



AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DIFFERENCE OF ATTRIBUTIONAL STYLES AND SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT STUDY FIELDS IN ANAR COUNTY

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Abstract:

Introduction: This study evaluates the difference of attributional styles and social acceptance; both components have significant impacts on the mental status of individuals, between high school students of different fields with respect to gender dimensions.

Method: This research is a survey-correlation study. The study sample consists of 225 high school students of humanities, experimental science, and physics-mathematics fields. Data was collected through Nowicki-Strickland questionnaire which is used to derive the locus of control. However, Marlowe-Crowne questionnaire was used to gain the social acceptance score of participants.

Findings: In both girls and boys groups, the highest score of social acceptance and locus of control (external) with the highest average belongs to the literature students. Conversely, in both groups the lowest average belongs to mathematic students.

Conclusion: The social acceptance of the high school students of different fields as well as that of girls and boys is different. The difference of the locus of control between different study fields is significant. However, different values were derived for the locus of control of boys and girls. This indicates that some factors affect the distribution of girls and boys across different study fields as well as the differences of girls and boys.

KEYWORDS:

attributional styles (internal-external), social acceptance, study field.

INTRODUCTION

Uncontrollable environmental factors play a role in the generation of mental pressures on an individual. This situation may put him/her to an emotional and feeble state and causes him/her to have no control on environment which results in the generation of stress and the elimination of necessary objective and motivation for progressing works. Inability in controlling environmental factors not only causes a person to feel distress and debility but also development of this situation will prepare the bed of psychosomatic reactions and emergence of neurotic behaviors [1]. Motivation is the driving engine of a person's behavior. Appropriate motivation and correct education styles are from the most important tools which play significant role in the flowering of the talents of students and forming the future life of this group of society. The direct influence of today's students on the future of a country highlights the role of education programs which should be founded on the recognition of more prominent individuals as well as scheduling and making decisions on this basis. Therefore, attempts should be done to make a succulent stressless

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atmosphere and to motivate students for educational achievements in order to avoid the waste of a country's capital and to have a bright future. Education wastage as well as no progress of the students of a society is considered as one of the important scourges, which annually bolts down enormous amounts of money [2]. Although the social-economical chaotic condition of families and the impacts of political problems have their special place in this matter, psychological and educational factors however, could not be neglected. Personal differences are from the effective factors in motivation [3]. It could be referred to attributional styles and social acceptance of individuals. The tendency of people to attribute their behaviors to internal or external causes is called the attributional style [4]. The theory of attribution is an attempt to introduce the cause or reason of the occurrence of events or the personal experiences of individuals. Winer found that attributions could be categorized within general templates and people tend to attribute their successes and losses to four factors: ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. These attributions could be again categorized in three aspects: a) locus of control (internal-external), b) stability (stable-instable) and c) controllability (controllable, uncontrollable). Attributions are of higher importance in education and evaluation processes because their locus of control determines the sense of taking pride and self-esteem in a positive experience and stability results in a good performance. Conversely, in the students who attribute their failed examination results to internal attributions, this decreases their glorying sense and causes them to feel shame. In its extreme state, the internal attributions in negative events result in the distress of the learnt. This means the appearance of the sense that more efforts would not essentially result in success and they are waste efforts [6]. This situation can create stress and shame and can decrease self-esteem. Since education and learning is a stressful experience [7], the learners' inability in learning arises from styles which are correlated to depression, task performance, person's health [8]. Certainly, the reasons for behaviour are different. Parts of the reasons are attributed to personal or internal factors and parts are attributed to external ones. Some are popular and general and some are special and exclusive [9].

Regardless of its intensity, the increasing rate of public health disorders among the students of developed countries is considered as one of the important reasons of education failure and quitting school problems [10]. Also, the styles for coping with stress, i.e. the process by which individuals control the problems produced from stress and negative emotions has assigned an important place to itself [11]. Therefore, the attributional styles of students like optimism (12), imagination of success (13) and previous performance (14) affect their learning. Basically, metacognition learning strategies promote educational self-efficacy and are recognized by internal attributions as well as more educational efforts, while cognition learning strategies are associated with external attributions, uncontrollable causes of success, less educational efforts, and less self-efficacy. Those Attribution styles in educational achievements which are generally based on students' personal efforts will result in more self-esteem, more efforts, higher levels of self-efficacy and deeper learning. The most recent findings of Pal et al. show that attributions, cognitions and problem-oriented coping styles, and positive psychological results related to occupation and negative attributions, are associated with emotion-oriented coping strategies and negative psychological results [12].

