Callaghan campuses were combined for this analysis. Data analysed

included average course marks and student enrolment numbers in Chemistry & Life Sciences courses between 2005 and 2013.

Overall trends in the institutional data were examined for grade point average (GPA), student progress rate (SPR) and university attrition rate (UAR) for prior enabling students (EP) versus no prior enabling (NPE) students enrolled in undergraduate nursing at UoN from 2005 and 2012.

SPSS version 21 was used to perform a one-way analysis of variance in relation to the mean GPA and mean SPR for NPE and PE students.

The student progress rate measures the percentage of students who enrolled in first year nursing and subsequently re-enrolled for second year nursing.

Results

Enabling Program Enrolments into Chemistry & Life Sciences (CLS)

Table 1:
Enrolment Numbers in Open Foundation Chemistry and Life Sciences Courses (CLS),
and Average Course marks (%) between 2005-2013.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total Student numbers	436	530	552	485	632	848	854	856
Part-time CLS Average Mark (%)	55	50	43	45	49	48	52	64
Full-time CLS Average Mark (%)	58	53	51	49	49	48	62	63

Between 2005 and 2008, enrolments in CLS courses remained steady at around 500 students. However, between 2008 and 2010 there was a 43% increase in the number of students enrolling in CLS, increasing from 485 students to 848 (Table 1). After this spike in enrolments, numbers in 2011 and 2012 remained constant at around 840 students.

Enabling Program Chemistry and Life Science Marks

Average course marks for both the part-time and full-time CLS courses fell progressively from 2005 to 2010, from 55% in 2005 in the part-time course to 48% in both courses in 2009 (Table 1). From 2011 onwards, average marks for the CLS courses increased from 52% in 2011 to 64% in 2012.

Undergraduate Nursing Enrolment numbers

The number of students enrolling in first year nursing increased from 462 in 2006 to 564 in 2012 (Table 2). During this time the percentage of students entering first year nursing via enabling programs increased from 24% in 2005 to 36% in 2012. Between 2006 and 2009, the percentage of enabling students enrolling in nursing fell. The data in Table 2 indicates that the year 2009 had the lowest percentage (17%) of students from an

enabling background entering the Bachelor of Nursing. Since 2009 there has been a steady increase in the percentage of students entering the nursing degree from an enabling background, up to a maximum of 36% in 2012.

Table 2.
Commencing Student Enrolments in the Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Newcastle, 2006-2012, by entry pathway.

Year commenced undergraduate nursing	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No Prior Enabling (NPE)	353	469	458	451	370	362	363
Enabling Programs (EP)	109	110	121	90	135	162	201
Grand Total	462	579	579	541	505	524	564
% of EP students	24	19	21	17	27	31	36

Grade Point Average (GPA)

The GPA of enabling (EP) students was lower than students with no prior enabling (NPE) across all years (Figure 1). In 2006, EP students GPA was 0.5 points lower than NPE students. This gap closed in 2007, but increased to almost 1 grade point difference in 2009. Since 2009 the difference between NPE and EP GPA's has reduced each year. Interestingly, between 2007 and 2011, the GPA for NPE students also declined, however those who entered via enabling pathways had a greater decline in their GPA (Figure 1).

