

A Comparative Study of High and Low Achievers of MA English: An Attribution Theory Perspective

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Abstract

The present study explored the perceptions of students on their academic performance in English essay writing paper. A sample involving high and low achievers of MA English was chosen from National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad. The study incorporated the Three Dimensional model of Attribution Theory as its theoretical framework. It employed a questionnaire as research tool to collect the required data. SPSS version 21.0 was used to interpret the responses put forth by the sample. Inferential statistics, involving t-test, was used to interpret data in statistical terms. The research focused on effort, ability, task difficulty and luck as factors that affect the performance of students in examination. Essay writing paper in mid-semester examination was selected for the study. The results revealed that the high achievers attributed effort expenditure and linguistic ability to their high score whereas the low achievers associated lack of effort expenditure and deficient linguistic ability with their low score. The present study is significant for students as it highlight the perceptions of the students about attributes affecting their performance in examination. The students can maintain or improve their performance only if they hold correct opinions about factors affecting academic performance. The study is equally useful for teachers, particularly newly appointed teachers, as it informs them how students interpret their academic performance and relate various factors with their success and failure.

Keywords: perceptions, academic performance, attribution, inferential statistics, essay writing

Introduction

Academic essay writing is a type of academic writing. In academic essay writing, students present arguments and information on a particular topic and follow a set of rules and practices: structure (beginning, middle and end), the traditional use of grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation and so on. They attempt to convince the reader or examiner that the arguments presented in their essays are sound and appropriate. Bradshaw (2008) believes that academic essay writing helps students improve their writing skills on the one hand and provokes critical thinking in them on the other hand. English is taught as compulsory subject till graduation at various academic levels in Pakistan such as matriculation, intermediate and graduation level (Ammar, Ali, Fawad & Qasim, 2015) and essay writing is part of syllabus therefore, it captivates the attention of students. A separate paper based on essay writing is also a part of competitive examinations such as, CSS and

PMS (Shaikh, 2014). The researchers selected essay writing paper for the study because of its worth in the educational system of Pakistan.

In Pakistan a large number of students find essay writing a difficult skill and thus, there is a high percentage of failure in essay writing paper. For example, in 2016, 81% candidates failed their essay writing paper in CSS examination (Haq, 2016). Therefore, it is important to know the factors that affect academic performance of students and contribute to their success and failure. The present study reports these factors by involving attributes (effort, ability, task difficulty, and luck) as focal point of the study. The study incorporates Three Dimensional Model of attribution theory proposed by Weiner in 1985 which focused on the above mentioned attributes.

Attribution can be defined as “the internal (thinking) and external (talking) process of interpreting and understanding what is behind our own and others’ behaviour” (Manusov & Spitzberg, 2008, p.38). Attribution theory was first proposed by Fritz Heider, an Austrian Psychologist, in 1958. Heider intended to study how people reflected on their behaviour, attitudes and actions and how they perceived behaviour, attitudes and actions of other people. Fiske and Taylor (1991), assert that “Attribution Theory deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanation for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment” (Cited in Mcleod, 2012). In simple words, attribution theory is the study of the relationship between causes and their subsequent consequences.

Weiner introduced his Attribution Theory of Motivation and Emotion in 1979 and further worked on it in 1985 and 2010. In 1979 he proposed Two Dimensional Model of Attribution Theory, which was revised as Three Dimensional Model in 1985. Weiner believed that the perceived causes of success and failure have three common properties: locus, stability and controllability (Weiner, 1985). Locus consists of internal versus external causes of a behavior, action or situation, e.g. if a student fails an exam due to illness then an external factor is attributed to the outcome but if he fails because he did not work hard for the exam then an internal factor is attributed to the outcome. Stability raises a question if causes behind behaviour and actions undergo changes or they are fixed and stable, such as social rejection due to physical unattractiveness reveals a stable factor, whereas controllability means that individuals have optional control on certain causes like making efforts to qualify an exam and they lack control of certain causes such as missing an exam due to illness.

