



ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS STUDY STRATEGY, ORIENTATED TO THOROUGH APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: of the present research was to analyze students' attitude towards study strategies, orientated towards thorough approach and comprehensive study.

METHODS: “*Questionnaire for researching the study strategies*” (N. Entwisle, M. Henly and D. Hensol, 1979) was used for the purpose for our survey; it was adapted for Bulgarian educational syllabus by J. Tzvetkova, 2001. The questionnaire included 30 statements. Data was processed using variational and nonparametric analysis. For better accuracy analysis for reliability with comparing to Cronbach alpha parameters was used.

RESULTS: the obtained results repeat, to a certain extent, the results of J. Tzvetkova, 2001.

On the formed statement *I often catch myself asking questions about the things I hear at lectures and I read in the books* positive answer give 72.22% from the elder students, thus from the determined second group - aged 40 to 55. It is observed that in the first age group (aged from 24 to 39) this refers to only (37.50±8.56%); the difference is statistically significant (Fisher's Exact Test=0.38, P<0.05).

In spite of the difficulties in conducting healthcare reforms, social and economic problems at work places, the investigated students not only didn't lose study motivation after the first semester but showed need for thorough studying - comprehensive studying and consequent satisfactory quest for personal meaning and reasonable choice in the education of master degree of Healthcare management.

CONCLUSIONS: Motivation for continuing the education to a higher degree is a matter of desire and personal choice from the students. Their motives vary, but are accompanied by pursuit for reading of additional literature in order to conduct the given assignments.

Key words: Healthcare management, students, study strategy, motivation for continuing the education.

INTRODUCTION

Study strategies emphasise on the ability to study, orientated towards succeeding. The topic acquires new meaning, especially for contemporary education, developing in conditions of interactivity and globalization.

In the past few years universities in central and eastern Europe encountered new challenge – introduction of strategies for renovation and alteration of higher education. There is an

extreme concern about the matter of providing permanent quality of teaching and scientific researches in conditions of actual economic crisis (1).

When revising the aspects of education and individual development, the problem of *forming students personality at university distinguishes as extremely current. This formation is performed”...in conditions of independent educational cognitive activity, by interaction with the teacher”* (2, pg. 425).

As initial point serves the opinion that *personality formation is not totally, rather than partially controlled process. This thesis is supported by the fact that besides purposive influences, on people affect also some difficultly controlled factors, occurring*

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sporadically. According to St. Chernev significant difficulties in controlling personality formation process are due to penetration of its spiritual life into motivational sphere and intimate experiences (3, pg. 460).

Students' individual characteristics are also very significant: presence or absence of interest towards study activities; presence or absence of necessary knowledge and skills; different rate of workability, velocity of work, etc (Glubkova, 2009), (4).

Contemporary study strategies researches are revolutionary, because they alter the directions for investigating the study process and explore it from the students' perspective. Primary point for these researches is not only improvement of academic achievements, but also total transformation of individual knowledge and development of creative thinking (5, pg. 61).

From the above statements the following thesis is distinguished: training process at universities should combine adequate management and academic atmosphere for formation of engagement, high motivation, empathy, professional skills, habits and other personal qualities of the students.

The aim of the present research was to analyze students' attitude towards study strategies, orientated towards thorough approach and comprehensive study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

"Questionnaire for researching the study strategies" (N. Entwisle, M. Henly and D. Hensol, 1979) was used for the purpose for our survey; it was adapted for Bulgarian educational syllabus by J. Tzvetkova, 2001(5, pg. 61). The questionnaire included 30 statements.

Data was processed using variational and nonparametric analysis. For better accuracy analysis for reliability with comparing to Cronbach alpha parameters was used.

In the current research difference in processing the results was the introduction of five additional inquiries, considering demographic characteristic of the studied group. Correlation between the demographic parameter and each factor was pursuit.

The proposed 30 factors in the adapted questionnaire of J. Zvetkova, 2001 are

correlated to five-degree scale, Lickard type. The difference in the present case was that scales were united into two statements "completely agree" and "completely disagree" because of the small number of respondents.

Results from the study: the obtained results repeat, to a certain extent, the results of J. Tzvetkova, 2001.