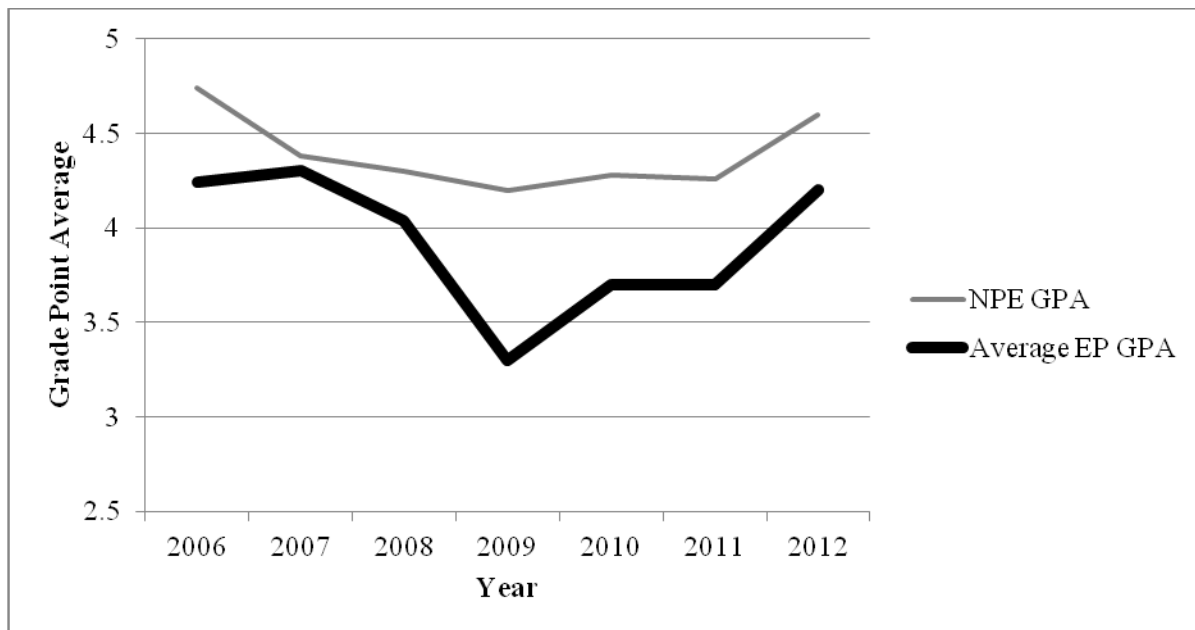


Figure 1
Graph of Grade Point Average (GPA) scores for students with no prior enabling (NPE) compared to GPA scores for enabling (EP) students in First Year Undergraduate Nursing between 2006 and 2012.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to explore the difference in mean GPAs for the NPE group and the PE group across the years from 2006 to 2012. Levene's test was not significant, $F(1,12)=3.79$, $p=0.08$, which indicated equal variances. From the analysis, the PE group, $M=3.93$, $SD=0.45$, was found to have significantly lower mean GPA scores than did the NPE group, $M=4.39$, $SD=0.20$, $F(1,12)=6.01$, $p=0.030$.

Student Progress Rate (SPR)

Student progress rate, shown in Figure 2, mirrored the decline in grade point average. Between 2006 and 2008, the SPR between EP and NPE students was similar (Figure 2), although NPE students still had a higher SPR compared to EP students across all years. However, between 2009 and 2011, the SPR of enabling students was 12 to 17% lower than NPE students (Figure 2). In 2012, the gap between the SPR of EP and NPE students returned to 2007 levels (Figure 2).

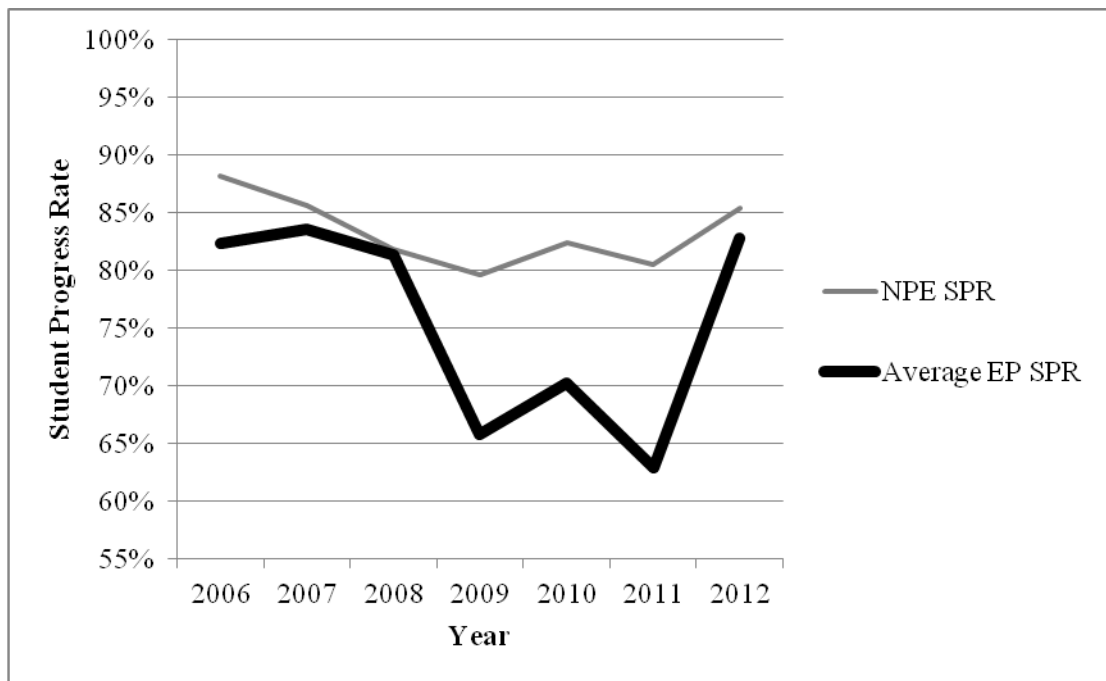


Figure 2

Student progress rate (SPR) for Enabling (EP) and No Prior Enabling (NPE) students enrolled in First Year Undergraduate Nursing between 2006 and 2012.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to investigate whether there was a significant difference in the mean SPR for the NPE group and the PE group across the years 2006 to 2012. Levene's test was not significant, $F(1,12)=1.33$, $p=0.27$ indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated. The PE group, $M=102.70$, $SD=35.14$, was found to have significantly lower mean SPR than did the NPE group, $M=336.08$, $SD=41.99$, $F(1,12)=127.17$, $p<0.001$.

