

ATTRIBUTION AMONG STUDENTS TOWARDS THEIR SUCCESS AND FAILURE AS A LEARNING STIMULUS

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Abstract

This research paper explores the perceived causes of attribution about children's success and failure in their education. The significance of the study strengthens learners to continue their learning process without dissonance. This is an exploratory as well as explanatory research to explore the role of attribution to enhance the learning abilities of students in the classroom through avoidance and repetitive behavior. The researchers have adopted a qualitative method of study. The universe of the present research was Karachi. The respondents were the students of the standard, VIII, and X. The age of subjects was 13-16 years. The sample size of the present research was 150 respondents. In the present study, the researchers have used an Intellectual Achievement, Responsibility Questionnaire (IARQ) developed by Crandall et. al (1965). The IARQ is composed of 34 forced-choice items which describe Carver & White (1994) BIS (I-) /BAS (I+) scales, The BIS (I-) /BAS (I+) scales a positive, BAS (I+) and negative, BIS (I-) achievement experience which routinely occurs in children's lives. The whole scale was applied to maintain the validity of the scale except the filler questions. Scale is depicting 20 items to inquire deeply the behavior of students towards their success and failure as stimuli of learning behavior.

Keywords: *Reinforcement, Rewards, Punishments, Interest Development, Pleasure, Dissonance.*

Introduction

In the present era, effective instruction is a significant component to increase the standard of teaching. In this phenomenon, there are two

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cohorts, one is teachers and other is students. Teachers are getting more training, using modern technology, adopting new methodologies, to provide effective teaching. Government and Non-governmental agencies also making policies, striving to provide modern logistic support, but the results are not prolific. On the other hand, students are also not subservient as past. They are more cognizant about their success and failure in academics. Many social and psychological as well as biological aspects are integral to classroom learning like motivation, reinforcement, reward and punishment, pleasure and brain function. Teacher in the classroom motivates the students on learning during classroom activities through their brain function which develops their interest and pleasure is induced (Leahey & Harris, 2001). Motivation plays a vital role in creating a condition that energizes behavior of students and gives them right direction (Atkinson, 2014). It typically directs behavior towards an incentive that produces pleasure or alleviates a dissonance state (Feldman, 2012). Extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation relates to the outside personality traits of the individual and his built-in characteristics with an activity. It is possible that extrinsic rewards (high marks, parental approbation, helping the class or school, gain a good reputation) may lead to intrinsic motivation. That is, the knowledge gained may become of interest (intrinsic) to the individual, and further knowledge may be pursued after the extrinsic motivators have ceased to exist (Bernard, 1972). It may conclude that the extrinsic rewards work as reinforcement in learning process that is the process by which a stimulus increases the probability that a preceding behavior will be repeated (Feldman, 2012).

Punishment refers as a stimulus that decreases the probability that a prior behavior will occur again. Punishment can weaken a response either through the application of an unpleasant stimulus or by the removal of something pleasant (Feldman, 2012). Students feel deprived them if they got failure in academics hurt their esteem. On

the other hand, rewards which are symbolic like gold stars, medals, or honor rolls in material a piece of candy, a sum of money, or the right to participate in student activities or to hold office, or psychological knowledge of progress, growth toward adequacy has their place in motivating the pupil's potential and works as an intrinsic force. The reward of saying "I can do it" is more important than the symbolic status of a good grade or a certificate of competition (Bernard, 1972). Pleasure is a state or feeling of gratification or satisfaction. The pleasure may be very mild, as the enjoyment of rest after activity (Davidoff, 1987). Children will achieve pleasure from their activities if those activities are designed to satisfy such basic needs as security, accomplishment, and adventure, belonging and physical satisfaction (Baron, 2005).

Attribution is the process through which individuals can explain their cause of success and failure in their academic results from the government and private schools (Robinson et. al, 2013). Punishment and Rewards are correcting the learning stimulus of the students to achieve the desired task through following the right instructions (Izard,1988).