On the other hand, social acceptance is one of the personal characteristics and attributes which could have significant influence on the mental status of individual. In schools and classrooms, there are students who are selected by their peers for activities like playing, studying, speaking, and other common activities. In opposite, there are students who are secluded and the peers show no tendency to select them for doing common activities [15]. Rejection by peers may result in depression (16), lower educational performance and refrain from going to school (17), and other educational problems (18). Such negative widespread impacts have caused researchers to focus on social acceptance related factors.

Since motivation and avoidance of stressful factors are from important factors in educational environments and regarding the fact that recognition of effective components prepares suitable condition for educating creative and literate people, especially in today's social condition, therefore, the main object of this study is to evaluate the parameters affecting the level of self-esteem and motivation and to study the relation between public health and attributional styles and students' social acceptance in terms of their gender in order to find the difference between girls and boys students and if the difference is significance to try to explore the reasons.

METHOD

The research method is a kind of survey which compares the attributional styles and social acceptance of three groups of high school girls and boys students of physics-mathematics, experimental, and humanities fields. This study evaluates the attributional styles and social acceptance of students as the variables of the study.

Nowiki-Streakland questionnaire was used to derive the score of the locus of control (internal-

external) of under evaluation participants in which higher score indicates locus of control with external orientation and lower score implies on locus of control with internal orientation (19).

To derive the social acceptance score of participants, the famous questionnaires of Marlowe-Crowne was used. The scores yielded from responses to this questionnaire, indicate the tendency of responders to social acceptance and are considered as their social acceptance capacity. Scores between 0 to 8, 9 to 19, and 20 to 33 indicate lower, moderate, and higher social acceptance, respectively [19].

FINDINGS

The final results consist of the results of t-test conducted in independent groups for comparing the mean value of groups and variance analysis conducted for variable interactions effects. Decisions were made about the examination of hypotheses. The statistical population of this study consisted of high school students of Anar county in 2011-2012 academic year. Sample size was calculated 225 students using Cochran formula. Among 225 students who participated in this research, 132 students were girl and 93 students were boy. The educational structure of them was as follows: 56 girls and 39 boys in literature field, 50 girls and 35 boys in experimental field, and 26 girls and 19 boys in physics-mathematics field.

The maximum average of social acceptance in boys group belongs to the literature field with a magnitude of 39.4, and in girls group it again belongs to the literature field with a magnitude of 45.7. On the other hand, the minimum average in boys group belongs to the mathematics field with a magnitude of 23.3 and in girls group it belongs again to the mathematics group with a magnitude of 26.4. The maximum average of the locus of control in boys group belongs to the literature field with a magnitude of 14.4 and in girls group it again belongs to the literature field with a magnitude of 20.07 while the minimum average in both groups belongs to the mathematics field (see table 1).

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of social acceptance and locus of control scores

Sample group	Study field	Scores of social acceptance		Scores of the locus of control		No.
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	
Girls	Literature	45.7	5.7	14.4	5.25	93
	Experimental	41.6	4.5	10.2	6.3	
	Mathematics	26.4	3.6	6.6	3.7	
Boys	Literature	39.4	4.4	20.07	3.9	132
	Experimental	35.2	4.7	12.3	5.4	
	Mathematics	23.3	4.1	6.4	3.2	
Total	Literature	48.00	4.7	17.2	4.2	225
	Experimental	39.3	3.4	11.2	5.6	
	Mathematics	24.8	3.9	6.5	3.4	

Two-ways variance analysis was used to compare the level of social acceptance of girls and boys students of different fields. Thus, at first the Levene's test was computed to investigate the hypothesis of variances homogeneity and then the two-ways variance analysis was used to evaluate the main interactions.