University Attrition Rate (UAR)

Overall the results indicate that the attrition rate for enabling students was comparable with NPE students across most years, except for 2009 and 2010, when there was a large increase in the numbers of students leaving university from both cohorts (Figure 3), and in general the EP students' attrition rate was lower than NPE students. However, the attrition rate for EP students in the period between 2009 and 2010 was 13% higher than NPE students (Figure 3). In 2012, there were similar attrition rates between EP and NPE students.

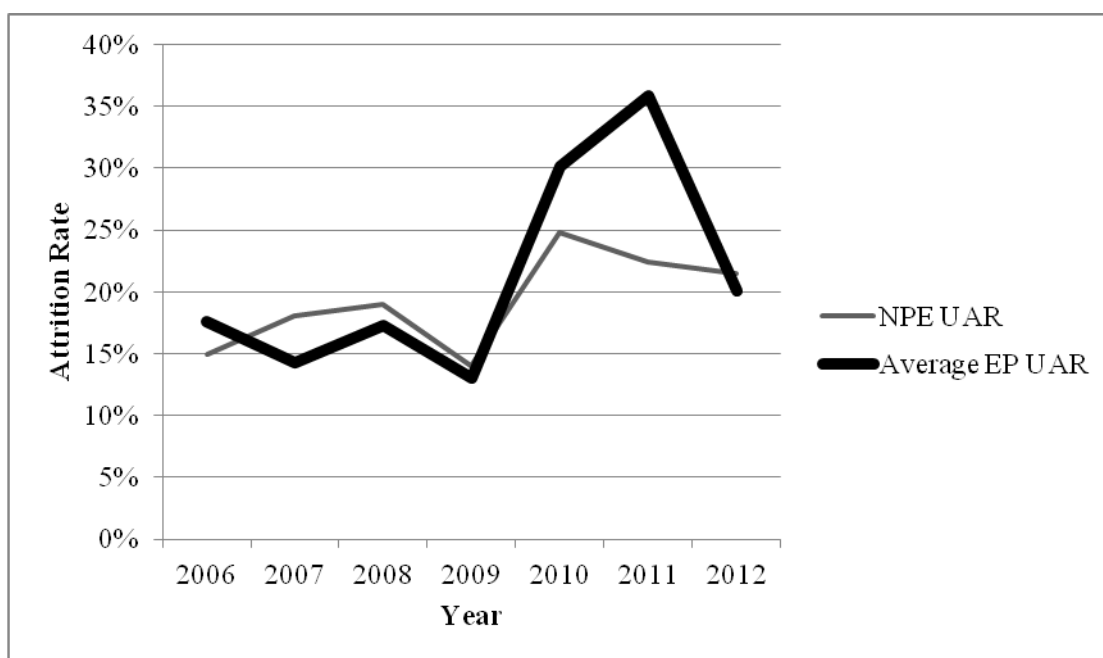


Figure 3
University Attrition Rate (UAR) for Enabling (EP) and No Prior Enabling (NPE) students enrolled in First Year Undergraduate Nursing between 2006 and 2012.

Discussion

This paper examined the achievement and progress of enabling students in the first year of their undergraduate nursing studies from 2006 to 2012 in response to a perceived drop in academic performance.

From 2009 onwards, the Chemistry and Life Sciences (CLS) courses started to become more popular, resulting in an increase in the number of student enrolments. As numbers increased in CLS, the percentage of students enrolling in undergraduate nursing also increased. The largest increases in the number of enabling students entering undergraduate nursing was seen in the years 2010, 2011 and 2012. The percentage of enabling students increased from 17% in 2009, to 27% in 2010, 31% in 2011 and 36% in

2012. The large increase from 2009 to 2010 coincides with implementation of the Bradley review recommendations and the introduction of HECS-HELP. The sustained large increases in subsequent years suggests that the incentives by the government have increased the participation of students who otherwise would not have undertaken university studies. These factors appear to have contributed to the overall increase in enrolments in the enabling programs at the University of Newcastle, in the CLS courses, and subsequently in the number of students enrolling in undergraduate nursing from an enabling background.

As the CLS class size increased there was a decline in the average course mark, from 55% in 2005 to 48% in 2010. This decline was concerning and it was thought that the large class size was impacting negatively on a students' grades. To address this decline, in 2011 the CLS course was split into two classes to address the increase in student numbers and decline in average CLS course mark. Smaller class size allows for more student contact and supports students learning more effectively. Reducing the class size resulted in an increase in average mark from 48% (in 2010) to 52% (in 2011) in the part-time CLS, and 48% (in 2010) to 62% (in 2011) in the full-time CLS course. Reducing class size appeared to have a positive impact on average scores in the CLS courses, improving the success rate of CLS students enrolled in the enabling program.