Weiner organized the above mentioned three dimensions along with four attributes. The attributes along their dimensions are given below:

Table 1.1: Attributes along with their three dimension of Attribution Theory

Attributes	Locus	Stability	Locus of Control
Effort	Internal	Unstable	Controllable
Ability	Internal	Stable	Uncontrollable
Task difficulty	external	Unstable	Controllable
Luck	External	Unstable	Uncontrollable

Weiner (1985) asserted that the three dimensions of his theory are also linked with motivation and emotional responses elicited by individuals. He believed that if stability of a cause behind a particular outcome motivates individuals to take part in an activity or to avoid that

activity. For example, if a student who fails in mathematics perceives his failure in terms of lacking ability (stable factor), he is most likely to quit studying mathematics but if he perceives his failure due to lack of investing effort (unstable factor) he may increase his studying hours. Furthermore, the three dimensions affect emotional responses of individuals too. For instance, when a student fails an exam due to lack of effort expenditure, he may experience anger, shame and guilt.

Literature Review

Simon and Feather (1973) examined the causes of academic success and failure. They studied effort in the context of knowledge or level of preparation. Moreover, they studied ability, task difficulty and luck. They examined these factors in relation to the students' expectations to fail or succeed in examination. Results showed that the students who got through the exam successfully associated their success with knowledge when they had high expectations to succeed and they related their success to good luck when they lacked much expectation to achieve high score. The students who could not get passing grade attributed causality to deficient knowledge when they had initially low expectations to succeed and they associated causality to bad luck when they had initially high expectations to score good grade. It was also found that the students who prepared well for the exam showed more confidence to qualify the exam as compared to those who were less prepared. The results clearly show that students determine academic outcomes in terms of their expectations. Bar-Tal and Frieze (1977) carried out a study on male and female college students. The students were given an anagram and they were asked to reorder the letters in order to make them meaningful English words. Men who were successful in performing the task attributed their success with their abilities whereas women who remained successful related effort, task ease and ability with success. They regarded bad luck as the factor behind failure. Those men and women who remained unsuccessful considered effort and ability as determinant of success and task difficulty as a factor behind failure.

Frank Van Overwalle (1989) carried out research on university students in Belgium. The researchers were interested to study students' perceptions on their performance in their midterm examination. The results of the study showed that ability, interest in studies, desire to do well in the exam, effort, and study method were perceived as internal whereas help from others for the preparation of exam, teaching, difficulty level of the test were labelled as external by the majority of the students. It was found that most of them conceived intelligence, interest in studies, desire to do well in the exam, study method, foreknowledge, and teaching as stable whereas luck was perceived as inconsistent or changeable by them. All other attributes other than luck were judged as controllable by will. Assouline, Colagelo, Ihrig, and Forstadt (2006) carried out a survey on gifted students. The results reflected that 56.7% of the gifted students related academic failure with "not working hard enough", 32.1% of the students attributed failure with "not doing the work the right way", and 21.5% of them thought that failure was due to the difficulty level of the task given to them. This shows that the majority among the students attributed failure with lack of making efforts to perform well as relative to ability and task difficulty.

Franco and Dominguez (2010) studied the causes of failure in English language among university students. It was found that "Participants attributed their failure to their lack of ability to learn English. Luck was not seen as a factor of failure. Effort was seen as a factor of success" (Franco & Dominguez, 2010, p.237). Hassan and Khalid (2014) carried out research to study the perceptions of students on locus of control. The students were divided into two groups involving high achievers and low achievers and the distinction was made on the basis of GPA they had

obtained in their previous annual examination. The results showed that they both considered “effort, hard work, regular study schedules, doing college work on time, being hopeful about future significant in affecting the academic outcomes positively and believed in their ability and were hopeful about improving their future academic performance” (Hasan & Khalid, 2014, p.29).