Objectives

- ☉ To explore how attribution (BAS) and (BIS) are motivating the individuals to get success in their academic results.
- ☉ To investigate attribution differences among the students of private sector schools and students of government sector schools.
- ☉ To explore how the teachers are reinforcing the sharpness of learning through behavioral approach in the classroom.
- ☉ To find out the age effect on their attribution regarding their success or failure.

Research Questions

1. How does the age effect on attribution towards learning and gaining success and failure?
2. What is the attribution of students of class VIII from private and government sector schools?
3. What is the attribution of students of class X from private and government sector schools?
4. What is the impact of attribution in facilitating a better standard of education?

Theoretical Background of the Study

Many scholars, researchers, sociologists, and psychologists have taken their research regarding examination of learning abilities through success and failure in academic activities. Many theories have been developed which are depicting different important variables for effective learning, maximize the chances of success and minimize the chances of failure in classroom learning (Gomez et.al., 2002).

Bernard (1992) has presented Intrapersonal and Interpersonal theory of motivation from an attributable perspective in which he expressed that individual's expectations for future success and self-directed passion are related to self-esteem, guilt, humiliation. These self-directed thoughts are the elements of "Intrapersonal motivation." On the other hand, in failure significant other, including, peers, teachers, and parents who arbiter the students as brilliant or dull, responsible or irresponsible, intelligent or poor, and develop compassion or annoyed behavior towards his or her. These others directed thoughts and feelings are elements of "interpersonal motivation." Through this motivation process some behavioral reactions guided by attribution inference that narrows the gap between stimulus or response (Fordham, 1970). This approach is helpful in the self-serving of a

student in classroom study and overall academic performance.

Deci et al. (1999) meta-analyzed 128 studies that documented the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation represented by the free-choice behavior and self-reported interest in the activity or task. They found that the use of extrinsic rewards significantly affected free-choice behavior. There was no significant effect on students' self-reported interest. Thus, when students received extrinsic rewards in exchange for task participation, they were less likely to persist in the task once the reward conditions were removed, although their levels of self-reported interest did not decline. Overall, the authors concluded that the negative effects of tangible rewards were more dramatic for children than they were for college students. The effect of such rewards varied depending on the type of reward and the context in which the reward was given. Such moderators have implications for the types of rewards that should (or should not) be used in schools, as well as the instructional contexts in which they should (or should not) be provided (George & Jones, 2011).

In the present study, BAS (I+) activates in response to positive effect, extraversion, and the processing of pleasant information to regulate the feeling of hope, elation and happiness which motivates the goal-oriented task and learning stimulus. BAS (I+) includes the three subscales:

1. **Drive:** (concerning the persistent pursuit of desired goals)
2. **Fun Seeking:** (Focusing on the desire for new rewards and willingness to approach)
3. **Reward Responsiveness:** (concerning positive responses for anticipation of rewards) Individuals with higher BAS (I+) sensitivity are more attentive to seek reward in the environment with the feeling of excitement and motivation to pursue the reward, activating behavior to take the necessary steps in obtaining it. When a reward is obtained, individuals with high

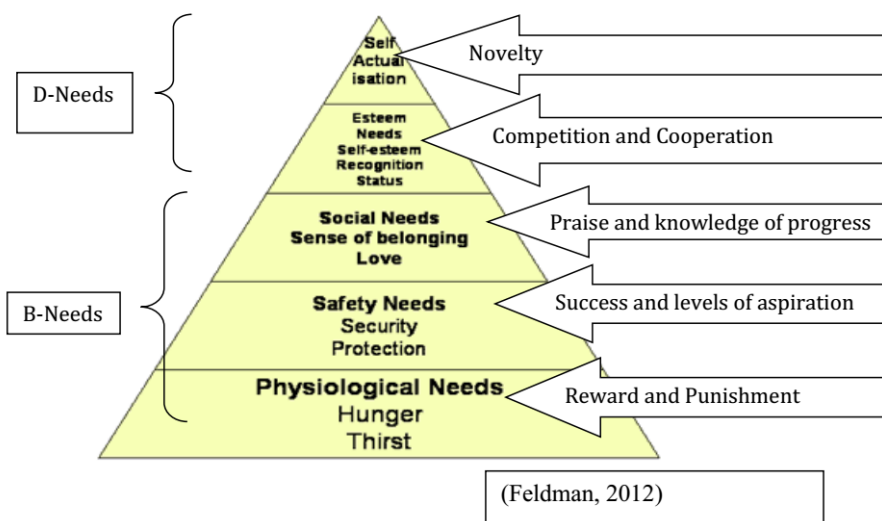
BAS (I+) may experience more positive feelings and the individuals with lower BAS (I+) sensitivity may experience less desire and motivation towards obtaining rewards and learning stimulus with lower positive affect (Gray, 1994).