Although the large class sizes may have been one of the factors that negatively impacted on effective learning in the enabling programs, and although students gained enough marks to be offered entry to the Nursing degree, their level of academic preparedness, confidence and perseverance was perhaps not adequate for the ongoing rigours of undergraduate study. This was evidenced by the significant difference between mean GPA for no-prior enabling and mean GPA for enabling students between 2006 and 2012. The greatest difference between the GPA for no-prior enabling and enabling students was between the years 2009 and 2011. Enabling students completing CLS courses in 2011, the first year of the smaller classes, entered first year nursing in 2012. Although creating smaller classes in the enabling program appeared to contribute to improved GPA scores for enabling students in the 2012 first year undergraduate cohort, enabling GPA scores were still lower than no-prior enabling students' GPA. The GPA data from 2009-2012 indicated that enabling program students were having difficulty undertaking undergraduate nursing study, even though they had completed the general Chemistry and Life Sciences course. The extent of the difference between GPA of enabling and no prior enabling students enrolled in first year nursing increased substantially from 2006 to 2009.

These challenges are more pronounced for mature age students, who are more likely to have financial and family responsibilities and therefore less time to devote to study. They are often the "first in family" to attend university and have limited experience with the rigours of academic life. Non-academic factors such as family commitments and financial responsibilities may have impacted on GPA, attrition and progression (Jeffreys, 2004). A study by Andrews, Salamonson, Weaver, et al., (2008), examined the reasons for first year nursing students' attrition in an Australian university. Their study found one of the reasons for students leaving, was life events preventing the continuation of their studies at university (Andrews, Salamonson, Weaver, et al., 2008). The Global Financial Crisis in 2008 may have negatively impacted on enabling students' capacity to,

firstly, attend university after completing the enabling program and then, subsequently, continue their studies. The responsibility of financial commitments may have resulted in the higher percentage of enabling students failing to progress and/or achieve compared to NPE students.

The lack of confidence in dealing with university study, plus the added financial stress may have made it too difficult for enabling students to continue their university studies in this period. Such factors may also help explain the widening gap between enabling and no prior enabling students SPR and attrition rates during the Global Financial Crisis between 2008 and 2011.

It was thought that the Chemistry and Life Sciences courses would address this problem for our students; however, it would appear that students were unable to transfer the information from the courses to their nursing courses for satisfactory progress through the degree.

Although this course provided adequate preparation for some students, many students appeared unable to apply their new knowledge to the study of nursing, which in turn was impacting on their capacity to be successful in their first year of undergraduate study in the nursing degree. It became obvious that the current CLS course offering was not suitable for the wide range and number of students who were now using this course to prepare for nursing, and that the course was not targeting the specific skills required in the undergraduate nursing course.

To address these findings a new course focussed on preparing students for entry into undergraduate nursing was proposed in 2012 and implemented in 2013. This course was developed in consultation with the nursing school and biomedical department at UoN and involved discussion around the most appropriate preparation for mature age students returning to study. UoN Nursing Faculty staff highlighted a focus on understanding basic scientific principles and their application to healthcare and the development of literacy and numeracy skills, as applied in the nursing context, as the areas of greatest need in terms of preparation of students. The new nursing course will help students develop an analytical approach to their study and focus directly on those skills that will be an essential component of their future work life in the health care environment.

This study has limitations. It is the result of the analysis of quantitative data only, without commentary from student's enrolled in either the enabling or first year undergraduate programs, and has not looked specifically at individual course GPA, SPR or attrition rates for enabling students in their first year of undergraduate study. Further research and analysis will be conducted looking at the results of the new course and the progress of the 2013 cohort of students as they move through undergraduate studies. As part of this, a comparison of the performance of the 2013 CLS students who have chosen to enrol in undergraduate nursing will also be undertaken.

Conclusion

The results of this study found that the academic performance of enabling students in their first year of undergraduate studies was considerably less than that of their non-enabling peers and that our institutional data was in line with views expressed in the literature as well as the anecdotal evidence from UoN Nursing faculty staff.

This paper provided a study of how general science courses within enabling programs were reviewed in light of challenges which students enrolling in the undergraduate nursing program faced. The academic performance data such as attrition, student progress and grade point average provided a trigger for change in course approach. The University will monitor the academic performance of enabling students who have completed the new course and subsequently enrolled into the undergraduate nursing program in 2014.

Enabling programs have played an important role in providing a pathway and preparation for undergraduate education. Such programs have widened student participation and have played an important role in addressing skills shortage in professions such as nursing. Completion of enabling and undergraduate nursing programs have played a key role in the social mobility of individuals. The existence of different access pathways for students into undergraduate education requires universities to ensure that enabling program curriculum content, teaching methods, assessments and support structures provide a smooth transition into degree programs. Relevant curriculum, pedagogy, and support structures are critical to ensure that students have comparable academic outcomes.

