

”Examining Factors Affecting Graduate Students’ Success in University Entrance Exam”

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ABSTRACT

Regarding the growing trend of globalization of science and technology and the fact that effective and efficient human resources may change the role and status of countries so that a country can be optimistic about its future if enjoys expertise human resource and since Education Organization and Higher Education Centers are responsible for training specialists and it is also believed that the main and perhaps the only way to train skilled human resource is through education and higher education centers, the educated and skilled workforce, therefore, can affect communities and regions throughout the world, regions, provinces, and even cities and villages.

Adopting a survey, descriptive and casual-comparative method, the present study aims to determine the effect of individual, psychological and social factors on graduate students’ success in university entrance exam.

In this regard, three hypotheses were formulated. A questionnaire is also employed to collect the required data from 120 alumni applying for M.S and graduate students. The gathered data are analyzed using SPSS software and Logistic Regression Model. The results revealed that undergraduate GPA and participating in other fields’ exam are among the most essential factors affecting the acceptance of students in graduate school’s entrance exam.

KEY WORDS: individual factors, psychological factors, social factors and success.

INTRODUCTION

Every community tries to achieve comprehensive growth and development in all dimensions, i.e. political, social, economic and cultural. Each country plans to determines and use the most important dimension to lay the groundwork for its growth and development in the future. On the other hand, considering the issues and needs, and laying the groundwork for individuals’ growth and improvement may affect country’s progress in other aspects of development [1]. Higher education centers aim to prepare an expert, innovative and creative generation for the future. It is noteworthy that people do not enjoy the same opportunities, facilities and conditions so that they sometimes cannot find a situation to make use of their talents, and if these talents are not flourished, many goals of higher education will not be fulfilled and kind of educational crisis resulting from concentration and distribution of facilities and social status comes to exist. Based on this, this research tries to reflect the realities relating to the success factors.

According to symbolic interaction and exchange theories, it is tried to analyze the effect of important variables playing an essential role in graduate students’ success. These variables including individual, social and psychological factors have special aspects and features influencing graduate students’ success.

Now, the question raised here is how much is the effect of individual, social and psychological factors on graduate students’ success in the university entrance exam?

Theoretical framework

The interactive approach became increasingly popular since World War II put emphasis on psycho-social issues. In the sociology of education, the researcher using an interactive approach tries to consider the interactions between peer groups, teacher-student, teacher and head master, attitudes and academic achievements of students, teachers and students’ values, students’ feedback and its impact on wishes, and socio-economic base and its relationship with students’ achievements[2], It is interesting to

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say that two useful interaction theories in the realm of sociology of education and higher education are: Symbolic interaction and Exchange theory[2].

The reciprocal interaction view states that encouraging students by teachers and other students can influence their successful attitudes. The reciprocal interaction approach is closely linked with labeling theories [3]. Evidence suggests that students behave well or badly based on their teachers' expectations [4]. The Concept of "self" in its own merit is very important in this school. Rock believes that self, in terms of symbolic reciprocal interaction, is significantly important and all social processes and events take place around this center.

Using kooli theory, one can say that the concepts of self are initially formed in childhood and then it would be reevaluated as people enter new positions in their life time. Social origins of a person's life appear via his/her communication with other people [5]. Successful self are those individuals passed the university entrance exam successfully, grew up in a scientific environment and communicated with successful people belonging to high social class. It is noteworthy that communicating with these people has created this successful self in those individuals, and eventually leads them to be successful in the university entrance exam. In kooly's opinion, therefore, the concepts of Like and first groups are closely related to each other.

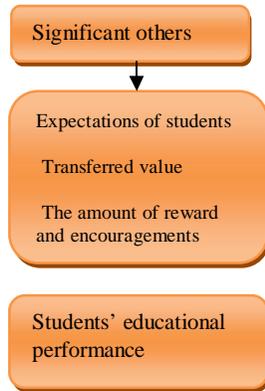
Mead examines the individual's activity or behavior within social context. He believes that an individual's behavior can only be perceived through understanding the overall behavior of his/her peer group because necessary actions rely on wider social actions which are related to the members of a group, not an individual[5]. Relying on this theory, one can prove the effect of social environment and social class on individuals' success. Mead talks about how gradual growth of the power of playing the role of others and looking at your act from others' point of view may result in developing awareness or self. Thus students, whose parents are engaged in top jobs and belong to high social class and spend much time on studying, try to internalize those roles, behaviors and studying habits through modeling their parents' behavior and playing their role. Upper class families prepare their children to accept new scientific materials by getting books and toys help them think better and answering their questions and curiosity in childhood.

