Amita Kaistha

MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE DISTANCE LEARNERS

Amita Kaistha
Assistant Professor (Education),
Department of Distance Education,
Punjabi University, Patiala, 147002

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed at studying the difference in the motivational beliefs of first year and third year undergraduate distance learners. Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ, Pintrich, et.al. 1991) was used as research tool to measure the motivational beliefs of distance learners doing their graduation through distant mode. A sample of 120 students was randomly selected for the study. The findings of the study showed that first year undergraduate distance learners have significantly higher level of task value, control of learning beliefs and self-efficacy for learning and performance motivational beliefs than third year undergraduate distance learners. In all the six motivational beliefs first year students showed higher mean scores than third year undergraduate students.

INTRODUCTION

After completing secondary education students opt for higher education in an area of their interest. Some got the opportunity to enter into formal education system, but many students because of unavoidable circumstances forced to enter the workplace without completing their educational qualifications. Then to fulfill the dreams of such students distance education owes the responsibility. Distance education is an effective alternative to the formal education. It has immense significance for the emerging learning societies in general and educationally undeveloped and developing societies in particular. Its aim is universalization of education along with life-long education. It is a channel for promoting diversified and education and is a source of inspiration for those who have 'dropped out' of it at some stage or other for one reason or other. It attracts the attention of educationists and researchers as they found it useful in diffusion of education and equalization of educational opportunities. Through distance education individuals are able to improve their social, economic as well as educational attainment level. In distance education the distance learner must have the strong motivation and beliefs about his own capabilities before entering this area of learning as he is deprived of not only usual large infrastructure, the classroom the library, teachers and fellow students and he has to set aside his free time after his working hours to become a student under the system of distance education. Motivation is one of the important element of learning in any educational setting and holds the central position in the educational empire. It promotes initiation of any activity and also confirms the persistence of those activities (Weiner, 1974). Teaching-learning process is instigated by motivation.

Many research studies revealed that students' achievement depends upon motivational beliefs. It was found that motivation plays an important role in improving the quality of distance education (Latha, 1994). Students studying through distance mode possess higher level of extrinsic motivation (Singh, 1997; Yellen, 1998). Simpson (2008) was of the view that for the support of learner motivation is an indispensable component of distance education. Distance learners give more value to the course materials in relation to interest, importance and utility as they get motivated by the tasks rather than the goal and emphasize

Amita Kaistha

the dependence of outcomes on efforts and self-efficacy rather than on external factors (Bonito and Ramos, 2011). Rewarding students only occasionally may optimally motivate them, but it can also be seen that motivation is an enabling factor which increases the performance. The absence of rewards or insufficient rewards obstruct the learning process by stimulating negative achievement goals such as avoiding failure rather than stimulating positive achievement goals i.e. aspiring for success (Covington, 2000). So there is need to give special attention to disturbing impact of lack of motivation on students especially the distance learners.   There has been a tremendous research in the field if motivation (Schunk, 1982, Pintrich and DeGgroot, 1990). 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 undergraduate distance learners"

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Learning is a behavioural change. Motivational factors are the driving force for learning to take place. After completing the schooling the experience of joining an institution of higher education is very important for students as it a transitional phase of their life (Wingate, 2007). Students with different study habits when joins the higher education institution may face many challenges in relation to learning and motivation. For a learner pursuing a course of study through distance mode motivation plays a very important role. In the last two decades the concept of motivational beliefs have emerged as a central and key variable for teaching-learning process. These are the beliefs or the perceptions of the learners about their own capabilities and efficacy to perform a task. These are related to their expectancy value to perform the task, their valuation of the task and the anxiety level while performing the task (Pintrich et al. 1991). This concept has been researched in conjunction with many other variables at different stages of education in India and abroad especially in higher education (Kaur, 2013; Al Khatib, 2010; Negi, 2010). There is need to concentrate on the motivational beliefs of distance learners by keeping into consideration their circumstances, interest and need. As they have to deal with the immensity of information available to them in their spare time as per their convenience but without the support of teacher and peer group. In addition to this they also need to keep themselves in pace with the fast changing world, so this is possible only when they possess high beliefs of their capabilities and efficacies.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present research study is
1. To study motivational beliefs among first year and third year undergraduate distance learners.
2. To study the differences in the level of intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety motivational beliefs constructs between first year and third year undergraduate distance learners.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Amita Kaistha

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

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY
1. There will be no significant difference in motivational beliefs of first year and third year undergraduate distance learners.

