A Study of Motivational Beliefs Among Distance Learners

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Abstract: In the fast paced world and age of information and knowledge there is an increasing demand of the institutions imparting higher education either through traditional mode or through distant mode.. It is very important for these institutions to understand the need of the adult learners. In higher education, learning can only be partially understood if the motivational beliefs of the students are not taken into account. There is thus a need to explore students' learning in the context of motivation for learning. In higher education there is need to concentrate on the motivational beliefs of learners as they have to cope with the enormity of information available to them and they can keep pace themselves with the fast changing world only when they possess high beliefs of their capabilities and efficacies. This paper will be of use for those who want to pursue research in distance education as well as for students, teacher educators and administrative bodies to understand the importance of motivation in learning and achievement.

Introduction

Learning at university level has become more complex with the changing face of higher education. In higher education various factors affect student learning which includes age, gender, previous experience, motivation, teaching- learning activities, course content, facilities and social environment. Distance education is an alternative method of course delivery in many universities and colleges to expand the access to higher education at national and international level. Through distance education individuals are able to improve their social, economic as well as educational attainment level. In distance education learning takes places in separation of teacher and student through the use of print materials, mechanical and electronic media and occasional instructions between teacher (instructor) and student. The underlying principle of teaching-learning process is purely psychological which deals with learning and motivation (Pintrich and Shunk, 2002). Motivation is the most important components of learning in any educational environment (Maehr, 1984).

The review of the related studies revealed that students' learning and performance depends upon motivational beliefs. Students of distance education possess higher level of extrinsic motivation(Singh, 1997; Yellen, 1998). The students in Distance Education, put more value in their perceptions of the course materials in terms of interest, importance and utility; they motivated by the tasks rather than the goal; they consider outcomes as more dependent on efforts and self-efficacy rather than external factors (Bonito and Ramos, 2011). Motivation plays an important role in improving the quality of distance education (Latha, 1994). So keeping in view the importance of motivational beliefs in higher education especially in distance education and

the dearth of studies in this area of research at undergraduate level in Punjab, the researcher has undertaken the research problem entitled:

"Motivational Beliefs Among Distance Learners at University Level"

Importance of the study

In higher education especially in distance education learning can only be partially understood if the motivational beliefs of the students are not taken into account. In the last two decades the concept of motivational beliefs have emerged as a central and key variable for teaching- learning process. This concept has been researched in conjunction with many other variables at different stages of education especially in higher education (Kaur, 2013; Negi, 2010). In higher education there is need to concentrate on the motivational beliefs of learners as they have to cope with the enormity of information available to them and they can keep pace themselves with the fast changing world only when they possess high beliefs of their capabilities and efficacies.

The findings of this study will provide an empirical database to gauge motivational beliefs of undergraduate distance learners and will be useful for the educational administrators, teachers and policy makers to cater to the needs of distance learners and to improve the existing curriculum transaction in higher education.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are –

1. To study motivational beliefs namely intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety among undergraduate distance learners.
2. To study motivational beliefs (namely intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety) in relation to gender among undergraduate distance learners.

Delimitation of Study

The study was delimited to the students studying in B.A-III (undergraduate class) through the Department of Distance Education, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in motivational belief namely intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation , task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety among distance learners at undergraduate level.
2. There will be no significant difference in motivational belief namely intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation , task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy

for learning and performance and test anxiety in relation to gender among distance learners at undergraduate level.

Methodology

The purpose of present study was to look into motivational beliefs among distance learners in relation to gender. For this purpose descriptive method of research was followed.

Sample

The universe of the study was students studying in B.A-III in the Department of Distance Education, Punjabi university campus, Patiala. A sample of 54 students was obtained for the present study. The sampling distribution of students is shown in following table:

Table 1.1
Distribution of Sample

Sr. no.	Male	Female	Total
1.	37	17	54

Research Tool: Motivational Strategies For Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)

Motivational Strategies For Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was used to measure the motivational beliefs of the distance learners.

Analysis And Interpretation

The t-test was applied to find out the differences in motivational beliefs of male and female groups separately for intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety.

