TEACHER ACADEMIC OPTIMISM AND ITS ROLE IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to prediction student academic achievement in mathematics course according to perceptions of academic optimism teachers in Birjand high school. Thus 340 students from among the total population of boys high schools (N=2077) were selected through multiple cluster sampling. Data were collected by an academic optimism questionnaire and final grade of academic year. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach’s alpha (0.80) and factor analysis. Data was analyzed through Correlation and hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Control variables included sex and student socioeconomic status. Results indicated that There was a positively and significantly relationship between all academic optimism variables and academic achievement. As well as, the results indicated that the academic optimism was the main predictor of the student’s academic achievement. In sum, this research contributes important theoretical and empirical findings for future scholarship in teaching and academic optimism. In particular, the results of the study confirmed and refined academic optimism at the individual level as a measurable construct and predict that teacher sense of academic optimism may be a force for student achievement but that relationship awaits further empirical support.

KEY WORDS: Academic Achievement, Optimism, Teacher’s Academic Optimism.

INTRODUCTION
Seligman et al. (1995) stated that, contrary to what some people believe that success is a function of talent and motivation, there is a third factor that is as much talent and motivation in the students’ success and progress that he has call it optimism. This concept is one of the central and important issues of positive psychology and as a result of a change of values in beliefs, in recent decades by people such as Socrates and Nietzsche, Allport, Erickson, Fromm, Maslow, Rogers and Patterson in field of psychology has emerged. It theoretically rooted in self-efficacy theory of Bandura (1986; 1997), social capital theory of Coleman (1990), cultural studies and organizational climate of Hoy et al. (1991) and learned optimism of Seligman (1998) are the results of a 40 years research on the schools which despite overcoming economic - social condition shad a significant influence on the development of the academic success of students (Hoy, 2012).

Optimism is mentioned as the natural or attitude optimism and attributive an explanatory optimism and in some cases it is considered synonymous with the structures of hope (Snyder, 1997; 1985). But these two concepts are different with together. Hoping is a thought process that simplifies the goal setting and helps us to be diligent to achieve our goal. Optimism commonly is considered as a cognitive variable while structural hope is emotional that has cognitive elements. Natural optimism is associated to internal control while the hope is an irritating variable. Optimism stems evidence, reason and belief of the person about self- efficacy while hope is rooted in the experience of the original trust and may be affected by the collective beliefs. Optimism according to the field has the different types that has been considered primary studies, explaining the optimism processes and factors affecting optimism, but, recent studies in this field, has focused on occupational and educational backgrounds, including academic achievement, job performance, productivity at workplace, job satisfaction and career success (Hoy et al., 2008).

What was said includes the general sense of optimism while this study focused on teacher’s academic optimism. Teacher’s academic optimism for the first time by Hoy, tartar and Woolfolk and Hoy (2006) as a common asset and excellence quality of schools that facilitates students' academic progress, was made. The structure consists of three components: Teacher collective efficacy (cognitive), trust in students and parents (emotional) and academic
emphasis (behavioral), that these three components able to create a positive, scientific and academic environment (Hsieh, 2003). Scientific optimism is a positive belief in teachers based on that they are able, with emphasis on teaching and learning, (component of academic emphasis), with the trust in participation of parents and students (component of trust in parents and students), and with faith in their capacity and efficiency (sense of efficacy) to overcome difficulties and setbacks, with effort and perseverance, resulting in academic achievement (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2008).

Component of collective efficacy of teachers in this definition is a belief or expectation, is a cognitive variable and in form of the teacher's judging about ability to obtain the desired results about learning and partnership of students, even in the case of strong and without motivation students) refers and has closely relationship to the advancement of student from one hand and a passion for teaching from the other hand. Thus, collective efficacy means the perception and reception of the teachers of this affair that efforts made by the school staff in form of collective have a positive impact on students. Collective efficacy is a belief or expectation that has a cognitive aspect (Goddard et al., 2004). Component of sense of teachers’ effectiveness refers to the teacher's judgment about its ability to achieve desired results for student participation and their learning, even in the case of strong or without motivation students that are theoretically rooted in cognitive theory of Bandura and two concepts of human factor and efficacy beliefs (Tschanen-Moran and Hoy, 1998).