METHODOLOGY
Present study was conducted by following descriptive method of research.

RESEARCH TOOL: MOTIVATED STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING QUESTIONNIRE (MSLQ)
Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) developed by Pintrich et.al. 1991 was used as a research tool to measure six 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 distance learners at undergraduate level. This questionnaire consists of two sections (i) motivation section and (ii) learning strategies section. In the present study only motivation section was taken to measure the motivational beliefs of undergraduate distance learners.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY
A sample of 120 students, 60 students pursuing their first year of graduation (B.A.-I) and 60 students pursuing their third year of graduation (B.A-III) was selected from the Department of Distance Education, Punjabi university campus, Patiala.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA
To find out the differences in motivational beliefs of first year and third year undergraduate distance learners groups the t-test was computed separately for each motivational construct viz. intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety.

Table 1.1

Mean values of Motivational Beliefs for First year and Third year undergraduate distance learners

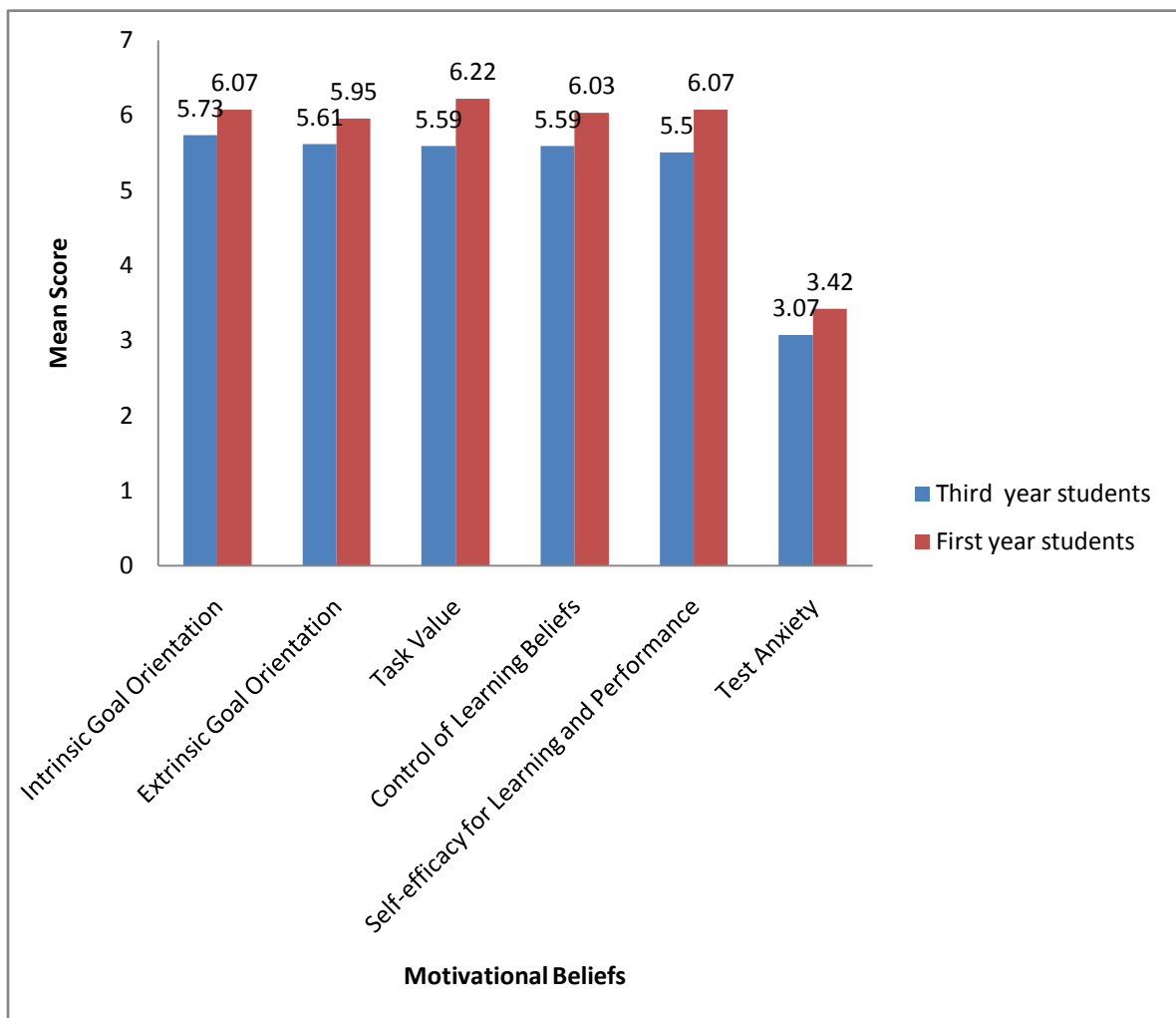| Sr. No.	Motivational beliefs Components	First year students (N= 60)	Third year students (N= 60)
		Mean	Mean
1	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	6.07	5.73
2	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	5.95	5.61
3	Task Value	6.22	5.59
4	Control of Learning Beliefs	6.03	5.59
5	Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	6.07	5.50
6	Test Anxiety	3.42	3.07

