

The Pedagogical Survey of Tunisian Students in Higher Education: Motivation and Affiliation

ALI MÂALEJ

Doctor of Economics, University of Sfax, Tunisia

Abstract: This paper aims at offering a set of pedagogical tools as a matrix for the students' affiliation in the higher education's institutions in Tunisia. The study is conducted on a sample of first year students taken from the Higher School of Commerce of Sfax (H. S. C. S.) during the academic year 2008/2009. Referring to the result, it is noted that the second semester's students' grades regarding the school modules are better than those of the first one. The placing of students in a different environment untallied to their background, unfamiliar grounds for relationships, newly met setting for study which are all accompanied with much freedom for action and a room for much more influential decisions at work. They are all decisive factors in their university lives. A key concept of the present study is affiliation which is closely related to others. Namely, they are project, vocation and motivation. They are all worth describing the occupational term "student". The looming question is whether the students' affiliation as well as motivation is the influential frames for success at university.

Keywords: pedagogical tools, motivation, affiliation, success.

Introduction

De-motivation reflects a lack in the Students' psychological response to the sociological necessity of the academic life. It is often manifested in two ways (Viau & Joly, 2001). The first concerns de-motivation which crops up internally from the very beginning of the course or even the nature of the subject per se. An exterior factor of demotivation may be accentuated by the teacher's activities assigned to the students. The corollary of the demotivation is the vanishing of the students' perseverance during the attended courses. Hence, low grades and the immanent failure are the motivating forces for students' drop out. Teachers are required to get students involved adequately in courses whose subject matter hinges on constant attention-drawing (Urduan & Schoenfelder, 2006 ; Yee & Tang, 2003 ; Trouilloud et al., 2006 ; Wentzel et al., 2010).

Romainville (2002) argues that students being made autonomous are able to think deductively. They get the implicit rules as well as tacit contracts themselves providing that the learning ground is prepared for them. The gate for success is open wide to increase their scores highly. He also claims that setting the course objectives is supposed to be in line with their knowledge interests. Skills are outlined adaptively a priori to enhance their choices efficiently.

According to Coulon (1997) the concept of affiliate is at the core of the students' management of the university life. Coulon (1997) thinks that affiliation is the key for success. He cites two types of membership. They are the institutional and intellectual affiliations. These two affiliation types are in accordance with the acquired cognitive ability to discover the appropriate process for course engagement as well as with the manipulatively practical rules of studying. Simply, they generate the conditions for transforming the institutional/intellectual standards into implicit practical actions. In fact, for a new student, it suffices to master the skills related to communication in the frame of the three dimensional university world: peers, teachers and non-teaching staff. The social background and the affective factor are vital for the students' success. Additional determinant incentives are probably stimulating for the students' achievements. The current study is an attempt to analyze them scientifically. An analytical process of how students are integrated in the training sector through motivational and educational tools is of a paramount importance. The population of the present study is a sample of students taken from the Higher School of Commerce of Sfax.

The target students are inclusively admitted to conduct the study in order to be informed of the main reasons of their success at the end of the first year of higher education in Tunisia. The main posed question is as follow: what is the relationship between motivation and affiliation on the one hand, and the students' success on the other hand?

Literature review

According to Archambault and Chouinard (2003), the influential variables for motivation are referenced to causal attributions, perceptual competence, a sense of self-efficiency, learning inclinations and particularly interest.

Motivation and vocation are the measuring operations of the university students' success. The enigma vanishes by a better understanding of the mechanism that may increase the students' motivation. A focal point is a pursuing of the students' attention and their abilities to understand the current courses extrinsically involved in their contents. Maurice (2001) believes that the best students are classified as those who demonstrate a cognitive attachment to their educational life through well-defined goals, specific projects, time management abilities, adaptively workable methods of a perceptual accuracy of the context, a leering ability of their teachers' expectations and a performing use of the language of study. They are also marked by an affective value for membership signaled by motivation. Maurice (2001) adds that the intellectual ability is embodied in formal and spontaneous academic assessments with the oral and written modes. In fact, students exposed to the rules of sciences are deeply grounded in the game of knowledge construction, learning standards and familiarization with the intricacies of academic discourse.