It is hoped that this response to a change in student learning needs will improve the overall success rate of enabling program students in their first year of undergraduate nursing studies and inform practice in the sector about the implementation of pre-university enabling programs for students wishing to gain entry into a nursing degree.

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THE EFFECT OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS ON CHANGING GOAL ORIENTATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Abstract

The aim of the current study was exploring the effect of the academic learned helplessness on changing the personal academic goal orientations. The sample was 282 undergraduates, (116 male and 166 female) responded to learned helplessness scale (LHS) and the achievement goal orientation inventory (AGOI) and the experimental group was exposed to repeated failure experiences which led to learned helplessness that caused later to changing the goal orientations of the students from mastery goals into performance goals.

Key words: learned helplessness, goal orientation, undergraduate

Introduction

Learned Helplessness

Learned Helplessness is defined as the reaction on the part of some individuals to become frustrated and simply give up after repeated failures (Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook & Travers, 2000). Seligman and Maier (1967) have systematically examined learned helplessness, a condition which has been attributed to motivational, cognitive and emotional deficiencies, developing due to exposure of an organism to a series of events independent of its behavior and not under its control (Overmaier & Seligman, 1967). Most of Seligman's experiments were conducted on dogs, where they encountered one of three conditions, one group of dogs was exposed to inescapable electrical shocks while another group was exposed to controllable electrical shocks, the third group was not given electric shocks (control group). Findings showed that the dogs that were unable to stop the electrical shocks displayed passive behavior, lack of initiative, anxiety, anger and subsequently a performance decrease 24 hours after exposure. These behavioral changes sustained even after the dogs were transferred to a cage in which they were able to control the shocks. (Elliott et al, 2000).

Learned helplessness has also been found in humans; however, the aversive stimuli that was used not electrical shocks but rather sounds (controllable/uncontrollable) or motor/cognitive tasks (solvable/unsolvable) such as the Raven Progressive Matrices, Levine's discrimination learning, storyline picture arrangement and mathematical questions (Hiroto & Seligman, 1975; Klein, Fencil, Morce & Seligman, 1976; Lubow, Caspy & Schnur, 1982). Helplessness is characterized by student passivity (Peterson et al., 1993) resulting from changes in cognition and emotion, a loss of motivation, and a reduction in behavioral effectiveness (Gentile & Monaco, 1988; Peterson et al., 1993).

Goal orientation

Goals are that which individuals attempt to accomplish (Was, 2006). Within the achievement goal perspective, different types of them are said to create the framework within which students construe and react to achievement tasks and their outcomes (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Two classes of goals were proposed: mastery (learning) goals and performance goals. Mastery goals direct behavior in achievement tasks towards the development of competence, mainly through improvement, learning and challenge-seeking. Learning-oriented students exhibit strong mastery orientations regardless of their confidence in their present ability, and failures do not keep them from the pursuit of knowledge. They do not perceive that intelligence is a fixed quantity; in fact, their continued growth proves otherwise. Performance goals direct achievement behavior towards the demonstration of competence by outperforming others or by avoiding performing worse than others. Performance-oriented students react very differently to failure, especially if they have little confidence in their abilities (in which case learned helplessness is a likely outcome). (Dweck, 1990; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot, 1999; Nicholls, 1984).

Moreover, learning and performance orientation differ in the standards used to evaluate competence. Learning orientation makes use of an absolute or intrapersonal standard (i.e., improve own past performance) and performance orientation draws on normative comparisons (i.e., outperform others) (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Elliot & Murayama, 2008).

Goal orientation is mostly seen as a relatively stable trait that may be influenced by situational characteristics (Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; Murayama & Elliot, 2009). Although learning and performance orientation were originally seen as opposing poles (Dweck, 1986), researchers have argued that individuals often have multiple competing goals (Button et al., 1996). Indeed, research has shown that learning orientation and performance orientation are best portrayed as separate and largely independent dimensions (Button et al., 1996; Payne et al., 2007). Elliot et al, (1999) expanded the goal orientation concept where they reported that it has two dimensions: approach and avoidance which resulted in three categories: performance-approach, performance-avoidance and mastery goals orientations. Thus, people can be high (or low) in both learning and performance orientation. This view was taken into account in this study.

Learned helplessness and goal orientation

Several researchers discoursed about the relationship between the learned helplessness and the goal orientation. Button et al. (1996) defined learning goal orientation as reflecting mastery-oriented behaviors, while performance goal orientation reflects maladaptive behaviors or learned helplessness. Gentry et al (2006) reported that the possibility of learned helplessness resulting from an experiment situation (a game simulation) showing a dismal outcome for students with performance orientations. McKinny (2003) found that Learning goal orientation is associated with adaptive behaviors that reflect a mastery-oriented approach to tasks, while performance goal orientation is associated with maladaptive behaviors and a vulnerability to a learned helplessness. He found also that individuals with a positive self-concept are more likely to engage in adaptive behavior patterns that are characterized by a learning goal orientation. In contrast, individuals with a negative self-concept are more susceptible to engaging in maladaptive or learned helplessness behaviors that are characterized by a performance goal orientation. The consequences of performance goals, when faced with obstacles, are helplessness, anxiety, negative affectivity, risk aversion and low persistence (Ames & Archer, 1988; Butler, 1987, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1984).