Figure 1.1   Distribution of mean scores of motivational beliefs components for first year and third year undergraduate distance learners

Table 1.1 reveals a difference in 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 between students studying in first year and third of graduation.

The table 1.1 further reveals that the distance learners studying in first year of graduation showed higher value of mean score in all the positive components of motivational beliefs. This high score indicates the higher level of motivational beliefs in the first year undergraduate distance learners. In the test anxiety component also first year undergraduate distance learners scored higher than the third year undergraduate distance learners. This reveals the high level of test anxiety among first year undergraduate distance learners as compared to undergraduate distance learners pursuing third year.

Means and Standard Deviation of Motivational Beliefs among first year and third year undergraduate distance learners

Amita Kaistha

The means and SDs of first year and third year undergraduate distance learners on six motivational beliefs components is as follows:

Table 1.2
Means and SDs of motivational beliefs for first year and third year
Undergraduate distance learners

Sr. No.	Motivational beliefs components	First year distance learners N= 60		Third year distance learners N= 60	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	6.07	1.04	5.73	0.85
2	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	5.95	1.18	5.61	1.26
3	Task Value	6.22	1.01	5.59	0.79
4	Control of Learning Beliefs	6.03	1.00	5.59	0.93
5	Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	6.07	1.05	5.50	0.76
6	Test Anxiety	3.42	1.52	3.07	1.11

Table 1.3
The t-values testing significance of mean differences on motivational beliefs
for first year and third year undergraduate distance learners (N= 120)

Sr. No.	Motivational beliefs components	t-values
1	Intrinsic Goal Orientation	1.96
2	Extrinsic Goal Orientation	1.26
3	Task Value	3.84**
4	Control of Learning Beliefs	2.50*
5	Self-Efficacy for Learning and Performance	3.41**
6	Test Anxiety	1.40

*significant at 0.05 level
**significant at 0.01 level

The table 1.2 shows the values of means, SDs of undergraduate first year and third year distance learners. Table 1.3 shows the t-values testing the significance of mean difference between the undergraduate first year and third year distance learners on six components of motivational beliefs. The table 1.3 further shows that t-values for intrinsic goal orientation and extrinsic goal orientation motivational beliefs came out to be 1.96 and 1.26 respectively. These values are non-significant at 0.05 level and further indicates that there is no significant difference in the intrinsic goal orientation and extrinsic goal orientation motivational beliefs of first year and third year undergraduate distance learners. From table 1.2 the values of mean for task value (6.22 Vs 5.59) and for self-efficacy for learning and performance (6.03 Vs 5.59) indicates that undergraduate distance learners studying in first year have significantly high task value and self-efficacy for learning and performance beliefs than undergraduate distance learners studying in third year.

Amita Kaistha

Further, it is clear from table 1.3 that the t- values for task values, and self-efficacy for learning and performance motivational beliefs came out 3.84 and 3.41 respectively. These values are found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. This shows that first year under graduate distance learners differ significantly from third year undergraduate distance learners.