Charlot (1997) emphasizes the intellectual affiliation to the tenets of a community of knowledge. The communal activities are purposed by giving a hand to the undergraduate students. The task of preparing students for academically integrative process is much more important than a cyclical training limited to university entrance, note-taking activities and methodological application of the current academic theories. Shankland (2007) and Hassanbeigi and Askari (2010) raise the issue of university affiliation from a psychological perspective. They have worked on the integration of the university students. They claim that membership is a mechanism for an adaptive defense. Accordingly, motivation to learn is multi-faceted. It may be a major cause for students' degrees of knowledge or university leavings. With the flow of students' dropouts, motivation for learning and membership become a vital area for research at university (Yee & Tang, 2003 ; Spera & Wentzel, 2003 ; Hamm et al., 2011). Students may start with the impulse for motivational enhancements. This impulse may be lost in the teaching/learning environment.

Viau and Bouchard (2000) claim the necessity of dealing with the issue of motivation through the dynamics of the students' learning process. For Viau and Bouchard (2000), students' motivation is complex. There are different levels of motivation. Motivation is impalpable. The motivational features are in the range of amplification and impairment. It depends on the courses' validity in the students' creeds, the assignments while learning and exam review. Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006) and Hamm and et al. (2011) ascertain that the teacher's role is generating the students' motivation during the courses. They think that a good teacher conceptualizes his/her courses for the benefits of the students in an interactive way. Legault et al. (2006) substantiate the teacher's abilities of infiltrating the supportive skills for the students to enhance motivation energetically. Trouilloud and al. (2006) study the teacher's psychology in terms of their attitudinal behaviour towards the students. The teacher's affective factor is beneficial for the students' motivation, guided perceptions and thus success. Archambault and Chouinard (2003) find out that the teacher's assumption of the students' feedback and comments with respect to the level of performance is influential. If it is negative, it may have a devastating effect on the learners' psychology. It may undermine the students' self-esteem and self-confidence simultaneously. Sarrazin and Trouilloud (2006) and Wentzel et al. (2010) affirm that the teacher's management of the interactive process with the learners' contributions to the in-built of the class' generative power for an accelerated motivation.

Trouilloud et al. (2006) indicate that the class' motivation encapsulates a high level of the learners' self-autonomy. The learning environment in which students' self-autonomy is left stranded may be with very limited effects. It urges the students with low expectations to pursue their courses at a minimum motivational pace. Harackiewicz et al. (2008) seek for an efficient objective whose effects are encouraging. It stimulates the students for an active engagement in learning to discover the interesting and the challenging aspects of the main themes during university courses. Archambault and Chouinard (2003) support the idea of objective's efficiency. They defer the teacher whose personal interests are tuned up in the course of developing the students' leering ability through designing a trial and error process in the flow of his/her lesson. The base of contention is, therefore, profitable in terms of demarcating a line for students to set up their learning objective in each of their university courses. A one-sided view of ratings and error is destructive for the students' establishment of their learning objectives. Nevertheless, standing at arm's length from the key for students' motivation is against a remedial process for learning.

Teachers should not be left in the cold. Motivation is intricate in its constitution. Truly, teachers are responsible for the external motivation of their students. An internal motivation on the part of the learners is required. Students who begin their studies with a very low motivation will affect the educational basic elements negatively. The more motivation is triggered, the more teaching is challenging for the better (Yee & Tang, 2003). Ryan and Deci (2000), and Lonsdale et al. (2011) emphasize that the students' self-generating interest, enthusiasm and efforts in the realm of university is of a great concern. A motivation as such vis-à-vis the students' convictions remain primarily individual and with pragmatic end. Students are also required to be self-confident towards the university administered competencies. It may be interpreted as a legacy inherited from secondary school life and the well-designed courses which reflect clarity and consistency. Lonsdale et al. (2011) prove that the students' predictions and expectations are expressed concretely providing that the presumed learning substances are roughly at their skill levels. Hence, the learners are likely to feel competent (Jang et al., 2009).