Following the performed analysis, four major factors were distinguished: *thorough approach/comprehensive studying; superficial approach/operational studying; study, organized and orientated towards achievements and the fourth factor – stable extraversion* (5, pg. 64-67).

The present research studies the first factor, which unities eight items. This factor is defined as "Strategy orientated towards thorough studying". Statements included in the study are associated with internal motivation, adjustments related to disappointing experiences and influence of the obligatory curriculum, active quest for personal meaning, significance of the school material, as well as its thorough and accurate comprehension.

This research was performed during 2009/2010 school year and has thorough character. The study included 50 students from the master program of "Healthcare management", Faculty of public health (PHF), Medical University – Plovdiv (MU-Plovdiv). 10 students were excluded from the survey due to their reluctance to participate and disloyal attitude to filling the questionnaire.

Sex distribution wasn't studied due to the fact that from the 50 investigated people only one was a man, thus in the present study sex could not be a defying factor.

According to the variable age respondents were divided into two groups: from 24 to 40 (72.00±6.35%) and from 40 to 55(28±6.35%). Analysis on demographic variable *occupation* shows that 42.86±7.07% have leading position (senior or chief supervisor) and 57.14±7.07% work as regular nurses, midwives etc. When studying the factor average score from semester exam students with excellent marks prevail (56.25±7.165), followed by those with very good marks (33.33±6.80%). The students determined their material status as good in

65.31±6.80% of the cases, average in 28.57±6.45% and high in only 6.12±3.42%.

On the formed statement **I often catch myself asking questions about the things I hear at lectures and I read in the books** positive answer give 72.22% from the elder students, thus from the determined second group - aged 40 to 55. It is observed that in the first age group (aged from 24 to 39) this refers to only (37.50±8.56%); the difference is statistically significant (Fisher's Exact Test=0.38, P<0.05).

Students' opinion wasn't influenced by their occupation during tuition, average score from semester exam and material status of the family.

Respondents who occupy leading position (senior or chief supervisors) as well the regular nurses and midwives etc answer positively in 42.96% and in (57.14±9.35%) of the cases respectively, (P>0.05).

The highest part of the investigated people with excellent marks from the exams (over 5.50) disagreed in (54.55±8.67%), and those with very good marks agreed in (62.50%) with the proposed statement (P>0.05). The obtained results could be explained by the fact that excellent students comprehend the offered material and need no additional explanations and inquires.

Students which determine their material status as "above average" and as average also answered positively to a high extent - (48.57±8.45%) и 57.14% respectively (P>0.05).

The second proposed statement **When I read article or scientific report I thoroughly investigate the evidences in order to decide whether the conclusion is justified** both age groups answered positively- (78.13±7.31%) и (80.00±8.94%), (P>0.05).

Their judgement is not influenced by their occupation – positively answer (95.24±4.65%) from those working on a leading position and (77.78±6.93%) from the nurses (P>0.05).

The stated opinion is not affected by the other investigated factors – average score from semester exams and material status. Both students with excellent marks (81.82±6.71%) and with very good marks give positive answer (81.25±9.76%), (P>0.05); the same refers about the material status - (85.71±5.91%) with

material status over average and 71.43% for those with average, (P>0.05).

The next statement **I find the academic topics quite interesting and I would like to continue studying them after the course is over** is accepted positively from both age groups -(62.50±8.56%) and 70.59%, (P>0.05). The obtained results concerning students interest towards the topics, included in the master program satisfy us to a great extent. The stated opinion is not influenced by the rest of the investigated factors: occupation, average score from semester exams and material status of the family (P>0.05).

On the statement **The main reason to be here is to learn more about those disciplines who actually interest me** again answer positively students from both age groups - (81.25±6.90%) from the younger respondents and (94.12±5.71%) from the students over forty (P>0.05).

The expressed students opinion is not influenced by the other investigated factors – occupation, average score from semester exam, material status of the family (P>0.05).

With the fifth statement **I often catch myself wondering whether the work I do during my education is worth it** the students mostly disagree - (76.67±7.72%) for age group 24-39 and (70.59%) for age group 40-55 respectively. It makes an impression that students do not express doubt concerning the significance of their education in healthcare management, which give us hope because at this point the legal condition for occupying leading position is bachelor degree in healthcare management.

