

Enhancing Scholastic Attainment of B.Ed Students in Distance Education through Heutagogy

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KEYWORDS

Heutagogy, Exploration,
Creativity, Collaboration,
Connectivity, Sharing, and
Reflection

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of heutagogical approaches in their learning journey and to assess the impact of heutagogy on teachers' scholastic attainment within the context of distance education. For this purpose a well-defined 5 point Likert comprised 18 items was developed on base of five domains of exploration, creativity, collaboration, connectivity, sharing, and reflection. Each domain featured three items, systematically arranged in sequence to ensure clarity and minimize participant confusion. Thirty teachers who obtained their bachelor's degree from Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad were randomly selected from the districts of Malakand and Dir (Lower). These individuals were chosen among those who secured employment in either public or private schools. The data collected was meticulously tabulated to facilitate the derivation of statistical values necessary for analysis. To accomplish this task, the latest version of SPSS was employed, allowing for efficient processing and calculation of the data. The resultant statistical values generated by SPSS are presented in the subsequent table, poised for further interpretation. The findings revealed several factors that significantly influence students' scholastic attainment. It was concluded that holistic approach is essential, particularly for those engaged in distance learning, to enhance scholastic attainment effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Education, the cornerstone of national development, has evolved from traditional to contemporary approaches. As a result, nations worldwide have embraced various modes of education, be it formal or informal, all grounded in philosophical principles. In the current era, there's a universal quest for innovative educational methodologies or enhancements to existing ones to nurture individuals equipped to address society's evolving needs. This places a significant responsibility on educators to cultivate such capable individuals. However, it's equally crucial to ensure that educators themselves undergo thorough training to become adept in their teaching roles. Educators today are tasked with developing lifelong learners who can survive and thrive in a global knowledge economy – learners who have the capability to effectively and creatively apply

skills and competencies to new situations in an ever-changing, complex world (The World Bank, 2003; Kuit & Fell, 2010)

Schools bear significant responsibilities and obligations in shaping the future of their students. Particularly at the secondary school level, where students undergo crucial developmental phases, the role of expert teachers becomes paramount. Hence, it's imperative to appoint teachers with requisite qualifications, especially at the secondary level. As such, every teacher is required to possess a B.Ed degree, ensuring they are equipped to effectively engage with students. In Pakistan, acquiring a B.Ed degree can be pursued through various avenues, one of which is distance education, providing flexibility and accessibility for aspiring educators. Since it involves self-directed learning, In distance education,

heutagogy plays a pivotal role in shaping the scholastic attainment of B.Ed teachers.

Heutagogy, also known as self-directed learning, is a student-centered approach that emphasizes flexibility, capability, and capacity. In this method, students take charge of their learning journey, interacting with the teacher who provides resources and guidance as needed. Otherwise students are not dependent on teachers for every aspect of their learning journey.

Heutagogy is to develop adaptive and reflective learners, who are better equipped with the attributes required for the modern workplace, where the pace of change is rapid and innovators, complex problem solvers, and good communicators are in demand (Blaschke & Hase, 2016).

Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad stands as a significant provider of distance education in Pakistan, renowned for its commitment to quality education. Over the years, its student population has steadily grown, with many opting for bachelor's degrees through its diverse program offerings. Among these programs is one framed around heutagogy, a method that places emphasis on self-directed learning? It remains intriguing to observe how heutagogy influences students and their future endeavors and scholastic attainment of the students.

Objectives of the research study

1. To explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of heutagogical approaches in their learning journey.
2. To assess the impact of heutagogy on teachers' scholastic attainment within the distance education context.

Research Questions

1. What are the teachers' perception and experiences of heutagogical approaches in their learning journey?

2. What is the impact of heutagogy on teachers' scholastic attainment within the distance education context?

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised students who were enrolled in bachelor's degree programs at Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad and successfully completed their degrees. These students would have been actively engaged in self-directed learning and would be able to provide valuable insights into the impact of heutagogy on their learning experiences and scholastic attainment.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Thirty teachers who obtained their bachelor's degree from Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad were randomly selected from the districts of Malakand and Dir (Lower). These individuals were chosen among those who secured employment in either public or private schools.