Ranjha (2015) conducted a research to study the causes of failure in English among Pakistani students. He found that students associated both internal and external factors with success and failure. 91% of the students considered lack of ability whereas 76% of them regarded lack of effort as the cause behind failure. 67% of the students considered English difficult, which compelled students to drop out and 67% of them held teachers responsible for the failure. Mohammadi and Sharififiar (2016) carried out a similar study on EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners of various academic levels. They found that majority of the students had associated having ability and lacking ability with success and failure respectively. The male students attributed ability whereas the female students attributed luck with success and failure. It was also found that the students who were enrolled in elementary classes attributed success and failure in the examination more with effort, ability and task difficulty as compared to those students who are enrolled in advanced academic level.

A study of the above mentioned researches reveals that all the researchers agreed that internal factors play a significant role in shaping the perceptions of students about their academic performance. It is also evident that some researchers also acknowledged the role of external factors in this regard but it is important to note that internal factors were given more worth as they were considered significant by all the researchers.

Research Method

The present study falls under the interpretive paradigm of research as it involves perceptions of the students under study. This is not an experimental study and no treatment was dispensed to the study sample. Therefore, in order to collect the required data, survey method was employed involving a closed-ended questionnaire followed by four-point Likert Scale. The questionnaire was prepared with special focus on the variables selected from the Attribution Theory and as a result each question addressed one of the given variables. Following the research conventions, the questionnaire ranged from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. Once the questionnaire was ready, the next crucial step was to test the reliability of all its items. So, a pilot test was carried out on fifteen students. The reliability of the questions was 0.71 as calculated by Cronbach Alpha by using SPSS version 21.0.

As stated above, the questionnaire consisted of fifteen items based on attributes (effort, ability, task difficulty and luck) taken from Attribution Theory. In the study “effort” was measured in terms of the input of study given by the low achievers and the high achievers before their examination. In other words, it involved the level of preparation they had for their essay writing paper. “Ability” was measured in terms of linguistic ability whereas “Task Difficulty” or “Task Ease” was measured in terms of the level of difficulty of the paper. The “Luck” factor was studied in the light of good or bad experience like having the examiner who is notorious for his bias and so on so forth.

The research site was National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad. The sample comprised students of MA English Literature and Applied Linguistics of first semester enrolled in the department of English (Graduate Studies) of the University. Thirty-three male

students and sixty-seven female students participated in the study. Their age ranged between twenty-one and twenty-three. The sample selection was based on purposive sampling technique, also known as subjective/judgment sampling, which employs researcher's judgment to choose a particular sample suitable for the research. Among several types of purposive sampling, the researchers chose homogenous sampling as the study was carried out with the students of MA English only.

The researchers themselves went to the classrooms of these students one by one with prior permission from the department. As a result, all the teachers as well as students fully cooperated with the researchers. All the given questionnaires were returned inside the given time. Later, incomplete questionnaires, which were not very many, were discarded. This was followed by the analysis of the collected data with the help of SPSS.

The following research hypothesis was formulated in the light of the literature review: The low achievers and the high achievers would describe their academic performance in terms of the internal attributes, such as ability and effort. They would not relate their academic performance with external attributes like task difficulty and luck.

A Null hypothesis was also formulated, which showed the opposite view that the high achievers and the low achievers would describe their academic performance in terms of external attributes, such as task difficulty and luck. They would not relate their academic performance with internal attributes like ability and effort.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

The research objectives followed by the research questions are given below.

- i) Examine the students' perceptions about the contribution made by the linguistic abilities in their academic performance.
- ii) Investigate the students' perceptions about the role of the factors found in the Attribution Theory.

The research questions are as follows:

- i) How do the students perceive the role of *effort* in their academic performance?
- ii) How do the students perceive the contribution made by linguistic abilities in their academic performance?
- iii) What role do the students attribute to *task ease* or *task difficulty* in their academic performance?
- iv) What role do the students attribute to *luck* in their academic performance?
- v) How do the high achievers and the low achievers compare in terms of their attributions regarding their performance?