The stated opinion is not influenced by the other studied factors – occupation, average score from semester exam, material status of the family (P>0.05).

Interesting results were obtained from the next offered statement: **The continuation of my education is mainly something that just happened, rather than something I really wanted for myself.** Great part from the students from the first age group (24-39) (86.61±6.61%) and those from the second age group (40-55) (77.78±9.80%) disagree with this statement (P>0.05), thus motivation for upgrading the education in masters program is a matter of personal choice and desire of the students taught in our department.

The obtained results are not influenced by the other investigated factors – occupation, average score from semester exam, material status ($P > 0.05$).

The following statement was also proposed: **I would like to be told exactly what to do in my papers and my other duties.** Agreement express ($58.06 \pm 8.66\%$) from the students from the first age group and (66.67%) from the second age group, ($P > 0.05$).

Their evaluation is not impacted by their occupation, average score from semester exam and material status ($P > 0.05$).

The final proposed statement **I tend to read only a little additionally to what is required for completing the assignments** provoked interesting answers - ($80.00 \pm 7.30\%$) students from the first group and ($66.67 \pm 0\%$) from the second one disagree with this statement ($P > 0.05$). We could conclude that students prepare with thorough interest, quest and approach towards the tuition.

The expressed opinion again is not influenced by students occupation, average score from semester exams and material status.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Educational process at universities possesses quite many specific characteristics. On one hand they are due to the specificity of the contingent of subjects – age, social experience, level of education etc., on the other hand - due to the requirements for academism of activities and interactions, and from third – due to the primary aim – acquiring professional qualification and competence for success in the profession.

Despite the altered characteristics of students contingent and this social group, people's beliefs remain filled with certain, relatively stable characteristics and qualities. Student is a young individual, with more thoughts and ambition than his peers out of university, used to be among the leaders in high school and very often chooses his profession or specialty because of affection for certain school subject or teacher. He is a formed individual capable of surviving on his own but not enough to do it constantly and always successfully, he "consumes" youth till the end (6, pg. 12-24).

Based on this two statements (Koleva, M., 2009; Terzieva and Ilieva, 2007) and also

on the fact that approach towards students in masters programs in mainly andragogical, we conclude that the established approach for dividing the investigated contingent into two age groups is a positive feature (7).

Provoking the interest is directly related to study motivation, which is determined by elders as realizing the benefit of studying (elder students seek answer for many questions during training process: What does the studying give them? (knowledge); Why do they need this information?; What benefit would they have from it?; How would it help them to be better persons and better professionals? etc. (8, pg. 6).

Students in masters program of healthcare management are professionals. A large part of them occupy a leading position and for the others perspectives for career development after acquiring masters degree in healthcare management are also promising. As mentioned above, our healthcare system requires a bachelor degree in healthcare management for occupying leading position. The raised interest towards the masters program, as well as the engaged positive attitude towards education, indicates craving for thorough studying, permanently acquired knowledge and subsequent creative behavior at work.

According to St. Chernev from psychological point of view managing the education suggests controlling the process of forming needs, motives, emotions and sensations in the individuals. Development and self-development of personality have always been associated with satisfying of material and spiritual needs (9, pg. 462).

Some students could experience diminishment of study motivation, caused by lack of interest, disbelief in knowledge benefits, disappointment, which is induced by disparity between expectations and adjustments and reality – organization and performance of study process, attitude and behavior of some teachers etc. (8, pg. 5).

In spite of the difficulties in conducting healthcare reforms, social and economic problems at work places, the investigated students not only didn't lose study motivation after the first semester but showed need for thorough studying - comprehensive studying and consequent satisfactory quest for personal meaning and reasonable choice in the

education of master degree of Healthcare management.

The performed research allows us to make the following most significant conclusions:

1. Additional explanations of the material from lectures by inquiring is typical for the elder students (over 40 years old) and those with very good marks from semester exam.
2. Students define the proposed academic topics as quite interesting, thoroughly investigate the scientific literature and expect to gain additional knowledge concerning the topics they are interested in.
3. Motivation for continuing the education to a higher degree is a matter of desire and personal choice from the students. Their motives vary, but are accompanied by pursuit for reading of additional literature in order to conduct the given assignments.

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