Table 1.2

Distribution of Scores of Motivational Belief along with different components (N= 54)

C.I	IGO f	P	EGO F	P	TV F	p	CLB f	p	SE F	P	TA F	P
5.8 – 7	34	62.96	34	62.96	28	51.85	30	55.56	22	40.74	1	1.85
4.2 - 5.7	17	31.5	13	24.07	21	38.9	21	38.9	28	51.85	12	22.22
3.6 - 4.1	2	3.70	1	1.85	4	7.41	2	3.70	4	7.41	8	14.81
2.3 - 3.5	1	1.85	3	5.56	1	1.85	1	1.85	0	0	21	38.9
1-2.2	0	0	3	5.56	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	22.22
Total	54	100	54	100	54	100	54	100	54	100	54	100
MEAN	5.78		5.54		5.54		5.56		5.44		3.11	
MEDIAN	6		6		5.83		5.75		5.5		2.8	
MODE	6		6.25		6		5.75		5.375		2.6	

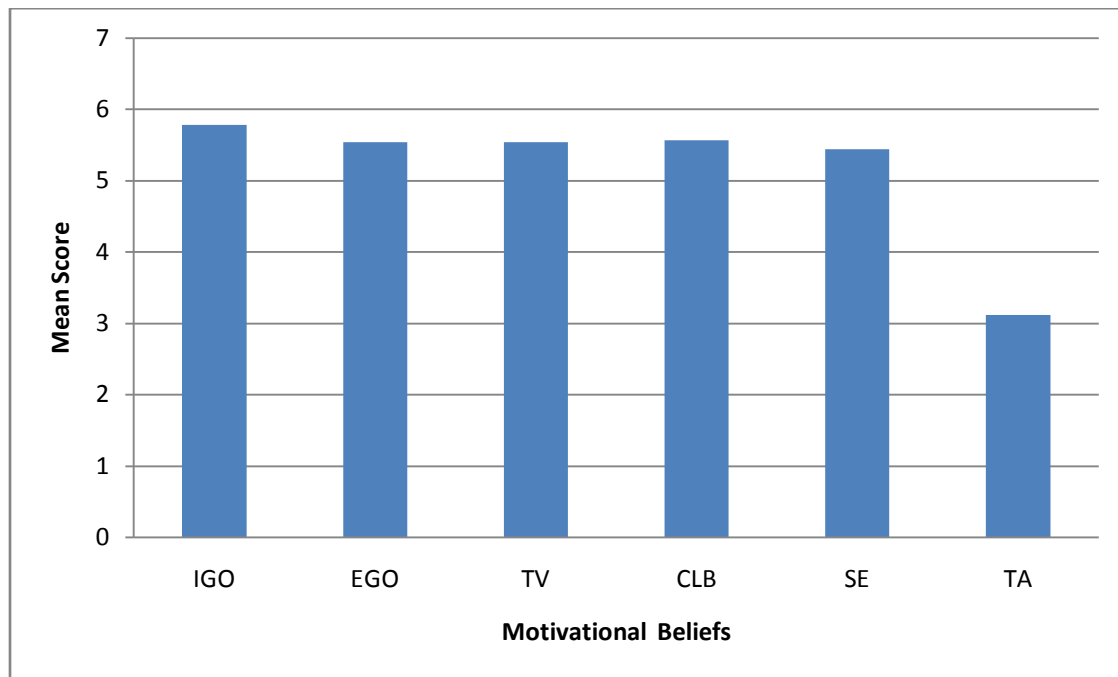| STD DV. | 0.795 | 1.35 | 0.77 | 0.896 | 0.719 | 1.245 |
| SKEWNS | -1.123 | -1.349 | -0.979 | -0.407 | -0.576 | 0.56 |

Figure 1.1 Distribution of mean scores of motivational beliefs components

Table 1.2 reveals that all the components of motivational belief namely intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation , task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety of all, the students differ significantly from one another.

The statistical data of table 1.2 shows that 34 students with percentage (62.96%) lie in the class interval in which IGO mean (5.78) falls, 34 students with percentage (62.96%) distance learners lie above the class interval in which EGO mean (5.54) falls,   28 students with percentage (51.85%) distance learners lie above the class interval in which TV mean (5.54) falls,30 students with percentage (55.56%) distance learners lie above the class interval in which CLB mean (5.56) falls, 22 students with percentage (40.74%) distance learners lie above the class interval in which SE mean (5.44) falls, 21 students with percentage (38.88%) distance learners lie above the class interval in which TA mean (3.11) falls.

As shown in the Figure 1.1 from the mean score values it is concluded that the test anxiety (3.11) among distance learners is less as compared to other motivational beliefs parameters. It further reveals that Intrinsic Goal Orientation (5.78) is the major factor by which the B.A –III distance learners differ from each others.

Table 1.2 reveals that the mean score of distance learners in motivational belief Intrinsic Goal Orientation (IGO) is 5.78 with median 6.0 and mode 6.0, it also shows that scores lie nearly in normal distribution. Table 1.2 further reveals that 34 students with percentage (62.96%) lie in the class interval in which IGO mean (5.78) falls and 20 students with percentage (47.05%) lie in the class interval of 1 to 5.7 that lie below the class interval in which mean falls. -1.12 Skewness of the frequency distribution means that there are many students in a group with their scores higher than the average score of the group.

