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ADULT TEACHING SPECIFIC CHARACTERS AT THE LAW ENFORCEMENT SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONS (AN EXAMPLE OF ACADEMY OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS)

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Abstract:

In pace with the changes taking place in the modern world, the functional role of learning in the development of a person and a society also increases. Accordingly, developing a pool of highly qualified law-enforcement officers should be the strategic interest of a state. Thus, it is essential to raise the quality of teaching at the educational institutions established under the aegis of law-enforcement bodies and provide the knowledge, approaches, and skills needed to deal with the challenges facing a state. The aim of this research was to examine the influence of certain variables such as instructional design, age, prior experience of learners, and specific types of teaching material on academic achievement. The experimental research design was developed. The participants were 68 adult police academy learners. The results analyzed using T-statistics and linear multiple regression showed that changing of the instructional design to improve academic achievement is not sufficient and in parallel with its development it is also crucial to take into account the prior experience of a learner. The research aslo ininvestigates both the traditional mechanism of learning and the implicit form of information acquisition.

 Key words: *Education Psychology, Organization of Adult Teaching, teaching to Law-enforcement officers, Teaching Design, Academic Achievements.*

Introduction

The functional role of education in the development of individual has increased in pace with the technological and informational progress taking place in the 21st century. In the modern era, an individual has to permanently learn, receive and process increasing and renewable information, as far as the act of learning supports an individual to cope with and adapt to the ever-changing environment (Jarvis, 2004). Despite the fact, that though the importance of learning is obvious, education psychologists often come across to learning-related problems. These problems have specific actuality for the education institutions, which are involved in adult teaching, because the peculiarities of adult teaching are focused on forming distinguished skills and competences and differs from the school teaching style, as in its content, also in its goals and objectives (Knowles, 1980). Herewith, learning needs are particularly significant in such education institutions, which are conducting teaching activities to the employees of low enforcement bodies, as far as the target group of the mentioned education institutions are the subject of high interest and expectations among the society, that in its turn, is conditioned by the specificity of their work and high priority of State Safety System (Brereton, 1961).

Based on the research experience, the wide spectrum of situational and dispositional factors effects on the academic achievements and teaching material acquisition. From the wide variety of factors, the following are more focused in regard with the learning problematics among the learners at special education institutions: **Organization of teaching** – teaching processes taking place in education institutions, in many cases are planned not directly according to the needs and individual

interests of learners, but considering the demands of their managers or the challenges of society and the State, accordingly they reveal low interest in learning and low level of interest in learning has the direct influence on the motivation of learning and naturally, on academic achievements (Kathryn R. Wentzel, Allan Wigfield, 2009). **Group Heterogeneity** – considering the group specifics, often may happen that the same group includes the learners who have different age range, interests, motivation and level of education and this, in its turn, complicates the acquisition of teaching materials by the target audience and later on its transfer to practical activities. **Prior experience -** individuals involved in group activities, are the practitioners of their work, who have the working experience at law-enforcement institutions for some period and in many cases, are employed on different occupations and positions. Correspondingly, they already have some experience, have developed the sketches of activities, have attitudes, which in some cases have negative influence on their learning activities. In the research, conducted by Haberfeld (M.R. Haberfeld, Curtis A. Clarke, Dale l. Sheehan, 2012), the target audience do not consider the provided knowledge as *Just-enough*, *Just-for-me*, *Just-in-time* that effects on the openness of learners to the new information, as far as learning the disciplines and techniques suggested to them by the education institution may contradict to their approved experience and in some cases, may require to modify or completely change their behavioral discourse. **Negative attitudes towards teaching/learning** – learning attitudes of the mentioned individuals in many cases are negative, because sometimes they find it hard to link the knowledge obtained in the education institution to the practical needs and the transfer gets complicated. Also, it should be considered that part of the individuals is not permanently involved in the learning process. Subsequently, their **academic competences** (learning style, cognitive strategies and etc.) are not sophisticated, that makes it hard to acquire the teaching materials and transfer in practice. According to Rosenshine (Rosenshine, 1995), there is the relationship between the low level of academic skills and motivation to learn. Irrelevant level of motivation causes the deterioration of learning activity among students and affects negatively on the learners' academic achievements (Brophy, 2004; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

As the review of the research context indicates, the wide spectrum of factors has effect on the learner's academic achievement and on the level of teaching material acquisition. The following problems in its turn, may vary in accordance to the specifics of challenges and context being in society, which further complicates the problems in the field of teaching to law-enforcement officers.