Goal-orientation theory suggests that learning goals elicit enjoyment, optimism and intrinsic interest (Butler, 1987; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988) that seem to be related to high positive activation; whereas performance goals elicit helplessness, negative affect, anxiety and stress (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Ryan & Stiller, 1991) that seem to be related to high negative activation.

Students with learned helplessness and performance goals see success as determined by factors such as luck which are outside of their control (Seligman, 1993). Furthermore, they generally believe they will never be successful at school for a variety of reasons including their perceived lack of ability and the difficulty of the tasks (Dweck & Repucci, 1973). By contrast, students who are mastery oriented tend to believe that success is determined by effort and are motivated, display more positive attitudes towards learning, use more effective learning and study strategies, and prefer challenging assignments (Ames & Archer, 1988).

The previous researches (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Gentry et al, 2000; McKinny, 2003) investigated the correlation between learned helplessness and goal orientation and they found that there were positive relations between learning (mastery) goals and adaptive behaviors, and positive relations between performance goals and learned helplessness. Unlike the previous studies, the current study explored empirically what happened to students' goal orientation when they experienced failure and helplessness.

The main purpose of this study was to examine the effect of the academic learned helplessness on changing the personal academic goal orientations.

Study question

1. Are there any significant differences on learned helplessness scale due to failure experiences?
2. Do students' goal orientations order change because of learned helplessness they acquired?

Method

Participants

This study was conducted at The Hashemite University (HU) in Jordan. The study sample included 282 undergraduates, (116 male and 166 female), they were chosen as an available sample from the faculty of educational sciences, from different majors. They registered in the *Psychology of Childhood and Adolescence* course, the course which was taught by the first author, at the academic summer semester 2011-2012. Most of them were sophomore.

Instruments

Learned Helplessness Scale (LHS): (Quinless & Nelson, 1988). The LHS is a 20-item, 4-point Likert scale strongly indicative of learned helplessness. It has suitable psychometric values, but for the purpose of this study new psychometric proprieties were formulated to be conducted on undergraduate students. Cronbach's Alpha reliability was .859; the value was good to apply this scale on the study.

Achievement Goal Orientation Inventory (AGOI): (AGOI) comprised 23 items, represents three goal orientation subscales: 8 items for mastery goals, 7 items for performance-approach goals and 8 items for performance avoidance goals. Items are rated on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*) (Elliot & Church, 1997). Within the present dataset, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.757 for the mastery-approach goal, 0.752 for the performance-approach goal, and 0.617 for the performance-avoidance goal.

Worksheets

Fifteen worksheets were distributed to the students during the summer semester which lasted for eight weeks from 3rd June to 25th July 2013. The themes of the worksheets were derived from the course, they contained different tasks from the psychology of childhood and adolescence, and the students were asked to answer them and delivered to the teacher next lesson.

Procedures

After specifying the aim of the study, the instruments of (LHS) and (AGOI) were prepared and the psychometric properties were extracted. The researchers got the IRB-HU approval to conduct the study on the students of the university. The sample was

divided into two groups, the experimental group ($n = 172$) and the control group ($n = 110$). The participating students informed about the instructions of the tasks. First of all, they completed LHS and AGOI, in order to explore the level of the learned helplessness levels and their goal orientations. The next lesson, the first author started to give the students the worksheets which were derived from the course. Each sheet contained a written task in the psychology of childhood and adolescence; the student might hand it to the teacher next lesson. When the tasks were delivered, the teacher took them home and corrected them, he provided a negative feedback for the experimental group, he and pretended that all task were not answered correctly, and they did not fit the norms that the teacher put, so they must repeat them, therefore the tasks were accumulated and the probability of the success decreased. On the other hand, he corrected the worksheets of control group regularly by providing them with positive feedback. In the sixth week, the students completed the instruments of (LHS) and (AGOI) again as a posttest. Taking the research ethics in account, and in order to not frustrate the students, they took counseling sessions by the second author, they were told that their works were good and right, the teacher provided the negative feedback for the purposes of the study. After getting back the measures, the data was entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to be analyzed.

Statistical analysis

Means and standard deviations were calculated, and series of t tests were used to assess the differences on the learned helplessness and the goal orientation among university students based on the study variables.

Results

To answer the first question of the study means, standard deviations and t tests of the pre-test and posttest were extracted and displayed in Table 1.

