



The Relationship between of the Literary Ability of Students and Their Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship between students' academic progress and their literary abilities. This was a descriptive type of correlation study. The population of this study was composed of all students in Hormozgan University in the academic year 2010-2011, among which 140 people are randomly selected. A researcher-developed questionnaire was utilized in order to assess the literary ability. The validity content of the questionnaire was approved by faculty members of the Department of Literature. In order to, assess students' progress, their GPAs (the average of students' marks) in their general, foundation and specialized courses was used. To analyze the collected data, Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were employed through the use of 18th version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The result of this study showed that was significant relationship between variables of literary ability (including literary knowledge and comprehension) and academic achievement, Also ,literary ability (including literary knowledge and comprehension) can be a predictor of academic achievement in students. It should also be mentioned that no significant difference between male and female students' literary ability was observed. People with higher literary ability are expected to have higher academic achievement as well. With regard to the fact that academic achievement is not gender specific, general programs for optimizing the literary abilities of various ages should be provided.

Keywords: Literary Ability, Academic Achievement, Literary Knowledge, Comprehension

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTRODUCTION

Today educational failure has turned to one of the major concerns of families and educational practitioners. Every year a large number of students around the world face the phenomenon of academic failure. There is no doubt that "there are many ways to define literature and our views about what to consider as literature have changed over time. It should be accepted that such a definition varies from culture to culture, from place to place, and even from reader to reader" (Huck, 1997). In some cases whatever is published, either appeared as an article, newspaper or magazine or in the form of a pamphlet or book is considered as literature. These phenomena, in addition to the adverse economic effects in the national form and also huge economic losses imposed on community and student due to course reruns or re-spending of money (Biabangard, 1999), academic failure in universities is in an alarming situation (Mesri, 2008), and has turned to one of the major problems in higher education institutions of Iran (Alikhani et al., 2005). Academic failure of students has a variety of causes. Lina et al. (2007), in research on achievement goals, learning strategies and language achievement among high school students found that mastery goals are positive predictor of learning strategies and academic achievement. The importance and the teaching of Persian language as a tool and realization and understanding and teaching of its literary heritage, familiarity with language and literature, familiarity with standard Persian language, acquiring

the just writing skills, simple writing skills, familiarity with research procedures, and of reference are part of the skill learning and cognitive goals of Persian language as a general course in universities. Educational purposes, including the preservation of Persian language and its valuable literature, smoothing emotions and sensations, moral education through literature has its own special place. Any subject matter needs to be well adjusted and proportionate according to the age, needs, interests, majors, and generally, with overall conditions of the learners. In other words, it is not possible to offer a book with the same content to many students in various fields and trends. In current situation, general Persian courses usually end up being offered two hours of practice due to compression of time, lack of plan, malaise and fatigue. General Persian books must meet the principle of selection as one of its necessary features. Such a principle can be applied through selection of text books, examples of training, and various professors. Solutions that can be considered are: 1 - students and professors should be able to choose any specific section form among suggested textbooks for teaching in a semester. As an instance, for a book chapter in lyrical literature, the text proposed should be four times the capacity of teaching. The selected part should be of paramount importance and the other aspects of secondary value. 2 - Students and their teacher should be able to select a textbook form among several proposed textbooks

based on the written curriculum. 3 – The student needs to be responsible for selecting the professor for such a fundamentally basic course. 4 – The foremost point in writing a general Farsi book, that is acceptable to everyone, is the careful consideration in the selection of academic texts. Clear selection criterion is also a basic requirement. Some criteria, such as avoiding one-sided view, taste, attention to the audience, integrity and comprehensiveness, avoiding self-censorship, toughness and maturity of selected texts, having strong and committed messages which are common these days, having high literary value, and dozens of other criteria should be always considered by authors of such show biz textbooks. A human being for better understanding of himself, getting familiar with his emotions and feelings, not being left alone, seeing how other humans everywhere experience the same problems and thoughts as his, and feel sadness, loneliness and despair like him, should read the literary texts. Thus, reading the literature, to give meaning to life and escape from despair, is a necessity. In addition, good books can improve society and make positive changes in the community (month of literature and philosophy, 2000). Taheri (2009), in a research aiming to investigate the relationship of utilizing self-regulated learning strategies with academic achievement in literature and mathematics courses conducted among the students of the first grade in high school, concluded that: 1 – There was a significant positive relationship in the use of self-regulated learning strategies and progress in mathematics and literature courses. 2 – There was significant difference between boys and girls in the use of self-regulated learning strategies and their mathematics achievement. However, this difference was not significant in the literature course.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population of the current study was students at Hormozgan University (2010-2011). Participants (N=140) were male (n=50) and female (n=90). These samples were selected randomly. In this way, the questionnaires were randomly assigned to each student. Researchers developed a paper-pencil questionnaire which contained some questions (N=20) on both literary knowledge as well as reading comprehension checks. The questionnaire was scored based on Likert scale in which participants' literal ability is specified through their reading each question and answering it. Developing the questionnaire, the researcher got assistance from professionals in this field of education. Because of the scale and the ability being measured to gauge performance, each score measures a specific criterion. Therefore, assessing the

scale's psychometric and reliability is not of necessary. The validity of this questionnaire was examined through Delphi method, i.e. asking the idea of method specialists. This means that the questionnaire was given to a group of professors of Persian literature and its content validity was confirmed. The participants read each question and answer it with his literary ability is measured. The validity of this questionnaire, the Delphi method was used or the method specialists. This means that the questionnaire was given to a group of professors of Persian literature and its content validity was confirmed.