The main impact of study field with a magnitude of 5.41 in 95% confidence level as well as the main impacts of gender with a magnitude of 7.62 is significant ($P < 0.01$). Meanwhile, the interaction impact of both variables with the statistics value of 10.24 is significant as well.

Table 2: Results of two-ways variance analysis to investigate the main impacts of sex and study field on social acceptance

Change source	Social acceptance					Locus of control				
	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	F.	Sig.	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean of square	F.	Sig.
Study field	74824.8	2	37412.4	5.41	)P>0.05(	13786.8	2	6893.4	18.9	)P>0.01(
Sex	20739.2	1	736556.7	7.62	)P>0.01(	3178.04	1	3187.04	8.74	)P>0.01(
Study field*sex	84508.2	2	59765.76	10.24	)P>0.01(	2177.9	2	1086.9	2.98	)P>0.05(
Error	2212033.5	219	5836.5			138232.6	219	364.73		
Total	2392105.7	224				157375.41	224			

According to the obtained results, the main impact of the study field with a magnitude of 18.91 is significant ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, it could be said that the value of the locus of control which is different between the students of different fields is significant ($P < 0.01$), with respect to the obtained value (8.74) which implies that the difference of the locus of control between boys and girls is significant. Also, the interaction impact of both variables with the statistics magnitude of 2.98 is significant (see table 2).

Table 3: post hoc (LSD) test for comparing social acceptance and the locus of control of groups in different study fields

Group		Social acceptance		Locus of control	
		Difference average	Sig.	Difference average	Sig.
Literature	Experimental	9.00	P<0.01	6.00	P<0.05
	Mathematics	24.00	P<0.01	10.7	P<0.01
Experimental	Mathematics	14.5	P<0.01	5.7	P<0.01

The results reveal that literature students have higher social acceptance compared with both experimental and mathematics students. Also, there is a significant difference between the social acceptance of mathematics students and experimental students. According to the results shown in table 3, literature students have higher locus of control (more external) compared with both experimental and mathematics students. Also, experimental students have higher (more external) locus of control compared with mathematics students (see table 3).

Table 4: post hoc (LSD) test for precise comparison of social acceptance of groups in terms of sex and study field

Group		Social acceptance		Locus of control	
		Difference average	Sig.	Difference average	Sig.
Literature boy students	Math/boy	16.1	0.01	7.8	0.01
	Math/exp	4.2	0.05	2.2	0.08
	Exp/girl	-2.2	0.08	½	0.06
	Math/girl	3.00	0.05	-8.00	0.01
	Lit/girl	-6.3	0.05	-5.6	0.05
Experimental boy students	Math/boy	11.9	0.01	3.6	0.05
	Exp/girl	-6.4	0.05	-2.1	0.06
	Math/girl	7.8	0.01	3.8	0.05
	Lit/girl	-10.5	0.01	-9.8	0.01
Mathematics boy students	Exp/girl	-18.3	0.01	-6.7	0.01
	Math/girl	-2.1	0.06	0.2	0.42
	Lit/girl	-22.4	0.01	-14.00	0.01
Literature girl students	Exp/girl	-4.1	0.05	7.8	0.01
	Math/girl	-18.7	0.01	13.1	0.01
Experimental girl students	Math/girl	15.2	0.01	5.9	0.05

According to the results of post hoc (LSD) test, literature boy students have higher social acceptance compared with all other groups except experimental and literature girl students. The social acceptance of experimental boy students is higher than that of mathematics girl students. Also, in 99% confidence, the social acceptance of literature girl students is lower than experimental girl students. In 99% confidence, the social acceptance of mathematics boy students differs from those of both experimental and literature girl students, while the social acceptance of literature girl students differs from those of both experimental and mathematics girl students.

According to post hoc (LSD) test results, literature boy students have higher locus of control compared with all other groups except experimental boy and girl students. The locus of control of experimental boy students is higher than that of mathematics girl students and in 99% confidence is lower than that of literature girl students. Also, in 99% confidence the locus of control of mathematics boy students differs from those of literature and experimental girl students while the locus of control of literature girl students differs from the social acceptance of mathematics and experimental girl students (see table 4).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study revealed that:

1- The difference of social acceptance between different study fields is significant. Interaction impact of sex and study field on social acceptance is significant. Literature students have higher social acceptance compared with mathematics and experimental students. Also, the social acceptance of experimental students has significant difference from that of mathematics students.