The above review indicates that wide variety of factors influence on the academic achievements and both, practical and scientific perspectives support to the study of all above-stated factors. Although, it must be noted that from the wide variety of factors found in the education institutions with police specificity, the lecturer and the teaching design and approaches used by him/her are distinguished in terms of effectiveness and saving (Roberg, 2002). The adequate teaching approaches applied by the lecturer may completely change student's cognitive and emotional attitudes towards a subject. Therefore, adjusting the teaching design to the target audience is one of the tasks, the effective solution to which significantly improves the indicators of academic achievements in learners (Kuhnlein, 2012). Well-planed pedagogical practice can refute the preventive factors of learning and increase the learning activity in students and the level of obtaining teaching materials instead. Indeed, in the conditions where the external motivation cannot be managed, the teacher's role becomes extremely significant, because she/he can make influence on the learner's internal motivation and direct it to learning (Woolfolk, 2009).

So, studding/developing adequate teaching design will enable us to improve the academic achievements in law-enforcement officers and improve the standard of their activity basing on their academic performance, which in the one hand, provide the opportunity to improve the central component, such as the teaching system of law-enforcement officers and on the second hand, optimize the resources allocated by the State on the teaching services.

The key working questions of the research was formulated as follows:

RQ1: What influence does the teaching design adjusted to the adult learners' peculiarities have on the affective/cognitive/conative components of their academic achievements?

Arising from the key issues, the following research hypotheses had been developed:

H1 - The teaching design built on the adult teaching principles has positive impact on the affective/conative/cognitive component of academic achievement;

H2 - The specific characteristics of adults are the predictors for their academic behavior;

Methodology and Research
Participants

68 participants took part in the stage of research. The average age of participants is 27 Max=50, Min=19). In terms of gender, 10 female and 58 male participants took part in the research. According to the level of education, 53 of them had higher education, 9 of them were holding student status and 6 of them - secondary education. The average of general work experience was equal to 2 years (Max=22, Min=0). Among them average 3 years of work experience at law-enforcement institutions (Max=22, Min=0). And the average indicator of academic achievement was 69 points (Max=91, Min=50).

Procedure

The research was conducted on two stages, the first stage focuses on the development of independent variable - Teaching design, and the second stage verifies the relationship between the independent variable (teaching design) and dependent variable (academic achievements).

Due to the experimental design of the second stage, the independent variable of the research is the administrative teaching design of a lecturer (**Control design** - Directive teaching design; **Experimental design** - Experimental teaching design).

Independent variable - Basing on the results collected through the adult teaching theoretical concepts and focus groups, the set of activities had been developed, which is directed to achieve better cognitive/conative/affective goals. The existing theoretical assumptions are consolidated in the complex design of teaching, conditionally named as "**Cumulative Design of Teaching**". Cumulative approach represents the complex design of teaching and builds on the following key components: **1. Problem identification -** At the beginning, the necessity of the whole teaching course is identified. The stage of problem identification serves to the nurturing of the interest in learners towards the discipline and building the next stages of learning on the mentioned interest. The problem outlines the design and content value of the course and teaching will be conducted not using the induction principle – *simple-to-complex*, but through the deduction principle – *complex-to-details.* **2. Group interaction** – During the course, the focus is made on the group-works and Experience-sharing. A teacher mostly delegates the duties and provides the additional materials using the "scaffolding principle". **3. Cumulative character of teaching -** Cumulative character of design, implies to create the format of teaching, which is oriented on constructing the knowledge obtained stage after stage on the previous one and on reconsidering the knowledge obtained on the previous stage using the newly-obtained, renewed knowledge. So, in the cumulative design, each subsequent session bases on the previous session i.e. **4. Cumulative character of assessment** – every subsequent assessment in its turn, implies the already passed material. Considering the cumulative design of teaching, the assessment process will also be cumulative, i.e. every subsequent assessment also includes the elements of previous assessment. **5. Content integration** - The final part of the course is dedicated to the integration of the passed material in practice.

