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A study of factors affecting students' performance in examination at university level

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Abstract

Examination is an integral part of the education system, which has certain objectives .Examinations are useful as it measures a student's progress towards predetermined objectives. Examination is a process for testing the abilities or achievement of the student in any area of academic program. So there are also some factors, which create obstacles to measure the real performance of the student. This study designed to measure the factors affecting student's performance in examination at university level. Questionnaire was used as research tool. The questionnaire was administered to 200 students, 100 students from Faculty of Arts and 100 students from Faculty of Science of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, Pakistan. Mean score was calculated to determine the empirical reaction of students on each item. The data was analyzed Gender wise and Faculty wise to compare by using standard deviation and Z test. The findings for each statement were made. On the basis of findings, the conclusion was drawn. It was found that (i) the respondents viewed that at university level most of the psychological, physical, socio-economic and educational factors affected their performance in examination (ii) Change in pattern of question papers near examination affect student's performance (iii) The respondents viewed that unfair means in examination affect their performance (iv) Lack of proper guidance affect their performance in examination. On the basis of findings of study, following recommendation were made to improve examination system (1) students may be given proper examination training before getting into final examination, in order to avoid overconfidence as well as exam phobia (2) Internal environment of examination may be peaceful and conducive to the students (3) Difficulty level of questions in question paper may be moderate i.e. neither too easy nor too difficult (4) paper evaluator may pay more concentration while marking answer sheet.

Keywords: Factors, affecting, performance , examination, students, University level;

1. Introduction

Every educational system consists of an examination system through which the qualities and abilities of the students are assessed by giving them grades and positions (Ahmed,1993).As Mathews (1985)states:

> "Examination tests the efficiency of the education provides ,we shall need to test what it is,   students can do, rather what he knows."

It means, the ultimate objectives of the examination is to measure the performance level of the students and without this, we cannot know what the students attain from their educational system. So examination are doing the job of final appraisal of student achievement. As Iqbal(1996)has discussed our examination system in the following words:

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> "Examination are conducted to test the ability of the student and find out if he has reached a certain standard of academic learning and knowledge. They scrutinize and measure the student 's capabilities against skill in answering a question under the condition imposed by the examiner."

The aim of the examination is to evaluate the ability of candidates. Examination supplies a tangible proof of fitness of a student for high class or a particular professional course. According to dictionary of education(1998)Examination is defined as under:

> "It is test of a person's knowledge or proficiency in which he or she is required to answer questions or perform tasks."

As for as the examination system in Pakistan is concerned, it is not bad but it has some limitations. So there are also some factors, which are affecting student 's performance in examination. In educational policy of Pakistan(1972) it was stated: "There is an usual degree unanimity as to the serious limitation of our examination system." Teachers students and general public are all a like of the view that it is neither provide an accurate test of the scholastic attainment of the students, nor it is designed to assess the intellectual development."

From the above statement , it appears that present system of examination in Pakistan is not testing real understanding and intellectual growth of the student. According to Singha(1998):

> "The inappropriate structure of questions, pattern and type of question papers, subjective marks and individual difference in evaluating the answers, dishonest invigilating staff, wrong marking of scripts etc are the main factors which affect student 's performance in examination."

Above factors are creating obstacles to measure the real performance of the students. As a result many students fail in the examination. It is fact that failure of student is not their fate rather as there are some problems, which becomes hurdle in their successes. Deserving students are deprived to get actual performance in spite of their good I.Q level. Examination system has many factors, which affect directly or indirectly on student s' performance in examination. So in order to make the present examination system meaningful, it is necessary to control these factors. There factors can be classified into following categories.