Mead suggests that one of the critical impacts of socialization is the ability to predict the expectations of others and behave as they do. He also argues that this ability is achieved through role-taking. An individual attributes his world and self to them and internalizes the expectations of some specific people in childhood and those of society in adulthood. Therefore, these social expectations lay the groundwork for evaluating and understanding self. When parents have given their children a series of roles or attached some labels to them since their childhood, the children try to internalize their parents' expectations and put them into operation. Having adopted this fact, one can conclude the effect of family on person and his own expectations for continuing his education.

Therefore, one can conclude that family can develop and flourish children's character in any circumstances and provide the situation for them to promote in their educations. At all stages of life, parents and family elders are the first behavior patterns and credit criteria for children and teenagers. Parents expressing desire to study and gain knowledge may develop and flourish children and adolescents' innate talent.

Thus, family, as an important factor in education, can substitute certain behavioral, emotional and intellectual habits in children before, during or even after their education. Social classes, each with different lifestyle, can significantly affect their people's education.

Peer groups such as those in schools and neighborhoods influence the educational motivation and vocational programs of their members. In a working-class peer group, entering the market after completing high school program or even before it may become a norm for them [3]. Accordingly, children of low-class families communicate with people of the same class so that they find the same opinion as theirs and would not think much about the university entrance exam. Therefore, the impact of social class on success can be concluded from this sentence. As a result, this research tries to examine the relationship between teacher and student using the interactionist view of the concepts of self, self-concept, significant others, self-expectation, others expectation of him, progress motivation, and based on this theory the individuals' self-concept appear through socialization process and in relation to significant others. The individuals' self-concept is the reflection of their parents' social class, attitudes of social environment and their lives which account for individuals' success as an independent variable. Each of these concepts is studied in terms of interactionist theory.



Regarding exchange theory, exchange is not only limited to tangible objects, but consider intangible objects such as veneration, interest, cooperation and approval, and also include concepts such as suffering and cost of shame, and sometimes involves opportunities, points and other contrastive aspects of human relationships.

The hypotheses of participating in class activities and enrichment classes, encouragement and ancillary facilities for taking part in entrance exam, using consultants and interest in field of study are all derives from this theory.

Since the exchange theory in its current form is actually a kind of regression to the spirit and principles of individualism, it has combined the individualism view with considerable emphasis on the notions of motivation and individuals' apparent desire to act their specific beliefs. The exchange theory asserts that individuals have their own specific wishes and goals. Every one may feel some needs in his life. But these needs are not considered as common goals. The hypothesis of motivation for participating in entrance exam is taken from this exchange theory. The person's goals and desires to participate in entrance exam will give them selfish motivations which may lead them to be successful in the entrance exam. It is assumed that individuals act according to selfishness to achieve their desired pleasure and satisfaction. Because of this give-and-take, exchange theorists believe that receiving rewards always impose amount of cost. The cost is usually defined as an effort spent on obtaining consent and potential rewards which have been missed as a result of a certain choice and putting aside other options.

Hours of study can also be considered as a hypothesis. Hours of study is a cost an individual bears to be successful in entrance exam. When somebody spends a lot of hours on studying, this amount of study is a cost missed as a result of making a certain choice (further study and passing entrance exam) and putting aside other options (putting aside hobbies and entertainments). Social approval is regarded as a general satisfier and motivator. As a topic of discussion in exchange theory, reward is believed not to be restricted to an individual and cannot be classified. The hypothesis for the effect of principals, teachers,

heads of departments and university professors' encouragement is taken from exchange theory. In Homnez premise, those behaviors for which an individual has received a reward are likely to be repeated more than other actions.