Data Collection

The research was carried out after the declaration of result of the mid semester examination conducted by the university. The sample comprised two types of subjects: students who achieved low scores in their mid-semester essay writing paper and the students who scored high in the same examination. As majority of the students did not achieve very high score in their essay writing paper, therefore such students who scored sixty per cent or more in the paper were considered high achievers and those students who obtained less than sixty per cent were considered as the low achievers. The data was collected on May 11 and 12, 2016. It was taken from the students of both morning and afternoon shifts. They took almost fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The researchers incorporated SPSS (21.0) for data analysis but before proceeding to SPSS, the researchers calculated the percentage of the responses elicited by the students. The sum of percentage of agreement and disagreement was then calculated to get a vivid picture of their responses, which in turn, revealed their perceptions on their academic performance.

As regards statistical assistance for the sake of objective analysis, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software was used to analyze the data collected for the study. Inferential statistics was used to analyze data. In inferential statistics predictions, decision, estimations, generalizations etc. are drawn on the grounds of data collected from the sample chosen for the study by the researchers. T-Test is used as an inferential statistical method to analyze data in research. It is employed to discover whether significant differences exist between two groups under study or the case is vice versa. The significance of t-Test is determined by the difference of the mean values shown by the groups that can then be reflected by the P-value. If the P-value is more than .05 (formally written as $P > .05$) then we can say that significant differences occur between the groups but if the P-value is less than .05 (formally written as $P < .05$) then we cannot claim that differences exist between groups involved in the study. With a t-test, a researcher determines whether the observed difference between the means of the sample groups exists or it happened by chance. If the P-value is less than .05 then the researcher can claim the validity of his alternative hypothesis which he made at the start of the research and refute the null hypothesis. If the P-value is more than .05 then this reflects that the null hypothesis is true whereas the alternative hypothesis is false and therefore invalid.

Data Analysis

The responses were noted on four-point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In order to check agreement and disagreement, we added the sum of those who disagreed to that of those who strongly disagreed as well as we did 'agree' with 'strongly agree' to make the difference of perception clearer. A table showing percentage of responses given by students against four-point Likert Scale is given below followed by another table showing the sum of agreement and disagreement expressed by the study subjects.

Table 2.1:*A table showing percentage of responses put forth by the low achievers and high achievers*

Items	Low Achievers (%)				High Achievers (%)			
	SD	D	A	SA	SD	D	A	SA
1	2.9	51.5	29.4	16.2	0	6.3	71.9	21.9
2	2.9	30.9	42.6	23.5	0	6.3	43.8	50
3	11.8	66.2	17.6	4.4	0	3.1	68.8	28.1
4	25	57.4	14.7	2.9	6.3	21.9	46.9	25
5	22.1	38.2	26.5	13.2	0	9.4	62.5	28.1
6	10.3	61.8	23.5	4.4	3.1	9.4	56.3	31.3
7	10.3	16.2	58.8	14.7	0	25	53.1	21.9
8	11.8	51.5	26.5	10.3	0	3.1	68.8	28.1
9	5.9	64.7	23.5	5.9	0	0	68.8	31.3
10	10.3	30.9	45.6	13.2	0	0	59.4	40.6
11	4.4	13.2	54.4	27.9	6.3	6.3	68.8	18.8
12	2.9	13.2	61.8	9.4	3.1	18.8	68.8	9.4
13	16.2	44.1	30.9	8.8	0	59.4	37.5	3.1
14	17.6	48.5	14.7	19.1	18.8	71.9	6.3	3.1
15	32.4	51.5	13.2	2.9	31.3	53.1	15.6	0

Table 2.2:*A table showing sum of percentage of disagreement and agreement reflected by the low achievers and high achievers*

Items	Low Achievers		High Achievers	
	Disagreement	Agreement	Disagreement	Agreement
1	54.4	45.6	6.3	93.8
2	33.8	66.1	6.3	93.8
3	78	22	3.1	96.9
4	82.4	17.6	28.2	71.9
5	60.3	39.7	9.4	90.6
6	72.1	27.9	12.5	87.6
7	26.5	73.5	25	75
8	63.3	36.8	3.1	96.9
9	70.6	29.4	00	100
10	41.2	58.8	00	100
11	17.6	82.3	12.6	87.6
13	16.1	83.9	21.9	78.2
14	66.1	33.8	90.7	9.4
15	83.9	84.4	16.1	15.6

The scores provided above clearly suggest that the study subjects from both groups attributed their academic performance to internal attributes, effort and ability, and ignored the significance of external attributes, task ease or task difficulty and luck, in this regard. The high achievers considered investing effort and having linguistic ability as factors behind success

whereas the low achievers related their least effort expenditure and lacking linguistic ability to their low score.