Another critical factor in learning is the students' view of group work and the free decision for its making. Alava and Romainville (2001) corroborate that the academic success is an index for the learners' intellectual levels as well as the strategically adaptive power for studying what is behind the high institutions' walls. For instance, a business students' self-familiarization with the academic site of teaching is susceptible for a gradual mastery of what is specific. In addition, the intangible pedagogy namely the processing of the faculty's expectations and anticipatory aspects are regulative of the learners' activities at university.

Methodology

To conduct the study, a sample of students who are enrolled in the first year of university studies at the High School of Commerce of Sfax is taken during the academic year of 2008/2009. It is randomly selected. The informants are students with Tunisian background education. They are facing their first experience at university. 810 students who are enrolled in the first year are under focus in this study. They pursue five different courses ranging from management to informatics. They include one basic university course and the remaining fourth are applied. The overall rate of success of the main session of the first year is 32.84 %. It resembles 266 students out of the total subjects as 810 found all over the table below:

Table 1

Fields	Total	Succeeded students	Success rate
1- Fundamental License of management	406	138	33.99%
2- Applied license of accounting	167	56	33.53%
3- Applied license of economics and international finance	106	35	33.02%
4- Applied license of economics and quantitative management	65	12	18.46%
5- Applied license of informatics	66	25	37.88%
Total sum (first year)	810	266	32.84%

The above statistics of table 1 show that half of the first year students are oriented towards the fundamental sector whereas the other half is dispersed all along the applied courses. While the rate of success in the principal exam sessions is around 35% in almost all the fields, it does not exceed 18.4% in the cases of applied license of economics and qualitative management. 266 students pass the end of the year. Those who are repeating the first year are excluded. Hence, for more reliability, a sample of 260 students is processed. The postulated number is equivalent to a rate of success which amount to 97.74% of the total sum. The purpose behind the postulation is to highlight the modules and subjects that contribute to the success of the estimated informants. Accordingly, the ordinary least square method is used for estimating the following equation:

$$G_i = a_0 + a_1 F_i + a_2 T_i + a_3 OP_i + \xi_i$$

A description of the different variables of the formula is presented just below:

- ξ_i represents the error while the i refers to the student.
- G is the dependent variable and represents the student average score of the main session of the first year.
- F is the fundamental module. The fundamental subjects usually feature specialty for industry taught.
- T is the transverse module. Common transverse modules are found in all sectors. They generally include technical language.
- OP is the optional module. Optional modules are usually chosen by the heads of departments. They are aligned with the specialty sector. The selection of the optional subject depends on the availability and experience of teachers.

Results

Table 2 (just below) is operational in terms of transferring motivation and affiliation into the target students' scores. The independent variables feature the category of courses. Their placements are accounted by their degree of knowledge. They are respectively fundamental, transverse and optional modules. The students' results are divided into two semesters in order to compare them basically as analytical data.

Table 2

Dependent Variable : student average score						
Independent variables		Fundamental Liscence of management	Applied liscence of accounting	Applied liscence of economics and international finance	Applied liscence of economics and quantitative	Applied liscence of informatics
First semester	F1	0.08 4.50*	0.07 3.58*	0.16 4.10*	0.11 1.45	0.07 1.37
	T1	0.17 8.51*	0.13 3.05*	0.05 1.12	0.07 0.5	0.11 2.43*
	OP1	0.10 7.06*	0.12 6.39*	0.11 5.05*	0.04 0.88	0.19 2.21*
		F2	0.13 7.76*	0.15 4.20*	0.14 5.70*	0.08 1.10
second semester	F3	0.10 7.71*	0.12 4.05*	0.23 9.70*	0.20 3.04*	0.09 1.24
	F4					1.24 0.15
	T2	0.12 7.38*	0.15 4.58*	0.18 4.69*	0.27 2.33*	0.12 2.72*
	OP2	0.15 10.5*	0.17 7.34*	0.08 3.51*	-0.10 -0.82	0.05 0.15
constant		1.63 5.54*	1.07 1.69	0.23 0.33	3.66 1.20	1.06 1.24
Adjacent R-squared		0.90	0.91	0.90	0.84	0.94
number		138	56	35	12	19