The dependent variable of the research is the level of material acquisition by a learner (The cognitive/affective/conative components of academic achievements). The dependent variable of *affective* component was assessed according to the numerical data received through the questionnaire (The questionnaire is the Likert 12 item Scale, Cronbach's Alpha=.738). The dependent variable of *conative* component was defined according to the numeric data received

through the observation form (It was assessed basing on the 20-point observation form, the variables were evaluated in the observation format with a 0.5-point accuracy). The dependent variable of *cognitive* component had been defined according to the observable cognitive outcomes (SOLO taxonomy). In order to assess the cognitive component, two independent cases had been created on the basis of SOLO Taxonomy.

Teaching content-For the experimental design the following discipline had been selected: "Investigative Psychology". The discipline covers the psychological characteristics of an individual involved in the crime, witness and victim and the issues of investigative interviewing. Teaching materials of the course consists of 95 pages and is equally distributed in two parts: 1. part of the offender (pg. 4-51), 2. Part of the Witness (pg. 52-95). Two teaching materials different in contents, but having the same cognitive value had been studied. The given differentiation enabled us to link the use of teaching methodology to the content of teaching materials, as far as the theoretical approaches of adult teaching highlight the value of teaching content, by which they emphasize the autonomous role of learners towards the teaching outcomes.

Data Interpretation

For the purposes of data interpretation, we created the multiple regression model. The model was created to verify the predictive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In regression 12 variables are discussed as independent: these are: 1. IV1- experimental design of the first group; 2. IV2- experimental design of the second group, 3. IV3- experimental design of the third group, 4. IV4 – test option to assess the cognitive results, 5. IV5 - age, 6. IV6 – gender, 7.IV7- average level of education, 8.IV8 – level of education – student, 9. IV9- level of higher education, 10. IV10 – general work experience; 11.IV11- work experience at law-enforcement institutions; 12.IV12- academic achievements;

The following variables are discussed as dependent: 1. DV1- Affective attitude to the teaching material/methodology of the offender; 2. DV2 – Affective attitude to the teaching material/methodology of the witness; 3.DV3 – Cognitive content-making level of the teaching material of offender; 4. DV4 – Cognitive content-making level of the teaching material of offender; 5. DV5 – conative component of offender teaching; 6. DV6 – conative component of witness teaching.

The regression analysis was carried out to assess the effect of 12 independent variables on the six dependent variables. The linear multiple regression model identified the specific peculiarities of teaching, which determine the affective, cognitive and conative components of academic achievements, specifically: (1) affective attitude towards the teaching design and teaching materials is conditioned by the work experience at law enforcement organs. (2) Age has negative influence on the formation of affective attitude. (3) The content of teaching material causes the affective component of teaching outcomes. (4) General academic achievements of a learner is the predictor for cognitive and conative components. (5) The content of the teaching materials determines the acquisition of teaching materials on cognitively high level. (6) the specificity of a learner's prior experience determines the exposition degree of conative component of the teaching content.

Discussion

Based on the research results, we may conclude that changing the teaching design to improve academic achievements is not sufficient and in parallel with developing teaching design, it is also crucial to consider other characteristics of adult learner. Among them, the prior experience of a learner had been highlighted as unequivocally important component. The research shows that the more relevant the learner's practical experience is with the content of the discipline, the easier the set goals are achieved. But when the previous practical experience differs from the content of discipline, the teaching material is harder to obtain. It is likely that cognitive structures (Schemes, fixed attitudes and others) of prior knowledge stored in the long-term memory of a learner and the meta-cognitive component of the mentioned knowledge (the sense that "I" still know it) prevents to accept the new material, that respectively complicates the teaching of new, different content methodology. From the following, we can state that while teaching to the individuals having

experience in police work, it is recommended to teach only the material which is close to their practice in its content and will be naturally built on the prior knowledge and skills. And in the case, when we have necessity to teach innovative and new learning contents, which fundamentally differ from the occurring practice, it is better to select the personnel having no or little experience in police work as the target audience. In such manner, forming and strengthening behavioral scripts are better taking place with the personnel having no different prior experience.