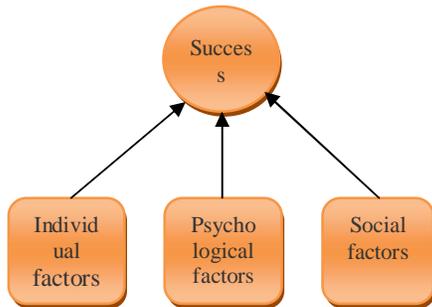
Homnez's second premise is motivation which relates to the effect of situations on actions occurring in those situations. These situations cause stimulus and motivation and may result in promoting actions in human being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A long history of literature is done in this regard and their findings and results are presented in the following table.

	[6]Mohammad rezai	[7]Ipasandy	[8]Hejazí	[9]Aboma	[10]Gary	[11]Erdem	[12]Rhodd	[13]Bain	[14]AL-mutairi	[15]Faster Greet	[16]Erdem
Individual factors	*										
Family Factors	*										
Psychological factors	*			*							
Group of Friends	*										
The role of managers	*	*			*						
The role of teachers	*										
Positive thinking	*										
Economic and social conditions prevailing in the region and ...	*					*					
Content textbooks		*									
The encouragement and support for parents		*						*			
Use of training aids		*									
The amount of teaching space		*									
Household population		*									
Literacy levels of parents		*									
High school GPA			*	*		*			*		*
Hours of study			*			*					
Way of			*								
Stimulating learning environment and atmosphere appropriate			*			*					
The motivation for the study of family attitudes			*					*			
Teaching experience			*								
University entrance exam results				*							
Previous academic training					*	*				*	
Employment programs					*						
University rules and regulations					*					*	
Sponsorships					*						
Location						*					*
Family income level						*					*
Ability to learn						*					
Environment during student						*					
The average student						*					
Sex							*				*
Ethnicity							*				
Major							*				
Number of years of education							*				
Knowledge Advisor								*			
Personal motivation								*		*	
Job security								*			
An online library facilities								*			
Religious spirits								*			
Age									*		
Nationality									*		
Tuition											*
Education level of parents											*

Analytical model:



METHODOLOGY

Population: According to the documents, 1400 people were participated in 2010 university entrance exam and only 79 candidates were able to pass the exam, but only 69 candidates gave back their questionnaires. Using stratified method, 60 individuals were selected from among those not accepted in the entrance exam.

Instruments of data collecting:

The instruments needed to collect the data were the same as follows:

1. Library study
2. Questionnaire

Variables: In the present paper, such indexes as individual factors, society factors and Psychological factors were determined as independent variables and succeed as dependent variable.

Reliability and validity

Validity: The validity of such a study was approved. Using Spss software (Cronbach's alpha coefficient), co efficiency of questionnaire, the existing and optimum condition, were 0.9449 respectively.

Reliability: To measure reliability of the present study, through content reliability were used. There are existed high

Data analysis

In such a study; data collected were analyzed using such descriptive statistics as frequency, mean.

To test the hypothesis, inferential statistics as the logistic regression method were used [17]. And the following results were obtained.

DISCUSSION

The logistic regression method is employed to analyze the research hypotheses. 120 individuals are selected and dependent variable is coded 1 showing "pass" or 0 showing "fail", and a step by step method is also used. According to Summary Model table, the arrival of independent variables in each step of the 8 steps may show greater improvement in the amount of 2 log likelihood than the previous step. According to step summary model, the improvement section indicates that the Chi-Square value is reduced and this reduction is significant. In the final table of variables in equation and based on constant value and Beta coefficient, the optimal logistic regression equation can be formulated as follow:

Exp(B)	Sig.	df	Wald	S.E.	B		
.881	.004	1	8.173	.044	-.127	Education of mother	Step 1(a)
2.807	.012	1	6.384	.408	1.032	Constant	
4.246	.028	1	4.827	.658	1.446	In another test series	Step 2(b)
.894	.014	1	6.067	.045	-.112	Education of mother	
1.931	.133	1	2.261	.438	.658	Constant	Step 3(c)
.017	.220	1	1.508	3.331	-4.090	Mathematics	
3.769	.044	1	4.054	.659	1.327	In another test series	
.914	.052	1	3.768	.046	-.090	Education of mother	Step 4(d)
1.861	.157	1	1.999	.439	.621	Constant	
.015	.213	1	1.549	3.357	-4.179	Mathematics	Step 4(d)
1.410	.038	1	4.299	.166	.343	Undergraduate GPA	
4.199	.033	1	4.522	.675	1.435	In another test series	
.900	.028	1	4.798	.048	-.106	Education of mother	