The details of the results produced by the t- test are given below:

Table 3.1

The mean, standard deviation, and t-values on the composite score of effort as a subscale of attribution scale consisting of the low achievers and the high achievers (N =100)

MM	Low Achievers (n=68)		High Achievers (n=32)		t(98)	P	95% 95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Effort	9.55 9.55	1.83	12.75	1.52	-8.55	.000	-3.93	-2.45

The above table shows the mean difference between the low achievers and the high achievers on the composite score of effort as a subscale involving attribution scale consisting of the students of MA English. The above figures show that the high achievers have higher mean on effort subscale as compared to the low achievers. The mean difference between the low achiever and the high achiever on the composite score is -3.19 that is statistically highly significant as $p < .001$. The result shows that there is significant difference between the means of the two groups thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

Table 3.2

The mean, standard deviation, and t-values on the composite score of ability as a subscale of attribution Scale consisting of the low achievers and the high achievers (N =100)

Scale	Low Achievers (n=68)		High Achievers (n=32)		t(98)	P	95% 95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Ability	14.5 14.57	22.7	19.28	2.20	-8.43	.000	-5.81	-3.59

The table given above shows the mean difference between the low achievers and the high achievers on the composite score of ability as a subscale involving attribution scale. The above figures show that the high achievers have higher mean on attribution scale as compared to the low achievers. The mean difference between the low achievers and the high achievers on the composite score is -4.70 that is statistically very significant as $p < .001$. The result suggests significant differences between the subjects of the two groups. The null hypothesis is rejected again.

Table 3.3

The mean, standard deviation, and t-values on the composite score of task difficulty as a subscale of Attribution Scale consisting of the low achievers and high the achievers (N =100)

Scale	Low Achiever (n=68)		High Achiever (n=32)		t(98)	P	95% 95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Task Difficulty	8.41 8.41	1.24	8.28	1.25	.487	.627	-.40	.66

The table reflects the mean difference between the low achievers and the high achievers on the composite score of task difficulty. No significant difference between the mean score shown by the high achievers vis-a-vis mean shown by the low achievers is visible. The mean difference between the two categories of the subjects on the composite score is .13 that is statistically non-significant ($p > .05$). The results do not suggest any significant differences between the two groups. Both the groups did not attribute their performance with task difficulty. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that the high achievers and the low achievers view their academic performance in terms of the task difficulty, proved to be false and the alternative hypothesis was justified.

Table 3.4

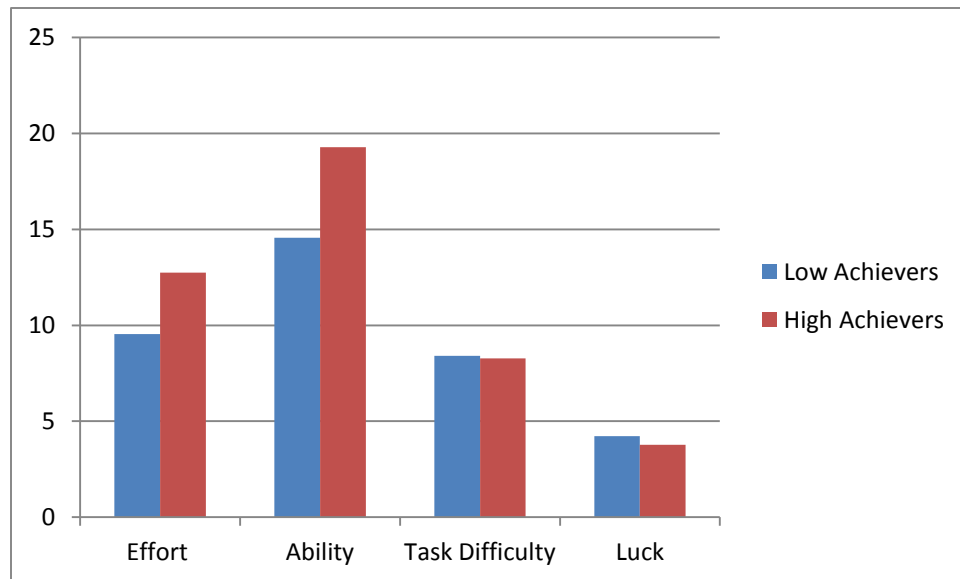
The mean, standard deviation, and t-values on the composite score of luck as a subscale involving the Attribution Scale consisting of the low achievers and the high achievers (N =100)