1. Extrinsic factors
2. Intrinsic factors
3. Personal factors
4. Miscellaneous factors

1.   Extrinsic factors

These factors can be categorized into following categories:

i.   Environment of examination hall. It include eight factors which are following

    Temperature
    Light
    Distance between rows and lines of students
    Sound inside the examination hall
    Suffocation
    Sound outside the examination hall
    Invigilation staff
    Seating positions
    Lake of discipline

2. Intrinsic factors

These categorized into following categories:

    Style or pattern of question paper
    Inappropriate sequence of questions
    Strict marking

3. Personal factors

These factors may be following

    1   Selection of questions
    2   Family problems
    3   Tension
    4   Over confidence\lack of confidence

4. Miscellaneous factors

Examination system has also some other factors, which affect on student s' performance in examination

1 Hand writing
2 Presentation of material
3 Selective study
4 Exam phobia

Objectives of the Study

Following were the major objectives of the study:

1. To determine different factors of examination system which affect on student s' performance.
2. To find out responses of arts and science male and female students about the factors which affect on their performance in examination.
3. To compare the male& female and arts & science students' responses about factors which affect on their performance
4. To find out significant difference among the responses of male, female& science, arts students about the factors affecting their performance in examination.

Method and Procedure

The study was descriptive research in nature. A five point rating scale questionnaire was developed to collect the data. The intended target population was all the students (male and female of science and social science faculties) of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. Out of the whole population, two hundred students were selected through simple random sampling technique.

Analysis of Data

Mean score was calculated for overall level of agreement / disagreement for each statement. For mean score norm was 3.00.However level of agreement was different for each statement. Mcomb is also calculated of students and teachers. Gender-wise and faculty-wise analyses of students were also made for the comparison of level of agreement by using STANDARD DEVIATION, and Z-test with the help of formula :

$$Z = \cfrac{X1 - X2}{\sqrt{\cfrac{(SD1)^2}{N1} + \cfrac{(SD2)^2}{N2}}}$$

The overall level of agreement or disagreement and made the following comparisons:

I-Gender-wise Analysis
II-Faculty-wise Analysis

Scale values assigned to each of the five responses was as:

Level of Agreement	Scale Value
SA	5
A	4
UNC	3
DA	2
SDA	1

To calculate the mean score, following formula was used.

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{(FSAx5 + Fax4 + FUNCx3 + FDAx2 + FSDAx1)}{N}$$

Where
FSA= Frequency of strongly agreed
FA= Frequency of agreed
FUNC= Frequency of uncertain
FDA= Frequency of disagreed
FSDA= Frequency of strongly disagreed

In order to determine the empirical reaction of the students on each item, the mean score on all twenty-five items was calculated in table no 1:

Table 1:   Mean Score On Each Item

Sr.No	Statements	Means Score (Student)
1	Similarities in questions in question paper in examination affect on students' performance	2.74
2	Environment of examination hall affect on students' performance	3.00
3	Preparation of exams without determining objectives affect students' performance in exams.	3.20
4	Over confidence about exam preparation affect students' performance during exams	3.1
5	Short attendance in class affect students' performance	3.00
6	Domestic problems affect students' performance in examinations	3.41
7	Financial condition of students affect students' performance in exams	3.2
8	Methods of exam preparation affect on students' performance	3.00
9	Change in paper pattern in examination affect on students' performance	3.4
10	Method of solving the paper affect on students' performance in examinations	3.11
11	Ambiguity in questions of question papers affect on students' performance in examinations	3.2
12	Handwriting of students in paper affect students' performance in exams	2.72
13	Rote memory affect students' performance in examinations	2.8
14	Mood of paper checker affect on students' performance	3.22
15	Difficult questions in question paper affect on students' performance in examination	3.25
16	Easy questions in question paper affect on students' performance	2.64
17	Extra and detail study for exams affect on students' performance	2.68
18	Attention and interest of parents towards their children affect students' performance in examination	3.00
19	Strict behavior of invigilation staff in examination hall affect students' performance	3.1
20	Polite behavior of invigilation staff in examination hall affect on students' performance	2.43
21	Sitting plan of examination hall affect students' performance	3.2
22	Mismanagement in examination hall affect on students' performance in examination	2.26
23	Selection of question in case of choice in question paper affect students' performance	2.47
24	Tension about exams affect students' performance	3.05
25	Strict marking affect students' performance	3.41

Table shows that mean score more than 3.00(norm) means that most of the students at university level felt that most of the psychological, physical, socio-economic and educational factors affect their performance in examination.