RESULTS

First hypothesis: There is a relationship between the literary achievement and literary skills. Table 1.

The Correlation Coefficient between Literary Ability and Literary Achievement Pearson correlations were used to examine the first hypothesis. As it can be inferred from Table 1, significant correlations can be substantiated between subscales of literary information, reading comprehension and total ability score ($P < 0.01$). This means that the more literary ability of a person is, the more likely it is for him to obtain higher academic achievement.

Second hypothesis: The literary ability subscales forecasts academic achievement between students. According to the table 2, it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between the educational achievement and literary information subscales ($r = 0.342$), that is the amount of .09 Achievement of the total variance in the dependent variable can be explained through subscales of literary ability.

Table 4 indicates that the information literary subscales and comprehension is predictor of academic achievement and comprehension subscales. The T- value of ($t = 2.59$, $P < 0.01$) reveals a significant difference. As it can be observed, the value of t-observed information literature subscales equals 1.46 ($P < 0.01$).

DISCUSSION

In order to strengthen cultural foundation, paying more close attention to literature is worthy. Consequently, the revival of the course, literature, is also required because most of the studies on reading literary texts have foregrounded some concepts such as the literary beauty, imagery, verses, etc. Persian literature and poetry is the language of cultures and beliefs. It is this language through which all Iranian feelings can be conveyed. This language has conquered the Iranian's spirit more than a thousand years and has expressed their inward feeling revealingly. Of course, this does not mean that the

choice is made consciously. Academic life, as one of the most important aspects of the personal life, influences other issues to a great extent. In this regard, poor academic performance of students is one of the grave situations in each country's educational system (Zahrakar, 2006). This study aimed at researching the relationship between Students' literary ability and their literary achievement at Hormozgan University, Iran. The data gathered from 140 literary ability questionnaires were compared with academic achievement of students through their grades in general, foundation, and specific courses. This study examined the characteristics of literary ability, reading comprehension, and literary information. The aforementioned questionnaire included 20 questions (the first 15 questions on their literary information and the next 5 questions on comprehension). Two research hypotheses were put forward and the findings of this study are described below.

Regarding the first aforementioned hypothesis, it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between literary information, comprehension and total ability. Table 2 presented that significant difference exists between literary information subscales and literary achievement. The significant results of the regression model ($F=5.24, p \leq 0.01$) was described in Table 3. Regression coefficient (Table 4) indicated that literary information subscales and literary comprehension predicate literary achievement.

Table 4 shows the significant amount ($t=2.59, t=1.64$) of Information subscales and literary comprehension at ($p < 0.01$) and with the t (59.2), (46.1). This study also claims that some university students did not enjoy permanent and effective educational opportunities and this can cause a serious and demanding situation for the society (Miyokaron, 1993).

Table 1. Correlation matrix of study variables

		Total Ability	Literacy Information	Literacy Comprehension
Total Ability	Pearson Correlation	1	0.305**	0.200
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.005	0.067
	N	85	82	85
Literacy Information	Pearson Correlation	0.305**	1	0.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005		0.346
	N	82	119	96
Literacy Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	0.200	0.097	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.067	0.346	
	N	85	96	120

Table 2. Summary of regression models

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.342 ^a	0.117	0.095	9.39873

Table 3. One way ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	926.136	2	463.068	5.242	0.007 ^a
	Residual	6978.560	79	88.336		
	Total	7904.695	81			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Literacy Comprehension, Literacy Information;
 b. Dependent Variable: Total Ability

Table 4. Regression coefficients and literary information subscales

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.799	8.429		2.468	0.016
	Literacy Information	0.963	0.371	0.279	2.599	0.011
	Literacy Comprehension	1.418	0.971	0.157	1.460	0.148

a. Dependent Variable: Total Information

One the other hand, those graduated students with poor performance and achievement do not acquire needed capabilities to do business effectively (Lazyn, 1991). In the study of Bock et al. (1968), the results of 122 English students' achievement test scores in reading, Arithmetic, and spelling were investigated. The results of the study showed that the solidarity between the variables studied was from 49% to 78%. All of these results demonstrated a statistically significant relationship. This means that the score can be interpreted as a factor in predicting academic achievement in arithmetic and spelling and language courses. In this study there was no difference between learners regarding their genders. This claim is in line with that of Alborzi et al. (1999) study which was conducted between boys and girls in terms of self-regulated learning. Plumbing the depth of achievement goals, learning strategies and language achievement among high school students, Lina et.al (2007) found that mastery goals e can positively predicted by learning strategies and academic achievement, which is consistent with the current study. Given that many studies have indicated that reading, or in another words the literary ability seems to be a good predictor of successes in other courses. For this reason, we addressed the following questions:

What is the relationship between the literary and the academic achievement of the students in general and specific educational courses and their total academic achievement? How well literary ability score can predict the total variance of the general and specific grade average point? Based on these findings, it is suggested that teachers, administrators, executors, administrators and tutors attend to the following points in order to improve literary skills: The same study can be carried out among student community. The researchers suggest that meta-analyses will be run in the case of plethora research studies in this field. Consequently, the insights of the various authorities of the University and their cooperation with the investigation will be enhanced.

Researchers have also recommend designing and implementing of a research workshop on the role and significance of Persian literature on the development of academic, social and vocational opportunities for students, staff organizations and other social institutions. It is imperative to make students, teachers and faculty members familiar with the necessary literary skills in order to lead them to more creativity and self-efficacy in education. Further studies on presenting and disseminating the current findings are recommended to Persian literature groups at universities across the country.

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