

Enhancing Self-Directed Learning by Better Understanding Environmental Factors: Physical, Social, and Psychological Aspects

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to investigate the environmental factors affecting independent learners' academic performance in the field of educational context. As it is an important part of student achievement, the statements and information in this article are worth discussing. Besides, this article set a goal to give information about the dominant point of psychological factors in the process of learning and improving student's ability to work on the problems they can face during learning.

Key words: psychological factors, aptitude, anxiety, motivation, attitude.

Introduction.

In the process of independent learning, various factors can affect the achievements of students, clearly, autonomous learners' performance can be occurred by two different types of factors: social and psychological. So, the purpose of this article is directed to illustrate the effects of social and psychological factors on students' learning achievements. To illustrate, psychology is the most important matter of human activities. It does not matter if it is day-to-day activities or even academic performance, this kind of various occasions often depends on human psychology. Psychological factors include students' attitude, aptitude, and motivation, on the other hand, the relationship between individual and social environment is embodied in social factors. Besides, social and psychological factors also include discussions on individual improvements by connection with social situations. In this view, learning a new language or something new by an understanding of environmental factors can raise self-comprehension and help students to create their ability in the learning process.

Literature review

The features of social and psychological factors describe the effects of social relations on a person's psychological attainment and well-being. Hayward (2012) was the man who invented the socio-psychological field and he explained the link between psychological and social elements. Historically, Erickson (1984) gave the concept of social and psychological

factors in his theory of social development. Erikson's theory of social and psychological improvement is exceptionally important and significant in human development (Franz & White, 1985). It expresses that social and psychological factors essentially influence human behavior (Ochse & Plug, 1986). This approach looks at individuals in the framework of combined effects of psychological elements and integrating social conditions on their physical and emotional well-being and their ability to work (Casillas et al., 2012). It describes psychological and social techniques that occur among people or groups of people. A few psychological and social perspectives may influence individuals' lives (Bouffard, Boisvert, Vezeau, & Larouche, 1995). In addition, social and psychological assessment is an evaluation of an individual's mental well-being and social prosperity.

Methodology

Psychological factors

Psychological factors are factors that are responsible in order to occur mental and spiritual concerns in the process of students' acquisition. It, at least, embodies four of many aspects, such as anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation, which have been proved through some research findings.

Aptitude

Aptitude is defined as the ability to learn a wide range of skills. Further, Skehan (1989) states that "aptitude is consistently the best predictor of language learning success". The existence of aptitude in foreign or second language learning is very influential. There is evidence in the research literature that some individuals have an exceptional "aptitude" for language learning. Research done by Carroll (in Oller, 1977) on American students who took major in French, German, Russian, and Spanish shows that language aptitude is significantly associated with success in foreign language study. Researches show that human beings exhibit a wide range of aptitude for learning a second language, for example, a native speaker of English who grew up in an English family can learn Spanish, Italian even German language if his or her academic performance demands it.

Attitude

Attitude is a special psychological factor that is defined as a manner of acting, feeling, or thinking that is responsible to show an individual's disposition, opinion, or agreement. Attitude can be developed as a result of experiences, which are accepted through different learning acquisitions. Attitude can be greatly influenced by people in the immediate environment: parents, teachers, and friends. Irrefutable, we have a positive attitude toward the language learning phenomenon, and we will try hard to learn that language with interest. According to the research and experiences, student's attitudes toward the language might be varied. They may feel excited, happy, or confident, or in contrast, they may feel bored, frustrated, or even angry. Therefore, teachers should have a big concern about the particular students' attitudes by analyzing the causes and the possible solutions.

Motivation

Motivation is the thoughts and feelings we have which make us want to do something, create the sense of endurance to continue to do it, and at the most important stage, can turn our wishes into action. Motivation can be influenced by divergent factors, clearly, there are

some specific motivate influences:

- ✓ Why people decide to do something;
- ✓ How long do they want to do it for;
- ✓ How hard they are prepared to work to achieve it.

According to research, two types of motivation can be used in language acquisition by learners:

1. Intrinsic motivation – the learner wishes to learn a second language for personal growth and cultural enrichment, besides, they have a desire to achieve practical goals using a second language, for example, for a particular career.
2. Extrinsic motivation-in this process, someone else, for instance, the learner`s parents` wishes the learner to know a second language for an integrative reason.

Here, there will be given a question - How teachers can evoke learners` motivation in the classroom atmosphere?

- ✓ Motivating students to the lesson;
- ✓ Varying the activities, tasks, and materials to increase student`s interest levels;
- ✓ Using cooperative rather than competitive goals to increase students` self-confidence;
- ✓ Creating a supportive and non-threatening learning atmosphere.

Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat. According to some research, there are two types of anxiety, learning anxiety and survival anxiety. Learning anxiety comes from being afraid to try something new for fear that it will be too difficult, that we will look stupid in the attempt, or that we will have to part from old habits that have worked for us in the learning process. If learners have such feelings toward their learning process, they can face some difficulties while learning a new language or something like that, first of all, they can not be confident in their knowledge, and every time when they are asked to speak or something else, they cannot speak with belief, because they can have some kind of fear toward their knowledge.

CONCLUSION

In this study, different types of psychological factors are discussed in order to complement each other and to show how they are important in the field of learning. According to the above explanations, it is evident that how the important points of factors in the field of learning. With the help of clear information about psychological factors, students will be able to discuss their problems or what kind of difficulties they are facing even if they can be able to solve their dilemmas using psychological factors.

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