In the present study, BIS (I-) activates in response to novelty, threat, punishment and non-rewards that regulates aversive motivation by inhibiting ongoing behavior that may lead to negative and painful outcomes which results in dissonance.

Well-balanced BIS (I-) and BAS (I+) results in adaptive behavior, with decisions and actions appropriately guided by the cues of the environment along with improving their behaviours for learning with rewards and punishment which gives the students a direction to choose the desired field in their future (Carver & White, 1994).

Theoretically, if an individual's needs are fulfilled, he would have reached at a state of homeostasis. According to Maslow's model, motivational needs are placed in hierarchy and suggest that before more sophisticated and higher-order needs can be met, certain primary needs (intrinsic) must be satisfied, as soon as current wants are satisfied, a new order of wants to emerge (Feldman, 2012). Similarly, children will achieve pleasure from their school activities if those activities are designed to satisfy such basic needs as security, accomplishment and adventure, belonging and physical satisfaction (Bernard, 1972). Maslow suggests that people need a safe and secure environment to function effectively (Feldman, 2012). The next level that is love and belongingness needs include the need to obtain and give affection. Similarly, teachers provide feedback in touching a child's shoulder, smiling approval, or using such words, as 'Good', 'Fine' etc. Maslow suggests that esteem relates to the need to develop a sense of self-worth by knowing that others know and value one's competence (Feldman, 2012). Similarly, the needs for self-actualization, for approval, for belongingness and safety indicate that cooperation is a strong incentive as a competition. Once these four

sets of needs are fulfilled then a person can strive for the highest-level need self-actualization. It is the state of self-fulfilment in which people realize their highest potentials. Novelty has merit when teacher point out the relationship between the new and the already known uses familiar procedures and himself shows enthusiasm for the expansion of knowledge into innovative ideas (Bernard, 1972).



The theory of cognitive dissonance was first proposed by Festinger (1957) and later refined and elaborated by Brehm in 1976. The elements in the theory are the cognitions that a person may hold at a given time. Between any pair of cognitions, one of the following relations is assumed to exist: consonance (one of the cognitions follows from the other), dissonance (ones' cognition follows from the negation of the other). The dissonance relation is held to be a motivating state of tension, main assumption of theory is that dissonance tends to generate dissonance-reducing behavior. Three methods of reducing dissonance are possible: changing one of the dissonant cognitions, decreasing the perceived importance of the dissonant cognitions, and further (justifying) cognitions, to reinterpret dissonance effects in terms of a self-perception theory

based on radical Skinnerian behaviorism (Myers, 2009).

Methodology

This is an exploratory as well as explanatory research to explore the role of attribution in enhancing the learning abilities of students in the classroom through behavioral approach system BIS (I-) behavioral inhibition or avoidance system BAS (I+). In the present study, the researcher has used an Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (IARQ) developed by Crandall et.al. (1965). The IARQ is composed of 34 forced-choice items which describes Carver & White (1994), The BIS (I-)/BAS (I+) scale. The researchers have adopted qualitative method of study. The duration of filling up the questionnaire was around one month. Data have been analyzed on absolute numbers.

Variables of Attribution

BAS: Students ability and efforts, luck factor

BIS: Teaching method and system.

Sampling

Total population available the above-mentioned schools was 455 students of class VIII and X.