The mean score of distance learners in motivational belief Extrinsic Goal Orientation (EGO) is 5.54 with median and mode 6.0 and 6.25 respectively showing that scores lie nearly in normal distribution. The statistical data from table 1.2 further reveals that 34 students with percentage (62.96%) lie above the class interval in which EGO mean (5.54) falls, 13 students with percentage (24.07%) lie in the class interval of 4.2 to 5.7 in which mean falls and 7 students with percentage (12.97%) lie in the class interval of 1 to 4.1 that lie below the class interval in which mean falls. Skewness of the frequency distribution comes out to -1.35 means there are many students in a group having their scores higher than the average score of the group.

The statistical data of table 1.2 shows that the mean score of distance learners in Task Value (TV) motivational belief is 5.54 with median 5.833 and mode 6.0, it shows that scores lie nearly in normal distribution. 28 students with percentage (51.85%) lie above the class interval in which TV mean (5.54) falls, 21 students with percentage (38.9%) lie in the class interval of 4.2 to 5.7 in which mean falls and 5 students with percentage (9.26%) lie in the class interval of 1 to 4.1 that lie below the class interval in which mean falls. Skewness of the frequency distribution comes out to -.98 means there are many students in a group with their scores higher than the average score of the group.

The mean score of distance learners in Control of Learning Beliefs(CLB) motivational belief is 5.56 with median and mode 5.75 and 5.75 respectively showing that the scores lie nearly in normal distribution. Table 1.2 shows that 30 students with percentage (55.56%) lie above the class interval in which CLB mean (5.56) falls 21 students with percentage (38.9%) lie in the class interval of 4.2 to 5.7 in which mean falls and 3 students with percentage (5.55%) lie in the class interval of 1 to 4.1 that lie below the class interval in which mean falls. It further informs

that skewness of the frequency distribution with value -.41 shows that there are many students in a group with their scores higher than the average score of the group.

The table 1.2 further reveals that the mean score of distance learners in motivational belief self efficacy (SE) is 5.44 with median and mode 5.5 and 5.375 respectively, it shows that scores lie nearly in normal distribution, 22 students with percentage (40.74%) lie above the class interval in which SE mean (5.44) falls, 28 students with percentage (51.85%) lie in the class interval of 4.2 to 5.7 in which mean falls and 4 students with percentage (7.41%) lie in the class interval of 1 to 4.1 that lie below the class interval in which mean falls. Skewness of the frequency distribution comes out to -0.58 means there are many students in a group with their scores higher than the average score of the group.

The statistical data of table 1.2 shows that the mean score of distance learners in motivational belief Test Anxiety (TA) is 3.11 with median and mode 2.8 and 2.6 respectively, it shows that scores lie nearly in normal distribution and 21 students with percentage (38.9%) lie above the class interval in which TA mean (3.11) falls, 21 students with percentage (38.9%) lie in the class interval of 2.3 to 3.5 in which mean falls and 12 students with percentage (22.22%) lie in the class interval of 1 to 2.2 that lie below the class interval in which mean falls. Skewness of the frequency distribution comes out to .56 means it is nearly normal distribution of scores.

Motivational Beliefs of Distance Learners in relation to Gender

The means and SDs of male students and female students on different motivational beliefs, namely intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation , task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety is as follows:

Table 1.3
Means and SDs on Motivational Beliefs In Relation To Gender

Motivational beliefs	Males N= 37		Females N =17	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	5.74	.865	5.85	.632
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	5.43	1.44	5.765	1.15
Task Value	5.47	.863	5.7	.521
Control of Learning Beliefs	5.55	.92	5.57	.878
Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	5.4	.74	5.54	.68
Test Anxiety	3.26	1.23	2.765	1.24

Table 1.4
The t-values Testing Significance Of Mean Differences On Motivational Beliefs In Relation   To Gender

Motivational beliefs	t- values
Intrinsic Goal Orientation	.470
Extrinsic Goal Orientation	.831
Control of Learning Beliefs	1.00
Task Value	.0868
Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	.687
Test Anxiety	1.385

The above two tables shows the means, SD and t-values of university undergraduate distance learners in relation to gender. The t-values testing the significance of mean difference between males and females on motivational beliefs namely, intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, control of learning beliefs, task values, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety is not significant at .05 level. Hence the hypothesis was accepted on the basis of outcomes of the study.

Conclusions
1. Male and female distance learners do not differ significantly in their intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value and self efficacy for learning and performance motivational beliefs.
2. Male and female distance learners have no difference in task value motivational belief.
3. Male distance learners shows more test anxiety as compared to female distance learners.

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