Landshere et al. (21) emphasize on the independency of social and educational competence. According to their research, social relation, conformity and educational achievement have relation with each other. Although the above researchers reported no difference between girls and boys, the current research however, indicates a difference. It seems that the reason of this mismatch is the differences of the

under evaluation population and culture. Lease and Kennedy (22), know social growth as a result of the social acceptance by others which agrees with the results of this study. Asher and Coie (23) believe that study fields play significant role in family and society which agrees with the results of this study. Bukowski and MCillessen (24) studied 6 decades of social relations of teenagers. The research revealed that social factors and educational achievements are effective in the identity formation as well as the growth of teenagers. Samari et al. (25) and Bakhshipour et al. (26) studies emphasize the importance of social factors. Human as a social-based entity needs to make relations with others. Social acceptance and attaching great importance to others is very important especially for girls. Bukowski and MCillessen (24) revealed that social factors and educational achievements are effective in the identity formation as well as the growth of teenagers. All mentioned results are in concordance with the results of this study. This study showed that social factors are very important and there are some differences between males and females.

2- The value of the locus of control is different between boy and girl students regarding the main impact of gender. The impact of gender on study field has an interaction impact on the locus of control as well. The interaction impact of gender and study field on the locus of control is significant. Literature boy students have higher locus of control compared with all other groups except experimental boy and girl students. The locus of control of experimental boy students is higher than that of mathematic girl students and lower than that of literature girl students. Also, the locus of control of mathematics boy students differs from those of both experimental and literature girl students. The locus of control of literature girl students differs from the social acceptance of experimental and mathematics girl students. Literature students have higher (more external) locus of control compared with mathematics and experimental students. Also, experimental students have more external locus of control than mathematics students.

The research of Shahraray (3) reported a positive and significant relation between motivation and educational progress in both genders. No relation was reported between attributional styles and educational progress for good and bad events in their internal-external, general-exclusive, and stable-unstable dimensions. In good events, in their internal-external, general-exclusive and stable-unstable dimensions, it was seen a significant and positive relation while in bad events, in their internal-external, general-exclusive, and stable-unstable dimensions, it was seen a significant and negative relation. However, no relation was seen between progress motivation and attributional styles for bad events in their stable-unstable and general-exclusive dimensions. This study showed no difference between two genders. The differences of sample population and study tools may justify the difference. The study of Gama et al. (27) revealed that successful students have internal, stable, and controllable attributional patterns and unsuccessful students have internal, stable, and uncontrollable patterns. This agrees with the results of the present study. According to Motamedi and Afrooz (28) study, it could be argued that there is a relation between attribution, as a matter related to social and cultural issues, and gender. They found that compared with men, women experience more emotional feelings. After each achievement they become happier but the failure sense is more dominant in women compared with men. Causative attributions of men are similar to those who have higher levels of self-confidence. Conversely, in women they are similar to individuals with lower levels of self-confidence. The current study however, confirmed the difference of boys and girls. Mchugh, Frieze and Hanusa (29) found that there are no attributional differences between boys and girls while progress motivation is different between boys and girls. The root cause of this difference could be attributed to the roles of local variables in attributions. On the other hand, cultural differences play significant role in this matter. Noori Ghasemabadi (30) studied boy students and showed that unsuccessful people experience more depression following each educational failure. He also showed that in negative events internal, general, and stable attributional styles have relation with depression.

Other studies have considered the role of sex differences. For example, it could be referred to Birenbaum and Karamer (31) study where it has been reported that in foreign languages which are traditionally considered as women scope, there are no sex differences in attributions. In other words, they concluded that the sex differences of attributions are related to lesson subjects. The current study showed the differences between study fields and sex.

The results of this study indicate significant differences between high school students of different fields and it is recommended to seek the root causes in the vision of family, society and educational organizations on the place of different study fields in current society. Family, school, society and the ministry of education are the main sources forming different attributes of students like attributional styles and social acceptance. First of all, the vision of current society should be improved and modified through implementing a correct education program.

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