Table no 2 :   GENDER WISE MEAN PERFORMANCE

No of student	Departments	botany	chemistry	English	Economics	Education	Islamiyat	Math	Pak studies	Physics	zoology
100	Female $\bar{x}$ score	75.5	66.5	75.9	70.5	77.1	72.6	80.0	71.6	76.7	80.0
100	Male X score	57.00	72.00	80.5	74.00	74.1	59.9	72.5	64.9	71.5	68.5

.The table no 2 shows the mean score of male and female students. Mean score of female students of Math and Zoology departments was 80.00 and mean score of male students of the English department was 80.5, that were the highest mean score of male ands female students. Minimum mean score of female students was 66.5 and 57.00 of male students.

Table no3:   Mcomb PERFORMANCE OF MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

Serial no	No of subjects	Mcomb of male group	Mcomb of female group
1	200	69.49	74.64

The table no 3 shows that Mcomb of female students was 74.64 was greater than male students' Mcomb 69.49.It shows that the female students were more affected by examination factors than the male students.

Table no 4:   COMPARISON BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

In order to compare the performance of the male and female students standard deviation of both groups was calculated and Z-test was determined:

Sr no	No. of students	Sex	Mcomb	S.D	Z
1	100	Male	69.49	6.66	4.90
2	100	Female	74.64	8.06	

The table no 4 shows that Z value is 4.90 Which is greater than table value 1.96.Therefore, the difference is significant which shows that female students had better responses than male students. For female group, the factors had more sound affect students' performance in examination. In male group, the level of acceptability in examination was lower than that of female students.

Table no 5:   MEAN PERFORMANCES OF ARTS AND SCIENCE FACULTY

In order to determine the performance of arts and science students, mean score of both categories on four-point factors scale was calculated.

Sr.no	departments	No of subjects	X score	Sr.no	Departments	No of subjects	X Score
A01	Education	20	75.6	S01	Botany	20	66.25
A02	English	20	78.24	S02	Chemistry	20	69.25
A03	Economics	20	72.25	SO3	Math	20	76.25
A04	Islamiyat	20	76.25	S04	Physics	20	74.1
A05	Pak-studies	20	76.25	S05	Zoology	20	74.25

The above table shows the mean score of the science and arts faculties. The highest mean score was 78.24 of English department in arts faculty and 76.25 was Math department in science faculty. Minimum mean score was 68.25 of Pak-STUDT department in arts faculty and 66.25 of Botany department in science faculty.

Table no6:Mcomb PERFORMANCE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE FACULTIES

Serial no	No of subjects	Mcomb of Faculty of Arts	Mcomb of Faculty of Science
1	200	74.1	74.02

The table no 3 shows that Mcomb of arts faculty was 74.1 was greater than Mcomb of faculty of science 69.49, which shows that the students of faculty of arts were affected by the examination factors than students of faculty of Science.

Table no 7:   COMPARISON BETWEEN FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

In order to compare the performance of the students of faculty of arts and science, standard deviation of both groups was calculated and Z-test was determined.

Sr.No	Departments	No. of students	Mcomb	S.D	Z
1	Arts	100	74.1	6.44	2.16
2	Science	100	72.02	7.11	

The above table shows that Z value is 2.16 Which is greater than table value 1.96.Therefore, the difference is significant which shows that students of arts faculty had better responses than students of science faculty. For faculty of arts, the factors had more affected students' performance in examination. In students of faculty of science, the level of acceptability in examination was lower than students of faculty of arts.

Table no8:   ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

Sr.No	Respondent's factors	frequency	%age
1	Harsh attitude the examination staff	29	39.73
2	Shortage of time	25	34.25
3	Unfair means	14	19.18
4	Change the pattern of papers near the exams	12	16.44
5	Physical health	11	15.07
6	Strict marking	11	15.07
7	Out of course papers	10	13.7
8	Annual examination system	10	13.7
9	Paper misprinting	8	10.96
10	Lack of proper guidance	7	9.5

The above table shows the responses of open –ended question.

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