Component of teachers trust in students and parents is a group feature and in fact, an emotional response to the social context is based on the belief that individuals and other groups are reliable and shows how much are the risk takers and three major sources of teachers’ trust are: trust in management, trust in colleagues and trust in the organization (Hoy and Moran, 2003). Hoy (1990) suggested that trust has five components of reliability, benevolence, competence, honesty, openness and flexibility. He (2000) added component of risk disclosure into above five elements (Hsieh, 2003). Scientific emphasis as one of the main components of organizational health that is expressed on the basis of it, the healthy schools are schools that have high levels of academic emphasis, teachers have high academic expectations from student and usually these expectations are support by students and parents (Hoy et al., 1997), Hoy and Tater (2006; 1997) and Goddard (2000) suggested that academic emphasis is related to academic achievement and refers to the behavioral and normative aspects of learning environment that in some cases it is also referred to as academic pressure and means the ability of teachers in emphasis on academic tasks more than social and emotional tasks of students (Burkey and Smith 1983).

In general, it can be said that academic optimism consists of optimistic elements of cognitive, emotional and behavioral and structural features that together constitute a latent structure that are in a process of mutual interaction. Efficacy is a belief, therefore it is cognitive; confidence is an emotional response and academic emphasis a cognitive pressure to achieve certain behavior in school that the mutual interaction of these three elements can to create positive learning environment (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2008). Foreign research done in this area can be divided into two general categories. First is the class of studies that has look to academic optimism as a whole and know it as a management duty and explores its relationship with variables such as transformational leadership, group collaboration, empowerment of school structure, culture, school climate and organizational citizenship, which in this context can pointed out studies of Messick (2012), Mitchell et al. Second category, Kirbi’s research (2009); King Bull (2010), Seligman et al. (1995), Woolfolk Hoy et al (2008), Boushman and Seligman(1995), Carver and Scheier (2002), Hoy et al. (2006), Hsieh (2012), and Tarter Hoy (2006), Adams and Forsythe (2009) and Mitchell et al. (2008) that have directly considered the field of education and learning and have reviewed issues related to education and the classroom, and in all these studies, academic optimism beyond the social base of the social – economic affect performance and academic achievement of students.In search of Persian literature studies did not find the study which evaluate this concept and examine its impact on academic achievement, and the lack of attention to this concept (academic optimism of teachers) in the structure of the education system in Iran is very strange.

Awareness this concept can be considered an extremely valuable affair because in the teaching process, not only the teacher's scientific experience and views that are effective, but the whole of its personality affect creating conditions for student learning and change. Teacher’s perspective and philosophy that believes it, puts a severe impact in the quality of its work, so that emits it from an individual state which has only teaching skills to a man of experts that he is responsible for training the human. Teachers with varying degrees of scientific optimism and vary viewpoints, may choose different management and teaching styles to teach. Hence, due to the sensitivity of the teacher's role in
achieving educational goals, the need for more recognizing of their specifications and personality traits as well as the study of these properties in relation to educational achievement is evident ever more. Therefore, the present study has two main objectives: a) an explanation of the concept of scientific optimism of teachers b) examine the role of academic optimism of teachers on student academic achievement was designed and the following questions were evaluated.

1) Is there a significant relationship between the academic optimism of teachers and the academic achievement?
2) Can predict the academic achievement of student based on the academic optimism of teachers and its components?
3) How is contribution of each components of academic optimism of teachers in explaining the academic achievement of students?

MATERIAL AND METHODS
Population, sample and sampling method
The aim of study was to investigate the role of the teacher perceptions of academic optimism on student academic achievement that was done by method of correlation. Population of the study consisted of all high school boy students of Birjand in the 2013-2014 academic year, and based on the recent visit in person at the general office of education of the city, 2077 students were announced. In this study, with control variables of gender, class and social-economic status a sample with a size of 340 people sample were selected by a multistage cluster sampling. For this, first, a list of secondary schools for boy in the city of Birjand was adjusted then the schools depending on the geographic location were divided and in its own class were placed. Further, among five fold segmentation, three regions were selected randomly. Then among the schools of three classes, 10 school randomly were selected and in each school one second grade class randomly with all its students were selected as the study sample and questionnaire were distributed among them. To control the type of lesson, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire in connection with his mathematics teacher, and finally 335 versions were collected, of which 7 were declared invalid version and in total data resulted of 328 questionnaires were analyzed.

Research tools and method of data collection
To collect information related to teachers’ academic optimism, questionnaire Hoy and Tarter (2006) was used that this questionnaire consisted of 11 items and 3 subscales include: trust in students and parents (4 items), academic emphasis (4 items) and teacher efficacy (3 items), which is based on a set of 6 options Likert from completely disagree to strongly agree has been set. Hoy and Tarter (2006), had done this questionnaire on a sample of 258 people and Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, for each of above subscales, 0.71, 0.79 and 0.73 have been reported, respectively. Validity of tool was calculated using method of exploratory factor analysis that this amount between 0.86 and 0.95 was estimated. For greater reliability and observance of its proportion with the culture context of Iran, reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha that this value for the various parts of questionnaire 0.80 was reported. Validity of the measuring instrument using exploratory factor analysis were calculated and these values (0.59 to 0.71), (0.80 to 0.85) and (0.60 to 0.87) were obtained, respectively. Well as for assessment of student achievement in mathematics, the final score of them was used.