Table 1
Means, standard deviations and t test results of the difference between pre-test and posttest scores on LHS according to the group variable.

	Group	N	mean	SD	t	df	Sig
Pre-test	experimental	172	30.49	4.512	-1.082	280	.280
	control	110	31.07	4.281			
Posttest	experimental	172	69.35	8.937	42.712	280	.000
	control	110	30.54	4.124			

$P \leq 0.05$ Size effect of cohen's D $69.35 - 30.54 = 38.81 / 8.937 = 4.35$ which reveals a large effect.

Table 1 showed that there was no significant difference on the pre-test of LHS between the experimental and the control groups ($t = -1.082$, $df = 280$, $p > .280$) which revealed that they were equivalent before they were exposed to failure experiences, and they had not acquired learned helplessness yet, but there was significant difference on the posttest of

LHS between them in favor of the first one ($t=42.712$, $df=280$, $p<.000$), which revealed that they acquired helplessness after they were exposed to failure experiences.

With regard to the goal orientations of the students, means and standard deviations were calculated before and after they were exposed to failure experiences and acquired learned helplessness, table 2 displayed the values

Table 2
Means and standard deviations of the students' scores on the GOS and the order of their GO according to the variables group (experimental - control) and the case of LH (before – after)

Before LH	experimental	M	SD	Control	M	SD
	<i>MG</i>	25.13	9.010	<i>MG</i>	25.54	9.341
	<i>PAvG</i>	20.39	10.587	<i>PAvG</i>	20.02	11.244
	<i>PAPG</i>	13.62	6.613	<i>PAPG</i>	13.61	7.362
After Learned helplessness	<i>PAPG</i>	23.02	10.989	<i>MG</i>	23.48	9.168
	<i>PAvG</i>	21.42	11.143	<i>PAvG</i>	19.07	10.362
	<i>MG</i>	13.69	3.096	<i>PAPG</i>	14.80	6.238

$P \leq 0.05$

Table 2 showed that the students' goals in the experimental group changed after they acquired the learned helplessness, the goals of the experimental group were mastery, performance-avoidance, and performance-approach goals respectively, and the same order was for the control group. But after the experimental group was exposed to the failure experiences, its goals order became performance-approach, performance-avoidance, and mastery goals. On the other hand, the order of the goals of the control group didn't change and remained as the same order.

Discussion

The results showed that the students acquired the learned helplessness because they were repeatedly exposed to failure experiences; they felt that they could not control the learning situation and they did not do anything toward the teacher and his norms of correct answers. This result assured what Overmaier & Seligman (1967) and Seligman (1995) found that people who are powerless to influence the outcomes of their learning and repeatedly expose to a series of events which are not under their control do not make effort to learn.

Moreover, the result of the current study showed that the exposure to failure experiences resulted in learned helplessness, which in turn led to transformation in goal orientations. The students changed their goals from mastery to performance-approach goals. This result may be explained that just to get rid from the embarrassing failure situations, and wanted to avoid incompetent students who performed worse than others, and they aimed at keeping their prestige in front of others. The students' behavior reflect the normal relation between the performance goal and learned helplessness, this result was assured by (Ames & Archer, 1988; Butler, 1987, 1992; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; McKinny, 2003 Nicholls, Gentry et al, 2006; 1984). This transformation in goals opposes what was found out in (Button et al, 1996; Murayama & Elliot, 2009) that the goal orientation is stable trait that may be influenced by situations, because the students of the study were influenced by failure experiences, they changed their goals.

The results may be explained by Higgins (2000) point of view that negative feedback is an outcome that fits prevention focus (performance goals), because the prevention system is most concern with avoiding negative outcomes. In contrast, positive feedback is an outcome that fits promotion focus (mastery / learning goals), because the promotion system is most concern with achieving positive outcomes. Based on that, Van-Dijk and Kluger (2004) tested the interactive effect of feedback sign and Higgin's regulatory focus on motivation. According to their hypothesis they found that under prevention focus (performance goals) negative feedback increases motivation more than positive one, whereas under promotion focus (mastery / learning goals) positive feedback increases motivation more than negative one.

Limitations, applications, and suggestions

This generalization of the results was restricted by some factors. The sample of the study was from one faculty at HU. Also, the period of the manipulation was restricted by the period of the semester which was eight weeks only.

In spite of the limitations above, there are some benefits of the results. Faculty staff may be benefit from the results by identifying the goals of their students and the factors that affect them. The results send a message to faculty staff to not expose their students to failure experiences, because they may acquire them helplessness, they must encourage them to get them to high level of achievement. Students also may benefit from the results by adopting identifying the properties of the mastery goals, they knew the relation between the goal orientations and learned helplessness, and they knew that exposing to failure experiences may drive them to adopt performance goals.

Researchers may find more findings if they study other variables such as gender differences, task difficulty level, and so on.