Researchers have interviewed 33% of total respondents from two stratum of the universe (Young, 2008). To find out the effect of age and mind set of students of two different sectors (public and private) to extract attribution pattern for first-rate suggestibility to find out the behavioral problem i.e. resisting improving the standard of education. Simple random sampling method (probability sampling method) was applied because this sampling gives all units of the target population an equal chance to be selected (Sarantakos, 1993). The respondents were the students of the standard VIII, and X. The age of subjects were 13-16 years. The sample size of the present

research was 150 respondents.

Data Table

Items:	Statements	Class VIII				Class X			
		BAS (I+) (I+)	%	BIS (I-) (I-)	%	BAS (I+) (I+)	%	BIS (I-) (I-)	%
1	If you are getting high scores.	35	46.6	45	60	45	60.00	25	33.3
2	Performing well to get continuous rewards.	60	80	20	26.6	30	40.00	40	53.3
3	Co-curricular activities.	20	26.6	55	73.3	50	66.6	25	33.3
4	grooming to get success	90	86.6	10	13.3	35	46.6	15	20.0
5	If your parents are satisfied to your studies.	20	26.6	40	53.3	60	80.0	30	40.0
6	When something happens wrong in class.	30	40.0	40	53.3	35	46.6	45	60.0
7	If you remember most part of classroom work.	45	60	10	13.3	60	80.0	35	46.6
8	If you find it easy to solve math problems.	40	53.3	30	40.0	50	66.6	30	40.0
9	If your teacher selects you as CR.	50	66.6	30	40	50	66.6	20	26.6
10	If you are praised as punctual in your studies assignments.	40	53.3	40	53.3	50	66.6	20	26.6
11	If you fail to complete your assignment.	48	64	32	42.6	26	34.6	44	58.6
12	You are getting good grades because your teachers have good skills.	42	56	36	48	40	53.3	42	56.0

13	If you are getting prize in interschool's competition, it would be possible due to:	34	45.3	47	62.6	36	48.00	33	44.0
14	If you are getting improvement in your grades	20	26.6	45	60.0	48	64.00	37	49.3
15	The main cause of students' low performance.	40	53.3	40	53.3	45	60.00	25	33.3
16	If you always make mistakes while completing the task	55	73.3	30	40	45	60.00	20	26.6
17	If a teacher says try to do better, would it because of:	50	66.6	30	40.0	45	60.00	25	33.3
18	If you are not interested in doing things to enhance your skills.	31	41.3	29	38.6	47	62.6	43	57.3
19	I would like to be known as intelligent.	55	73.3	30	40.00	53	70.6	22	29.3
20	The main cause of students' success	30	40.0	40	53.3	35	46.6	45	60

Analysis of the Data

This research was conducted to explore the perceived attribution of success and failure of the students of secondary classes VIII and X from government and private schools. One group of respondents was selected from class VIII both private and government sector. Their age group was around 13 or 14 years. Other group was chosen from class X of both sectors; they belonged to the age group of 15 or 16 years. At this stage students considered as senior at school level and they have developed their attitude toward their future career education. Further at this stage they can judge the causes of their failure and success. There were many attributions towards learning stimulus to which the students associate their outcomes (O' Keefe 2010). The present research denotes success from own efforts and self-appraisal as BAS

(I+) and failure attributes to the system or teacher denotes as BIS (I-) respectively.

ITEM NO. 1- It may be analyzed that, most of the respondents of class VIII from private sector supports BIS (I-) and give credit to the educational system and teachers for getting high scores in their academics, whereas the respondents of class VIII from government sector supports BAS (I+) and attributes themselves for their success because of their own efforts and abilities for getting high scores in their academics. On the other hand, the respondent of class X from both sectors supports BAS (I+) for success and takes credit for their own abilities and efforts and blames system and teachers for failure as BIS (I-) respectively.

ITEM NO. 2- In regards of the classroom performance most of the respondents of class VIII and X from both sectors supports BAS (I+). The majority respondents feel that it is their own effort and abilities and friendly environment of the classroom boost their interest, pleasure, and energize their level of performing the task/activity.