.012	.071	1	3.254	2.464	-4.446	Constant	Step 5(e)
.013	.182	1	1.778	3.242	-4.322	Mathematics	
.006	.272	1	1.208	4.646	-5.106	Field of industrial management	
1.571	.012	1	6.246	.181	.452	Undergraduate GPA	
3.759	.051	1	3.802	.679	1.324	In another test series	
.899	.032	1	4.580	.050	-.106	Education of mother	Step 6(f)
.003	.025	1	4.995	2.659	-5.942	Constant	
.011	.156	1	2.017	3.206	-4.554	Mathematics	
.006	.259	1	1.274	4.601	-5.193	Field of industrial management	
1.668	.007	1	7.197	.191	.512	Undergraduate GPA	
3.461	.070	1	3.277	.686	1.242	In another test series	Step 7(g)
.846	.052	1	3.768	.086	-.167	The non-school study	
.914	.084	1	2.981	.052	-.089	Education of mother	
.002	.022	1	5.255	2.754	-6.313	Constant	
.861	.017	1	5.673	.063	-.149	Age	
.009	.253	1	1.307	4.080	-4.664	Mathematics	Step 8(h)
.001	.271	1	1.211	5.941	-6.537	Field of industrial management	
1.707	.006	1	7.541	.195	.535	Undergraduate GPA	
5.819	.018	1	5.620	.743	1.761	In another test series	
.778	.014	1	5.987	.102	-.251	The non-school study	
.877	.019	1	5.490	.056	-.132	Education of mother	Step 8(h)
.170	.593	1	.286	3.312	-1.772	Constant	
.861	.019	1	5.515	.064	-.149	Age	
.009	.242	1	1.369	4.072	-4.765	Mathematics	
.081	.058	1	3.598	1.326	-2.516	Nursing Degree	
.001	.254	1	1.298	5.931	-6.759	Field of industrial management	Step 8(h)
1.790	.005	1	8.052	.205	.582	Undergraduate GPA	
5.716	.020	1	5.435	.748	1.743	In another test series	
.772	.013	1	6.201	.104	-.259	The non-school study	
.861	.012	1	6.376	.059	-.150	Education of mother	
.113	.526	1	.402	3.440	-2.182	Constant	

a Variable(s) entered on step 1: Education of mother -b Variable(s) entered on step 2: In another test series.

c Variable(s) entered on step 3: Mathematics -d Variable(s) entered on step 4: Undergraduate GPA.

e Variable(s) entered on step 5: Field of industrial management -f Variable(s) entered on step 6: The non-school study.-g Variable(s) entered on step 7: Age .-h Variable(s) entered on step: Nursing Degree.

$$\text{Logarithmic over} = -2.182 - (\text{mother})(0.150) - (\text{amount of non-curriculum})(0.259) + (\text{in other test series})(1.743) + (\text{undergraduate GPA})(0.582) - (\text{Industrial Management field})(6.759) - (\text{nursing degree})(2.516) - (\text{mathematics})(4.765) - (\text{Age})(0.149)$$

Since some of these factors are not significant with respect to their minus sign, it is better to remove them from the table and formulate the model as follow:

$$\text{logarithmic over} = -2.182 + (\text{test in other fields})(1.743) + (\text{Undergraduate GPA})(0.582)$$

Conclusion

The results of the study reveal that:

1. Some indicators of individual factors may affect alumni's
2. Success and some others may not affect at all. One of the effective individual factors in the first step is the alumni's undergraduate GPA and in next steps it is taking a part in other fields' exams.
3. The results of the study suggest that psychological factors have no effect on the alumni's success in the entrance exam.
4. Social factors can be divided into various parts such as: family factors, motivation, social class, and school and university factors. The findings indicate that social factors and its subdivision have no effect on alumni's success.

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