Scale	Low Achiever (n=68)		High Achievers (n=32)		t(98)	P	95% 95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Luck	4.22	1.3 1.30	3.78	.792	1.75	.082	-.05	.93

The above table shows the mean difference between the low achievers and the high achievers on the composite score of luck. The figures show that the low achievers have the higher mean on luck in relation to the low achievers though the difference between the mean shown by the two groups is not very high. The mean difference between the low achievers and high achievers on the composite score is .43 that is statistically highly non-significant as $p > .05$. The sample in the study did not rate the luck factor as significant enough to affect their performance in the examination which justifies the alternative hypothesis.

The following graph shows the mean values as reflected by the low achievers as well as the high achievers against the attributes of effort, ability, task difficulty and luck. The mean values reflected by the low achievers on the attributes are: effort (9.55), ability (14.57), task difficulty (8.41), and luck (4.22). The mean values shown by the high achievers on the attributes are: effort (12.75), ability (19.28), task difficulty (8.28), and luck (3.78). The graph indicates that the high achievers show high mean in terms of effort and ability as compared to the low achievers. There is unnoticeable difference between the means shown by the two groups in terms of task difficulty and luck.

Bar- graph showing Mean Values of the Low Achievers and High Achievers



Discussion

The study was carried out to explore the factors held responsible by the low achievers as well as high achievers of MA English (NUML) in relation to their good and poor academic performance. The attributes were *effort*, *ability*, *task difficulty* and *luck*. The data were analyzed by inferential statistics by employing t-test. The results of the study clearly indicate that the high achievers acknowledged the role played by their effort investment in order to score high in the paper. They agreed that they studied well and had exposure to a number of topics that were significant to be prepared for essay writing paper. They admitted that they had ample knowledge about the topics given in the paper and they had also included their own opinions and ideas on the given topics. Therefore, they had shown satisfaction on the quantity as well as quality of their knowledge. A high number among the high achievers also claimed to have practiced essay writing at home that further throws light on their effort making to achieve high scores in the paper. The low achievers, on the other hand, admitted that it was the lack of effort on their part, which caused such bad score in the paper. They agreed that they had not worked hard to achieve good score and they had not enough knowledge about the topics given in the paper. They also expressed disagreement on having done sufficient writing practice at home, which further highlights and supports their confession in terms of lack of effort.

By reflecting on all the statements involving the attribute of “effort”, it is shown that the high achievers considered their effort making as a factor behind their good performance in the exam, whereas, the low achievers regarded lack of effort on their part as a key factor affecting their performance in the exam in terms of their scores.

The high achievers believed that their knowledge of the language also contributed to their good performance in the paper. They claimed to have good command of grammar and syntax, in addition to good vocabulary and orthographical knowledge, the ability to organize ideas while writing, and ability to present arguments in an effective manner. The low achievers believed that they did not possess ample knowledge related to grammar and syntax, had poor spellings, lacked ability to organize ideas appropriately and present arguments effectively.