RESULTS
In this study teachers’ academic optimism and its factors contains three subscales (trust in students and parents, academic emphasis and feelings of efficacy of teachers) as predictor variables and academic achievement is intended as the criterion variable that the results of the descriptive indicators of teachers’ scientific optimism scale is reported in the following table. In order to examine the questions of the study stepwise regression model were used. Hence, the correlation between the variables of each component of predictor variable (teachers’ scientific optimism) with the criterion variable (academic achievement) was calculated and then variable of teachers’ scientific optimism as predictor variables were entered into regression equation that the results for each questions of the study has been reported in the following table. Table 2 is the correlation coefficient between teachers’ scientific optimism and academic achievement 0.42.Therefore there is a positive correlation (P<0.05) between teachers’ scientific optimism and academic achievement.
Results of Table 3 show that the components of academic optimism of teachers explains 18% of the variance in student achievement and the ratio F is 7.22 which is significant at the 0.000 level. To determine the impact of academic optimism of teachers and its components on academic achievement as the variable of predictor and teachers’ science optimism components as predictor variables and as criterion variables were entered in a stepwise regression equation and the results in Table 4 have been reported.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the components of teachers’ scientific optimism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teachers’ scientific optimism</td>
<td>Academic emphasis</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>4.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust in Science Students and their parents</td>
<td>17.41</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collective efficacy</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The correlation between the components of teachers’ scientific optimism and academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Scientific emphasis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.17 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) collective efficacy</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.48 **</td>
<td>0.32 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) teachers’ trust in students</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.48 **</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0.17 *</td>
<td>0.32 **</td>
<td>0.37 **</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P < 0.05  ** P < 0.01

Table 3: Results of the correlation coefficient and the coefficient of determination of the components of academic optimism of teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Coefficient of determination</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Results of regression analysis using stepwise method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence of parents and students</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>6.86</td>
<td>47.14</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust and collective efficacy of teachers</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>28.69</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust, collective efficacy and academic emphasis</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>7.22</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictor variable regression coefficient indicates that the components of confidence, academic emphasis, collective efficacy and teachers’ scientific emphasis can predict significantly academic achievement of students. In addition, the component of teachers’ trust in parents and students with a coefficient of determination of 13% and with F = 47.14 at level (P<0. 01) has largest contribution in explaining the variance in student achievement and two components of the teacher collective efficacy and scientific emphasis explain 3% and 2% of the academic achievement of the students, respectively.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to predict student achievement based on the components of academic optimism of teachers (trust teachers to students and parents, teachers emphasis, collective efficacy of teachers). Result of the study showed that between the teachers’ scientific optimism and academic achievement of students there is a significant positive relationship and components of teachers’ scientific optimism can be explained and predicted academic achievement of students. Studies of Hoy et al. (2006), McGuigan and Hoy (2006); Woolfolk Hoy et al. (2008) about academic optimism suggest that by controlling the level of the economy-Social, previous advance and other characteristics of the demographic directly is related to student achievement, attitude and individually optimism of the teacher, classroom humanitarian management, student-centered teaching.

Hence, given that optimism has also basic inherent and Seligman has considerate the optimism as a acquired reaction believes that people can learn this important through learning behavioral techniques, school administrators withholding continuous sessions along with parents and teachers of the children, through honest dialogue with respect to the influence of parents and teachers on student progress can leads to supportive climate based on trust and intimacy, in which situations, parents and teachers can dialogue with complete transparency on the status of the school. School managers should seeks to build bridges between the school, parents and the community, because the teachers and students is placed in a broad social system, which will affect their academic optimism.

On the other hand, since the scientific optimism, as organizational and individual features to create and maintain a positive school culture, teachers should be encouraged to develop and keep optimistic beliefs, and effort to expand a positive-oriented and active school environment. Hence, requisite any change in the first place, is a change in attitude that with the necessary training and provide conditions for the development of this major, students are viewed as elements capable and reliable, that if the facilitator is provided to actualize itself capabilities. With attitude change, teachers create a climate with caring and full of confidence in the classroom so that students do not feel unsafe and they can easily share their feelings that doing all these things shall be subject to structural changes in the educational system and consequently the necessary changes in the process of management of school and to develop a positive thinking and during it teachers to bear responsibility it important affair.

Overall, this research provides important theoretical and empirical findings for future research on the factors affecting the academic achievement and scientific optimism and forecasts the scientific optimism of a teacher at an obligation for academic achievement but to confirm the claim, several empirical studies research is needed.

REFERENCES