The t-value for control of learning beliefs is found to be 2.50, which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is a significant difference between first year and third year undergraduate distance learners in control of learning belief component of motivational belief. Further, the values of mean from table 1.2 indicates that first year undergraduate distance learners have higher level of control of learning beliefs than third year undergraduate distance learners. The t-value for test anxiety is 1.40, which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance, indicating no significant difference between first year and third year distance learners with respect to test anxiety, but mean values from table 1.2 indicates that first year undergraduate distance learners have higher level of test anxiety than undergraduate distance learners studying in third year. Hence on the basis of the outcomes of the study the hypothesis "There will be no significant difference in motivational beliefs of first year and third year undergraduate distance learners" is partially rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The first year undergraduate distance learners have higher level of intrinsic goal orientation, extrinsic goal orientation, task value, control of learning beliefs, self efficacy for learning and performance and test anxiety motivational beliefs than third year undergraduate distance learners.

2. First year undergraduate distance learners differ significantly from third year undergraduate distance learners in their task value, control of learning beliefs and self efficacy for learning and performance motivational beliefs.

3. The first year undergraduate distance learners showed higher level of test anxiety as compared to third year undergraduate distance learners.

Further it can be concluded that it is very important for the higher education institutions to understand the need of the adult distance learners keeping into consideration their prerequisites, circumstances and opportunities available to them. The findings of the present study will provide an experimental database to measure motivational beliefs of undergraduate first year and third year students pursuing their studies through distance mode. The study will be useful for those who want to pursue research in distance education especially targeting motivational aspect of distance learners. Further, it is also beneficial for students, teacher educators, administrative bodies and curriculum planners to understand the significance of motivation in teaching-learning process of distance education system, so that maximum benefits can be provided to the students pursuing higher studies through distance mode and also to lessen the gap between formal and non-formal education system. It will also be helpful to the instructors to understand the motivational needs of distance learners and make arrangements for them accordingly.

REFERENCES

Al Khatib, S.A. (2010). Meta-cognitive self-regulated learning and motivational beliefs as predictors of college students' performance. *International Journal for Research in Education (IJRE)*, No. 27

Bonito, S.R. and Ramos, R.C. (2011). The motivation strategies for learning of Postgraduate Distance Education students. Paper presented in Open Conference Management System, 24 *ICDE World Conference* 2011.

Covington, M.V. (2000). Goal theory, motivation and school achievement – An integrative review. *Annual Review Psychology*, 51, 171-200.

Kaur, K. (2013). Motivational Beliefs and Learning Strategies as correlates of Achievement in Mathematics among college students of Punjab. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis in Education, Punjabi University, Patiala.

Latha, K.P. (1994). The Role of motivation in Improving the Quality of Distance Education. An article on Distance Education in India: Studies in Quality and Quantitative Aspects. Editor. Manohar K.M. (1994*), Indian Distance Education Association*, SDLCE, Kakatiya University, Warangal.

Negi, S.P. (2010). *Motivation and Learning strategies of Distant learners of Punjabi University; An Empirical study*. Ph.D. Thesis in Education, Punjabi University, Patiala.

 Pintrich, P.R., & DeGroot, E.V. (1990). Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82(1), 33–40.

Pintrich, P.R.,and Schunk, D. H.(2002). *Motivation In Education: Theory, Research And Applications* (2nd ed.)Columbus, OH; Merrill- Pentrich Hall

Pintrich, P.R., Smith, D.A.F., Garcia, T., & McKeachie, W.J. (1991). *A manual for the use of the motivated strategies for learning questionnaire (MSLQ).* The University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Schunk, D.H. (1982). Effects of effort attributional feedback on children's perceived self-efficacy and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 74(4), 548–556.

Simpson, O. (2008). Motivating learners in open and distance learning: do we need a new theory of learner support? *Open learning*, Vol. 23(3), 159-170.

Singh, B. (1997). *A study of temperament, motivational orientation and learning preferences of B.Ed. students of face to face and distance education system in an Indian University.* M.Ed. Dissertation, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla.

Weiner, B. (1974). *Achievement motivation and attribution theory.* Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press

Wingate, U. (2007). A framework for transition: Supporting 'learning to learn' in higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*. 61(3)

Yellen, R.E. (1998). Distance Learning students: A comparison with traditional studies –*Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 26, 215-224.