Significance of the Study

Firstly, the primary significance of this study is to identify the heutagogical skills that can enhance the teaching-learning process.

Secondly, it aims to facilitate students' understanding of other procedures, such as assignment submission through specific portals launched by the university.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of heutagogy, as articulated by Hase and Kenyon (2000), revolves around self-determined learning. In the heutagogical approach, instructors play a facilitating role by providing guidance to their students. Conversely, students engage in ongoing negotiations with their teachers to seek additional guidance and assistance, thereby ensuring they remain on the right track of education.

As for principles and applications in education, Heutagogy plays a significant role. Not only does

Heutagogy facilitate learners' abilities, but it also paves the way for a better learning environment and develops learners' capabilities to learn in a simple manner. As Merriam (2001) mentioned, Heutagogy, as a form of self-directed learning, aims to help learners build the capacity for self-directed learning, while also promoting experiential learning and social action. Similarly, Mezirow (2001) suggests that Heutagogy has a profound impact on learning, as learners undergo maturation and reflection through real-life experiences such as beliefs and lifestyle. Moreover, all of these aspects relate to learners' self-perception

In Heutagogy, double-loop learning and self-reflection are considered key concepts. McAuliffe et al. (2008) suggest that double-loop learning occurs when learners question and test their own values and assumptions in order to enhance their learning process.

In distance education, Heutagogy plays a crucial role in fostering the learning environment, particularly because learners are not engaged in face-to-face interactions. Therefore, Heutagogy supports the unique features of distance education that align with its principles

Hase (2014), is of the opinion that in today's knowledge-based society, knowledge holds a paramount position, influencing social dynamics and technological advancements worldwide. This underscores the crucial role of education in shaping employability and societal participation. Recognizing this, distance education has emerged as a viable solution, particularly for individuals residing in rural areas and those already engaged in professional

commitments. Through distance learning, students can pursue university-level degrees conveniently, allowing for flexible learning while balancing existing responsibilities. Consequently, there has been a significant surge in enrollment in distance education programs, reflecting the growing demand for accessible and adaptable learning pathways.

Procedure and discussion

A meticulously designed questionnaire comprising 18 items across six domains - Exploration, Creativity, Collaboration, Connectivity, Sharing, and Reflection - was formulated utilizing a five-point Likert scale. Each domain featured three items, systematically arranged in sequence to ensure clarity and minimize participant confusion

In the capacity of an online resource person at AIOU Islamabad, the researchers identified and contacted 70 teachers who had completed their B.Ed from AIOU Islamabad. Subsequently, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 selected participants, with 17 of them employed in government institutions and the remainder in private ones. Participants were also requested to furnish their transcripts. While most adhered to this request, some provided details of their B.Ed marks, alongside their roll and registration numbers.

The data collected was meticulously tabulated to facilitate the derivation of statistical values necessary for analysis. To accomplish this task, the latest version of SPSS was employed, allowing for efficient processing and calculation of the data. The resultant statistical values generated by SPSS are presented in the subsequent table, poised for further interpretation.

Abbreviations used in Questionnaire and Discussion

Ex= Exploration (Domain of Exploration)	Strongly Agree (SA)
Cr= Creativity(Domain of Creativity)	Agree (A)
Cl= Collaboration(Domain of Collaboration)	Not Sure (NS)
Cn. Connect (Domain of connectivity)	Disagree (DA)
Sh. = Share (Domain of Sharing)	Strongly Disagree (S.D.A)
Rf= Reflection (Domain of Reflection)	

Table.1. Domain of Exploration

Items	Statement	N	Min:	Max;	Mean	Std Deviation
Ex1. Valid N (list wise) 30	Distance education students have the opportunity to engage with teachers and seek clarification on concepts to enhance scholastic attainment.	30	1.00	5.00	3.100	1.32222
Ex2 Valid N (list wise)29	I possess the ability to effectively solve problems presented in assignments.	30	1.00	5.00	4.034	0.90565
Ex3 Valid N (Leastwise)29	I engage in discussions with fellow students to enhance our learning.	30	3.00	5.00	4.300	0.5959

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the items within the Domain of Exploration. The mean scores for Ex1, Ex2, and Ex3 are recorded as 3.100, 4.034, and 4.300 respectively, while the corresponding standard deviations are 1.32222, 0.90565, and 0.5959.