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Opinion Page

ARE UNIVERSITIES TEACHING WHAT THEY SHOULD BE TEACHING? ARE WE TEACHING THE RIGHT THING?

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The *Opinion Page* in the last issue of JIRSEA discussed how we, particularly those in Malaysia where I am teaching now, should be teaching right. Hence I discussed at some length the importance of *Quality* to be part of the university teachers' toolkit.

In this edition, as a sort of continuation of the approach to university teaching, I ask the question whether we are teaching the right thing.

Teaching things right, in my opinion should always be accompanied by the question, **are we teaching the right things?**

We know the consequences of not teaching the right things, don't we? It is obviously a waste of valuable resources, at a time when staying put means being left behind and as Bill Gates once said things are moving nowadays at the speed of thought. I am sure we are aware that the steam engine took 100 years to develop for industrial use, and we should know that technology in general, computer, internet technology in particular had exploded in front of our eyes in a matter of years and continues to *run wild*. These are thousands of times more pervasive than the steam engine as well.

The technology explosion also knows no boundary. Various innovations and creations are springing up from countries and causes which one never thought about before. The commercial and technological explosions in China are only a few years old and yet they

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had produced the biggest number of successes, however one wants to measure them. Number of billionaires, size of companies compared with established ones in developed countries, number of patents, copyrights and the like. In addition, for one reason or another, we begin to hear about various innovations from under-developed or developing countries brought about by their use of technology. The explosions of technologies in the two Chinas and the innovations arising therefrom have led the world in some areas. Even countries like Uganda has produced entrepreneurs who have used technology in their ascent and to some extent even produced newer technology as a result.

Sudhir Ruperelia is an example of somebody doomed to fail who not only turned his fortune around but in the process gave tremendous opportunities to others in Uganda. He sets up and owns the biggest university in Uganda, the Victoria University whose education philosophy is to encourage the kids to think on their own. What a great philosophy of somebody who owns a bank with over 45 branches, several other banks, several resorts, hotels and is building hundreds of apartments and I guess many other businesses that I am not aware of.

I met an 81 year old Professor from Indonesia in Dili who dedicated his life to improving lives in Timor Leste, a case of a person from a developing country helping many in a less developing country. He sought funding from developed countries and directed them to Timor Leste's farmers. He helps one of Timor Leste's universities train their staff (Academic and Administrative) at his university in Bandung, Indonesia, improved the library system (obviously using technology) and started research projects there.

People thought you need a lot of money to do all these. Yet Sudhir came back to his native Uganda with only a few hundred Pounds after being kicked out by the Idi Amin government when all Asians were pushed out of the country.

Prof Ramdhon Bermanakusumah had passed his retirement by 25 years and yet still active helping those in need by introducing technology to a people who were tainted with wars, with Indonesia as well as civil wars.

China as a country has been helping many African countries in many ways and recently made various agreements with Cuba and other South American countries.

So what are we seeing here in terms of our education and higher education syllabi? It is my contention that even in Engineering its syllabi need to change, the more innovative, the more radical the better. Malaysia's graduates are having lots of problems getting jobs and the government had devised a number of post-graduation training for graduates to make them more 'saleable' to employers. Already some recruiting agencies declared that they will not consider Malaysia's graduates. If that is not an indictment of the Malaysian higher education I don't know what is. And yet many of these problems could have been addressed with minor tweaking of the syllabi at the universities if a proper and major series of changes are not desired at this stage.

Having observed higher education for many years in at least five countries and the last decade in Malaysia, I am more than convinced that the syllabi of all programs in many countries including Malaysia must change if it wants to keep up with the rest of the world. I hazard a calculated guess that the real problem in Malaysia and perhaps also in other Southeast Asian countries, but I stand corrected in regards of the other Southeast Asian countries, that the willingness and readiness to be innovative and creative in higher education in this case in particular is just not there. This willingness and readiness to change had been demonstrated in education as well as in other professions to be a critical instigator for changes that count. We must not forget of course that changes in attitudes will not only change education but many other things related and unrelated to education but critical to the development of people and nations and thus the world. The indictment mentioned earlier means that no Malaysia's graduates will ever be recognized as anything in the world as they are not able to even think critically while people in Uganda poorer as they might be compared to Malaysians at the moment, have got the right steps of getting their kids and students to be able to think critically on their own, as mentioned by Sudhir Ruperelia owner of many things in Uganda but also of its biggest university, Victoria University, there. Sudhir said in an interview that he doesn't really plan other than to be able to see and exploit opportunities to the full. Isn't this one skill we should be instilling in our students for their sakes and for the world's?

I have already outlined in a previous *Opinion Page* that graduates requirements by employers world-wide are *critical thinking, communication skills, collaborative skills, creativity, self-direction* and *global competence*. Which parts of these are not clear to those responsible for universities' programs, curricula and syllabi?