ITEM NO. 3- In the response of participating in co-curricular activities, most of the respondents of class VIII and X from both sectors supports BAS (I+) along with their academics because it is a source of satisfaction as well as development of social skills.

ITEM NO. 4- In the response of query about their grooming or proper uniform, most of the respondents of class VIII and X from both sectors supports BIS (I-) for grooming. Most of the respondents are not personally interested in grooming themselves but it is due to the system and to get rid of annoy of teacher and to avoid minus marks they groom themselves.

ITEM NO. 5- In regards of the satisfaction of their parents most of the respondents of class VIII from both sectors support BIS (I-) to satisfy their parents, whereas the majority respondent of class X from both sectors supports BAS (I+) to satisfy their parents. It is because due to

the immaturity the respondents of class VIII approach teachers and system, the respondents of class X approach themselves when their parents are satisfied.

ITEM NO. 6- In the response that something happens wrong with the students in the classroom, the majority respondents of class VIII and X from both sector reply for BIS (I-) for being something wrong in the classroom because for gaining success students remain quite careful and alert while doing the task/activity in the classroom.

ITEM NO. 7- The majority respondents of class VIII and X from both sectors supports BAS (I+). They praised themselves, their own efforts and abilities to avoid minus marks; somehow, they gave credit to teaching method and material which is interesting and memorable.

ITEM NO. 8- The majority respondents of class X from both sectors support BAS (I+) to have efficiency in solving math problems, whereas the majority respondent of class VIII from both sectors supports BIS (I-). Students of class VIII approach teachers and teaching method in this regard. The respondents of class X of private sector approach themselves, but the respondents of class X from government sector replied for BIS (I-) when they found easy to solve math problems.

ITEM NO. 9- About all respondents excepting very few replied for BAS (I+) and gave credit to their own abilities efforts for being selected as CR.

ITEM NO. 10- The majority respondents of class VIII of both sectors were about BIS (I-) for praising regarding punctuality in the completion of their assignments, but the respondents of X from both sectors supports BAS (I+) for punctuality in their assignments and attributes themselves for their own abilities and efforts for approaching success and to get better results in their academics.

ITEM NO. 11- The majority respondents of class VIII from govt. sectors attribute BAS (I+) for failure in completion of their

assignments, but the respondents of class X from both sectors support BIS (I-), even respondents of class VIII were also of the view that the teaching method is not innovative and improper guidance is responsible for their failure in completion of their assignments. In gaining success in activities the respondents feel that it is their own efforts and abilities and there is no role of teacher's guidance and administration for their performance. In case of failure the respondents blame the teachers and system for it.

ITEM NO. 12- The majority respondents of class VIII from both sector support BIS (I-) and attribute their teachers' skills for their good grades, but the respondents of class X from both sectors replied for BAS (I+) for gaining success took credit for themselves approach and for failure blaming the system including the lack of facilities and selection of teachers on favoritism not on merit.

ITEM NO. 13- The majority respondents of class VIII and X from both sector support for BIS (I-) for getting motivated when success is associated with the task for achieving it. Motivation induces pleasure and interest in performing the task for which the respondents gave credit to their teachers.

ITEM NO. 14- The majority respondents of class VIII from both sector support for BIS (I-) for getting improvement in their grades but the respondents of class X expressed their feelings about BAS (I+) and show happiness and feeling proud on achieving success is obvious in approaching themselves on their own abilities and efforts.

ITEM NO. 15 In the present study, most of the respondents of class VIII and X support BIS (I-) for the failure as they are not accepting their own mistake for the failure and blaming teachers and the system. It may be possible because of getting over confident that they know everything and now it is no need to learn any more.

ITEM NO. 16- In the present study, the majority respondents of class VIII and X from government sector support for BAS (I+) for making

mistakes in completion of their tasks while respondents of VIII and X from the private sector were of the view of BIS (I-) if they make mistakes while completing their task the system of teaching and week guidance is responsible for it.