The mean score and standard deviation of Ex1 suggest that students have some level of opportunity to engage with their teachers. Conversely, the means and standard deviations of Ex2 and Ex3 indicate that students exhibit proficiency in solving assignment problems and actively engage with their peers in the learning process.

Table.2. Domain of Creativity

Items	Statement	N	Min:	Max;	Mean	Std Deviation
Cr.4. Valid N (list wise)29	I involve my friends in developing plans for learning.	30	1.00	5.00	3.600	1.00034
Cr.2 Valid N (list wise)29	Heutagogy encourages learners to explore topics of interest independently, fostering creativity through self-directed inquiry	30	1.00	5.00	3.366	1.2276

Cr.3 Valid N (list wise)29	Heutagogy fosters creativity by encouraging learners to explore diverse perspectives and think outside the box	30	2.00	5.00	3.826	1.2008
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Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of three items within the Domain of Creativity. The high standard deviation suggests a lack of consistency among students' heutagogical practices and creativity. However, the mean score of Cr6

indicates some level of encouragement among students to explore diverse perspectives and foster creativity through self-directed inquiry. This encouragement potentially contributes to the scholastic attainment of the students.

Table.3. Domain of Collaboration

Items	Statement	N	Min:	Max;	Mean	Std Deviation
Cl.7. Valid N (Listwise)30	I incorporate various ideas when collaborating with others	30	2.00	5.00	3.700	0.9523
Cl.8 Valid N (Listwise)29	I provide and receive feedback on the performance of other groups during collaborative assignments.	30	1.00	5.00	3.090	1.4112
Cl.9 Valid N (Listwise)29	I regularly communicate with my teachers, seniors, and juniors to exchange various ideas and insights	30	1.00	5.00	3.800	0.96132

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations of the domain of collaboration, indicating a certain level of satisfaction and justification in favor of this domain. The standard deviation values of Cl.7 and Cl.9 suggest that students regularly engage in incorporating their ideas with others and

communicate with teachers, as well as senior and junior students, to exchange ideas, which contribute to their scholastic attainment. However, the standard deviation of Cl.8 indicates that students may be somewhat passive in seeking and providing feedback on their performance in other groups

Table.4. Domain Connectivity

Items	Statement	N	Min:	Max;	Mean	Std Deviation
Cn.10. Valid N (list wise)30	I keep contact with my teachers to continually improve my learning approach.	30	1.00	4.00	2.46	1.0080
Cn.11 Valid N (List wise)30	I employ suitable techniques and methods to address any misunderstandings that may arise during learning interactions in distance education	30	3.00	5.00	4.10	0.7119

Cn.12 Valid N (List wise)30	I participate in online forums to engage in discussions on learning topics, aiming to gather additional information to share with students.	30	1.00	5.00	3.89	0.9197
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Table 4 reveals that the mean score of Cn10 is notably low, accompanied by a high standard deviation. This indicates a lack of communication between students and teachers regarding enhancing their learning capacity for improved scholastic attainment. However, contrasting with this trend, the high mean score and low standard deviation of Cn10 and Cn11 underscore the proactive approach of some

students. They demonstrate adeptness at employing effective techniques and methods to address any misunderstandings encountered during their learning journey. Moreover, students actively engage in online forums to stay updated on their subjects, acquiring additional information which they subsequently share with peers in group discussions.