Both the high achievers and low achievers described their paper of essay writing in terms of task ease. They did not consider the paper too difficult for the students of MA English as it was not above their level. Both the high achievers and low achievers believed that the time given to complete the paper was also sufficient and there was ample choice for selecting questions in the paper.

While evaluating the part which the luck factor plays to achieve high or low in the examination, both the high achievers and low achievers believed that luck does not play significant role in this regard.

It is evident from the above mentioned discussion that the high achievers as well as the low achieves related their high score and low score or in other words, associated their academic performance with internal attributes (effort, ability) and they did not believe that attributes like task difficulty and luck played part in obtaining high score and low score. Therefore, they did not regard external factors significant enough to have profound impact on their academic performance. According to the high achievers their high score was a result of investment of their effort and ability while the low achievers thought that their low score was due to the lack of effort their deficient linguistic ability. Both the high scorers and low scorers appeared to be reluctant to link their academic performance with the external, unstable and uncontrollable factors like task difficulty and luck. The results of the studies have similarity with the results produced by the studies conducted by Franco and Dominguez (2010) and Hassan and Khalid (2014) who too relate internal factors, effort and ability, with the academic performance of the students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed by the researchers to the teachers and researchers as well as students who are preparing for their examination.

- i) The results shown by the study clearly indicate that both high and low achievers attributed effort and linguistic ability to success. It is a common observation that students relate their achievements with internal factors, such as effort and ability, and they associate their academic failure with internal factors, such as bad luck and task difficulty (Mkumbo & Amani, 2012). The study is useful for the students to judge the impact of the internal attributes vis-a-vis the academic performance. By looking at the opinions put forward by the low achievers and high achievers, the students who believe that external factors play significant role in shaping the academic career of the students might be convinced to estimate the significance of internal factors (effort investment and ability) for the success

in the examination. In the words of Hunter and Baker (1987, p.50) “students will be better learners if they believe success depends on efforts more than on luck or ability”. They further suggest that “students must accept the fact that much of what happens to them is a result of what they do (Hunter and Baker, 1987, p.52).

- ii) Teachers should avoid attributing lack of ability to the students who fail in examination but they should convince them that their failure is due to making fewer efforts. Weiner (1985) believed that the stability of a cause behind an outcome motivates an individual to take part in an activity or to avoid that activity. He also asserted that “the three causal dimensions determine the emotional responses of anger, gratitude, guilt, hopelessness, pity, pride and shame” (Weiner, 1985.p, 548). Therefore, the teachers should be careful while attributing factors behind academic failure or poor performance of their students.
- iii) It is evident from the results of the study that the low achievers knew that their low score was due to least effort expenditure and lack of linguistic ability. Therefore, it is suggested to the teachers to assess their teaching methodologies to know that if they are implementing such methods that motivate students to increase effort expenditure to learn and succeed.
- iv) The study is significant for the other researchers who are keen on conducting research in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT). Another study can be carried out on teachers by using Weiner’s theory as the framework. The study would aim to reflect upon the perception of teachers on their students’ academic performance. Such a study may employ questionnaire or interview as research tool or they both can be paired together to be used in the research to collect data from the sample.
- v) The present study was conducted with adult students. Another study can be carried out on school students (9th and 10th grade) to explore the effect of age difference cast on the perceptions of students.
- vi) Weiner’s Attribution Theory focuses on educational environment and thus is widely used in the studies carried out in academic settings. But it cannot be confined to education only as its application can be extended to include other domains of life.

Conclusion

The present study aimed at exploring if the study subjects (low achievers as well as high achievers) attributed their success or failure to internal factors or external factors. It was found that both the high achievers and low achievers attributed their academic performance with internal factors only and did not associate their performance with external factors. According to them efforts and sound linguistic ability help to perform well in examination and thus lead towards academic success whereas half-hearted efforts and poor linguistic abilities create hurdles to perform well in examination. In terms of task difficulty and luck, both the low achievers as well as high achievers agreed that these attributes did not have any remarkable impact on their performance in the examination. They held effort and ability as important factors to describe academic success and failure.

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