ITEM NO. 17- In the present study, the majority respondents of class VIII from both sectors support BAS (I+) as well as BIS (I-) for motivation from teacher “try to do the best” but realize it that without their own efforts they cannot achieve any task. Respondents of class X from both sector support BAS (I+) for themselves approach through their own abilities and efforts for success and pleasure in the task.

ITEM NO. 18- In the present study, the majority respondents of class VIII and X from both sector support for BIS (I-) for their lack of interest in enhancing their skills. The respondents gaining success credit themselves, whereas for failure, they blame the system and teachers. Continuous failure cause frustration among them and they are not willing to enhance their skills

ITEM NO. 19- The majority respondents of class VIII and X from both sector support for BAS (I+) for creation of new sensation and enthusiasm. The respondents to be addressed as intelligent have attribution towards their aim of learning through new sensation, their own efforts and abilities.

ITEM NO. 20- In the present study, the majority respondents of class VIII and X from both sector support BAS (I+) for their success. Somehow, they appreciate the contribution of teachers in their success. The respondents feel exited and honored when they achieve success and for the next time they put more efforts and abilities to maintain their records.

Thus, in the present study, these were the following outcomes towards learning stimulus attributing success and failure in their academics.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the learned behavior of students (i.e. A conditioned response to stimuli) is directly related to the matter of standard of education. If the students seem failure in the competition, they adopt the behavior of whining or dissonance until they get their own way.

In the present research, it may be analyzed that the respondents of the government schools, students of class VIII mostly accepting compunction for their own failure, whereas, students of class X from the government sector blaming the system, educational institution, teachers, parents and lack of educational resources for their failure in academics and taking somehow credit for their own abilities and efforts and luck factor for success in academics.

The respondents of the private schools, students of class VIII and X, both are blaming the educational system, educational institution, teachers, parents, insufficient educational resources for their failure in academics and taking 100% credit for their success due to their own abilities, interest and efforts and approaching themselves for their success.

The researcher has found these differences as the students of governments belongs from lower level financial status which affects their socialization, self-esteem, lack of confidence, uneducated parents, lack of resources and lack of awareness regarding resources for memorizing techniques of learning quickly. Whereas, the students of private schools belong to upper level financial status and educated parents and having personal educational resources i.e. having laptops in their homes with internet facility boost their learning attribution in gaining success and in case of failure hurts self-esteem for which the respondents show whining and dissonance behavior and deny accepting failure for their own (Queralt, 1996).

It is analyzed through the research the respondents of public sector schools, feel themselves on the mercy of system and teachers, the infrastructure, labs condition, teacher's behavior, old syllabus, and old teaching methods are great cause of frustration, they are having very pessimist behavior which is a constraint in the development of education standard. They consider their own shortcomings the main cause of their failure rather than the unavailability of logistic support or innovating teaching methods to improve their skills. Whereas the students of private sector found over confident and are not ready to give credit of their success to others including teachers or system they are hundred percent showing BAS (I+) for their success.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the attribution towards success or failure cannot be avoided to understand achievement behavior of students of both sectors public and private. It is recommended that the system of education must be advanced, the use of pedagogies, new skills of teachers. Innovative and practical education is the dire need of the era.

Parents of both sectors also should be taken on board with their academic progress about their children's attribution in gaining success and failure as the parents of government sector students are not well educated as the parents of private sector school so the educational system and teachers should conduct workshops, training and counseling to upgrade the parents with latest teaching methods so that they teach their children at home as well.

Teachers of both sectors should design such conceptual activities so the lessons are perfectly learned in the classroom with the positive feedback motivates the abilities and efforts of the students in gaining success and better results. In case failure, teacher and parents both help the student in learning academics so that the students could achieve good grades in their studies.

The educational system can be more effective by educationists and professionals by implements new teaching methods and planned curriculum and a discussion panel should be made in which parents can discuss their children success and failure and to educate parents about simple techniques of learning which they could implement on their child while learning academics. Revision of curriculum should be mandatory after every three years at least. Counseling sessions should also be conducted for self-actualization of the students i.e. an important need for their behavioral development to attribute also other elements rather than their own efforts and abilities.

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