Table.5. Domain of Sharing

Items	Statement	N	Min:	Max;	Mean	Std Deviation
Sh.13. Valid N (list wise)30	I utilize platforms like Slide Share, Research Gate, Twitter, and Facebook to share ideas	30	3.00	5.00	4.366	0.55605
Sh.14 Valid N (list wise)29	I display my work and efforts to my peers to enhance my academic achievement	30	2.00	5.00	4.275	1.03152
Sh.15 Valid N (list wise)29	I frequently share me and my friends' assignments	30	2.00	5.00	2.900	0.8897

Table 5 shows strong analysis in the favor of Sh13 and Sh14 in the form of their mean scores .Both items justify that students utilize various platform to share their ideas. Moreover, they displaytheir work to peers for better understanding and scholastic attainment. This is really amazing that keeps the students on right track. However, the standard

deviation of Sh14 is somewhat considerable in which the students have verity in their approach. Another interesting obtained in Sh15 that shows less mean score and less standard deviation. Less standard deviation means that there is no verity found among the students that they commonly share their assignments.

Table.6. Domain of Reflection

Items	Statement	N	Min:	Max;	Mean	Std
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						Deviation
Rf.16 Valid N (list wise)30	I discuss my feelings about the teaching experience during online or face-to-face teaching and learning sessions	30	1.00	5.00	4.066	0.65605
Rf.17 Valid N (list wise)29	I regularly assess my learning progress through self-assessment	30	1.00	5.00	4.025	1.0052
Rf.18 Valid N (list wise)29	I review and reinforce the concepts covered in the previous lesson.	30	1.00	5.00	3.900	0.8997

Table 6 validates that the mean scores, along with the standard deviations, of all three items (Rf 17,Rf 18, and R18) for the domain of Reflection support students' scholastic attainment. This suggests that students actively discuss their experiences with teachers and peers, both online and in face-to-face settings. They also engage in self-assessment to

enhance their learning by reinforcing concepts through their previous knowledge.

Scholastic attainment of the students

To assess the impact of heutagogy on teachers' scholastic attainment within the distance education context, their result were collected and tabulated, and their average scores were found out.

Table 7, Average Scholastic Attainment of the Students

Semester	Course code	Credits	Title of Course	Marks (Average)
2019 SPRING (O)	8601	3	GENERAL METHODS OF TEACHING	87
2019 SPRING (O)	8602	3	EDU. ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION	89
2019 SPRING (O)	8603	3	CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	84
2019 SPRING (O)	8604	3	RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION	87
2019 SPRING (O)	8605	3	EDU. LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	81
2019 SPRING (O)	8606	3	CITIZENSHIP EDU. & COMMUNITY	86
2019 SPRING (O)	8607	3	TEACHING PRACTICE-I	91

Tables7 shows that Heutagogy has a great impact on the scholastic attainment of the students.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions and experiences of heutagogical approaches in their learning journey and to assess the impact of heutagogy on teachers' scholastic attainment within the context of distance education. The findings revealed several factors that

significantly influence students' scholastic attainment. Participants perceived positive aspects of these factors, particularly in the domains of exploration, creativity, collaboration, connectivity, sharing, and reflection.

In the domain of exploration, students demonstrated proficiency in solving assignment problems and

actively engaged with their peers in the learning process. While there was a lack of consistency in students' heutagogical practices and creativity, there were indications of encouragement for students to explore diverse perspectives and foster creativity through self-directed inquiry. This encouragement potentially contributes to students' scholastic attainment.

Similarly, in the domain of collaboration, students regularly incorporated their ideas with others and communicated with teachers, senior, and junior students to exchange ideas, contributing to their scholastic attainment. However, some students were passive in seeking and providing feedback on their performance in other groups.

In the domain of connectivity, there was a lack of communication between students and teachers regarding enhancing their learning capacity for

improved scholastic attainment. However, some students demonstrated a proactive approach by employing effective techniques and methods to address misunderstandings during their learning journey. They also actively engaged in online forums to acquire additional information, subsequently sharing it with peers in group discussions.

In the domain of sharing, students utilized various platforms to share their ideas and displayed their work to peers for better understanding and scholastic attainment. Finally, in the domain of reflection, students actively discussed their experiences with teachers and peers, engaging in self-assessment to reinforce concepts through their previous knowledge.

In conclusion, a holistic approach is essential, particularly for those engaged in distance learning, to enhance scholastic attainment effectively.

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