On the other hand, the research results showed that, despite the negative affective component, which is revealed towards the new teaching methodology among the learners having specific prior experience, the learners still use the mentioned knowledge while assessing the behavioral component to find the practical solution to the problematic situations. The matter is that individuals having specific prior experience didn't like the content of the teaching materials and respectively, the provided knowledge was assessed as useless by them. But despite this, the research revealed, that such knowledge was still used in conative component, specifically in performing the practical tasks. Accordingly, the learners obtain the knowledge unconsciously and use it in case of need (in this case involving in behavior). Therefore, we can assume that this is the case of gaining experience through the implicit memory and revealing the "Priming effect".

Thus, the deeper processing and analysis of the data, indicated that despite the fact that at first sight experienced personnel find it harder to acquire knew knowledge, in reality that is not true. In case of experienced personnel unlike to inexperienced, we meet the different form of learning: obtaining knowledge implicitly. Therefore, the research revealed two different forms of learning - implicit and explicit. In the case of teaching inexperienced personnel, the typical procedure is taking place and the learning process is explicit. But with experienced personnel we meet learning in broader sense and obtaining new knowledge takes place through the unconscious record of information in memory. As a result, the knowledge is integrated in behavior when needed.

Thus, the research shows that in adult learning, knew knowledge is obtained through the distinguished mechanisms (together with the traditional ones). The mentioned result should be used in planning the adult teaching methodology. It is especially important to use the following results in teaching such disciplines, which require the conative component of teaching, i.e. script formation. For example, police teaching, teacher training, military servants' tutoring/training and etc.

The above stated results enable us to conclude that hypothesis - Teaching design based on the principles of adult learning have positive affect on the affective/conative/cognitive component of academic achievement, is confirmed in some components of academic achievements and is conditioned by the group specifics. And the hypothesis - the specific characteristics of adults are the predictors for their academic behavior – is confirmed both, in the component of academic achievements and also in experimental groups.

The research enabled us to realize the assumptions of adult learning theoretical models, on the one hand in Georgian culture and on the other hand, in such specific target group as law enforcement institutions. The research helped us identify the central components of adult learning, which coincide to the theoretical models, such as: McClusk's theory of margin of adult learning (McClusky, 1970), Illeris's three-dimensional Learning model (Illeris, 2002), Jarvis's learning process theory (Sharan B. Merriam Rosemary S. Caffarella Lisa M. Baumgartner, 2007) and Knowles's Andragogical model of learning (Malcom S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton III, Richard A. Swanson, 2005). The following research shows that from the theoretical models of adult learning the specifics of prior experience is the weighed factor for Georgian cultural context and in the sub-culture of police work.

From the practical perspective, the list of recommendations had been developed on the research basis, which may be used in the process of adult teaching at law enforcement organs. Specifically, it is recommended: **To increase learner's autonomy** - a learner should have opportunity to determine independently, which teaching discipline she/he will learn and in what time frame. This will enable the learner to define the priorities autonomously in regard with

learning activities and raise the degree of his/her own learning activity, that in its turn, will increase the openness to the course; **More group interactions** – it is important to include more activities adjusted to the activity level of group in the teaching component, that gives us opportunity to increase the interest towards the learning process and at the same time share the rich experience of the group members. **Differentiation of active and starting teachers within the teaching courses** – considering the differences between the prior experiences, it is recommended to differentiate teaching and training courses, because active worker in some cases may have negative practical experience and sharing such experience will hinder the achievement of teaching goals among the newcomers. **Teaching contents and age** – in order to acquire innovative teaching methods, it is recommended to focus mostly on the young personnel, because their openness to novelties is higher than in older age category. **Recruiting** – In case if a teaching institution cannot provide the systems for external encouragement/motivation, during the recruitment the focus should be made on considering such dispositional criteria, as learner's internal motivation to learn in general. This would enable the teaching institution select the staff, who can resist to the situational influence of the environment and will reveal more motivation towards the teaching process.

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