Italics numericals : t of student ; * : 5% as a signififier roof

With reference to the above statistics, it is shown that the modules of the second half of the examined year are more efficient than those of the first half counterparts. Through time, the students are better adapted to the institution's environment and the pedagogical methods for study. The students' familiarization with the institution is noticeable at the second half of the studied year. It stimulates motivation and pushes success to go up. The present results support those of Coulon's (1997) investigation of the issue of transition from secondary to tertiary education. They reinforce it particularly when they signal the importance of the initial step of the integrative process through the differences in scores within the frame of the first and the second semester. The gradual transition from secondary courses to the university one is the major deal. By the introduction of affiliation as a concept, Coulon (1997) highlights not only the students' status' changeability but also the acquisition of a new identity. According to the findings of this study, novice students are expected to achieve a set of learning needs to master, particularly in the first stage of their transition towards higher education. The gap of scores in terms of the first and the second semesters reflect the students' difficulty at university affiliation. They are required to know the 'art' of making relations with the university triangulated cycle. The latter consists of relation-making with the fellow students, the teachers and the administrative staff (Wentzel et al., 2010).

In addition, regarding table 2 **above**, the coefficients of the fundamental modules play an important role in the students' success in applied economics licenses and informatics noticeably in the second half of the university year. The taught subjects are of a basic value required for the academic formation of the students. They are also influential in the calculation of the overall average. In this respect, the students' attitudes towards the basic subjects are motivationally self-sustained. For the sections of management and accountancy, the impact of the second semester optional modules on the students' performance is foundationally positive. The pertaining subjects of the optional modules have an effect on their overall average. It is noticed that the advocated teaching methods of these subjects are very motivating for the students. The interactive contextual situations are at the core of the relationship between students and teachers. It is in accordance with Wentzel et al. (2010), and Hamm et al. (2011), findings in terms of motivation which intermediates in the classroom environment. The selected qualities of communication and class management, developed by the teachers in their classroom environment, are pivotal in students' motivation. Indeed, students have fun probably in the following three cases: the content of the addressed courses is rich in substances or the lessons' traits are guiding the students adequately or they are eager to attend particular teachers' classes rather than others. It follows that the first two situations are related to a fun discovery of courses while the third is more correlational with the teaching methods and the teachers' personal traits (Coulon & Paivandi, 2008).

In the light of the present study, it seems that motivation is not only dually made by internal and external factors. It is also a temporal constituent where the time flow plays a part. However, affiliation is individual. It depends on the student's communicative skills to perceive the university environment with a positive attitude. Finally, it is noted that the coefficient of the constant is positive and salient in relation to the basic license sector only. Then, it is suggested that there are other factors, apart from the taught modules, which are likely to explain the students' success. It may be accounted for the bringing of the students' intellectual capabilities of secondary schools to the tertiary ones in Tunisia. As a matter of fact, the oriented students to the fundamental fields generally have remarkable scores at the baccalaureate exams (final diploma obtained at secondary schools in Tunisia) rather than the applied ones.

Conclusion

The purpose behind the present study is to demonstrate how motivation as well as affective factors is an integral part in attaining a more increased rate of success at first year in university. It is better to scrutinize the dynamics of motivation to discern the enigma of the demotivated students. They are in need of a motivational triggering in order to pursue their university courses. The factor of integration is organic in the students' success. The findings of the current investigation are suggestive. They reveal that the learners' scores are much better in the second half of the academic year. The more the students feel integrated into the educational system, the much better they do. Time plays significant part in getting the students acquainted with their courses' flows. The noticeable low scores in the first semester of the Tunisian higher education are accounted for the lack of experience among the students' population. Students require additional motivating teaching/learning incentives for a loose adaptation in their environments. The current research is an attempt to unmask the optimal conditions for the university students' ways of success. Its findings are illuminative. They denote that integration, the preconceptual pedagogical methods and motivation have an impact on the learners' scores at higher education in Tunisia. The due course for motivational and affiliated accentuation is the university diplomas critical effects on the students' future. They are the motivating factor for enhancing the work potentialities and hence the marked oriented job facilities (Maâlej & Boudabous, 2011).

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