

FACTORS RELATED TO STUDENTS' PLANNING ACTIVITIES OF SOME UNIVERSITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY

NGHIÊN CỨU MỐI QUAN HỆ GIỮA MỘT SỐ YẾU TỐ VỚI CÁC HOẠT ĐỘNG XÂY DỰNG KẾ HOẠCH CỦA SINH VIÊN CÁC TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC TẠI THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH

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ABSTRACT

Planning is one of the important activities in our life. It has many relations with other activities, characteristics, skills, and also can help us achieve our goals more easily. However, the correlations and correlation level of students' planning activities (SPA) with other factors related to student's abilities, characteristics and grade point average have received quite little attention of researchers. The objective of this study is to find out the relations and relation level of SPA with others as extroversion characteristics, high - order thinking, active learning, purposes of learning, persistence in learning actions, group working, working alone and grade point average. In the pilot survey conducted on 296 university students, exploratory factor analysis and 1st reliability of individual items analysis (Cronbach's Alpha index) were applied to select valuable items of each factor in the questionnaire. In the main survey stage, 498 university students were randomly selected from their classes and responded to a questionnaire on their perceptions. By applying frequency, mean, standard deviation, correlation and regression analysis, it was found that factors like high - order thinking, active learning, persistence in learning actions, group working activities, working alone have positively related to students' planning activities.

Keywords: *planning activities; extroversion characteristics; high - order thinking; active learning; persistence in learning.*

TÓM TẮT

Xây dựng kế hoạch là hoạt động quan trọng, có mối liên quan đến các hoạt động, các đặc điểm, những kỹ năng khác và cũng giúp con người dễ dàng hơn trong quá trình thực hiện công việc để đạt được mục tiêu. Tuy nhiên, hiện nay có rất ít công trình quan tâm nghiên cứu mối quan hệ của các hoạt động lập kế hoạch và các yếu tố liên quan đến những khả năng, các đặc điểm và điểm trung bình của sinh viên. Nghiên cứu này hướng đến việc tìm ra các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến hoạt động xây dựng kế hoạch của sinh viên như các đặc điểm hướng ngoại, sử dụng tư duy bậc cao trong học tập, tính tích cực học tập, mục đích của việc học, sự kiên trì trong học tập, các hoạt động làm việc nhóm, hoạt động làm việc cá nhân và điểm trung bình chung. Giai đoạn thử nghiệm tiến hành khảo sát trên 296 sinh viên để phân tích nhân tố và phân tích độ tin cậy của các câu hỏi nhằm lựa chọn những câu hỏi có giá trị đưa vào bảng hỏi. Giai đoạn khảo sát chính được tiến hành lấy ý kiến của 498 sinh viên và sau đó tiến hành phân tích tần số,

trung bình, độ lệch chuẩn, hệ số tương quan và hồi qui. Kết quả các yếu tố: sử dụng tư duy bậc cao trong học tập, học tập tích cực, kiên trì trong học tập, làm việc nhóm, làm việc một mình có mối quan hệ tích cực đến hoạt động xây dựng kế hoạch của sinh viên.

Từ khóa: *hoạt động xây dựng kế hoạch; đặc điểm hướng ngoại; tư duy bậc cao; tính tích cực học tập; kiên trì trong học tập.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Planning is the process of thinking about and organizing the activities required to achieve a desired goal. Planning is one of the important activities in our life, not only for managers but also for all people. It plays the first role and the most important function of management [1]. The implementation of planning allows ones to look ahead and accomplish goals and avoid emotional, financial, physical or social hardship [2]. There were some research works finding relations of SPA with other factors. Julie Noble & Douglas A. Powell (1995) published that educational needs and plans have relation with student's achievement of higher-order thinking and other factors as course work taken, and school attended [3]. Power et al (1986) announced that planned activities help us to achieve our goal, develop other skills, and work more efficiency [4]. Planning skill is closely related to others skills such as: analyzing and interpreting data and situations; diagnosing problems and identifying relevant causal factors; predicting and forecasting; goal setting and identifying possible courses of action; evaluating and comparing possible courses of action; communicating; implementing actions and monitoring them [5]. However, the fact that SPAs have or not any relations with some factors of university students such as extroversion characteristics, high-order thinking, active learning actions, purposes of learning, persistence in learning actions, group working, working alone, and grade

point average have not yet received any research. If SPAs have correlations with these factors, it will be a good solution to develop the factors of students through SPAs.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVE

Whether or not planned activities have contributed to develop abilities or characteristics of students such as: extroversion characteristics, active learning, higher - order thinking, group working skills, purpose of learning, persistence in learning, working alone, and grade point average?

The objective of this research paper is to find out the factors which affect on the planning activities of the students and how strong these factors make the effects.

III. HYPOTHESIS

H1: There is a positive relationship between students' extroversion characteristics and SPA.

H2: There is a positive relationship between students' high - order thinking and SPA.

H3: There is a positive relationship between students' active learning and SPA.

H4: There is a positive relationship between students' purposes of learning and SPA.

H5: There is a positive relationship between students' patient in learning and SPA.

H6: There is a positive relationship between students' group working and SPA.

H7: There is a positive relationship between students' Self-working and SPA.

H8: There is a positive relationship between students' grade point average and SPA.

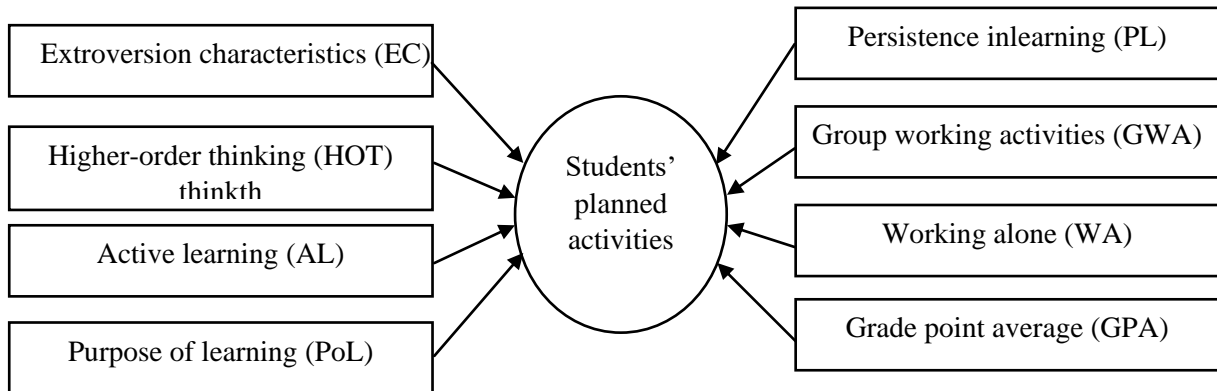


Figure 1. Framework of study

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of this study focuses on the 8 factors relating to students' planning activities as above-mentioned and shown in Fig.1. The meaning of these factors will be described in the following:

- Planning activities are understood as activities or processes that relate to a design or scheme of arrangement. There are several tasks that planners have to do such as define goals; decide tasks should do; schedule time, methods, workforce, and so on [2], [5].
- Extroversion characteristics: A trait extroversion are a central dimension of human personality theories [6]. Extraversion is the act, state, or habit of being predominantly concerned with obtaining gratification from what is outside the self [7]. Extraverts tend to enjoy human interactions and to be enthusiastic, talkative, gregarious, and dynamic [8], [9].
- Higher-order thinking, known as higher order thinking skills, is a concept of education reform based on learning taxonomies. The idea is that some types of learning require more cognitive processing than others, but also have more generalized benefits. Higher-order thinking students tend to use analysis, evaluation and synthesis

skills when learning. Higher order thinking also involves the learning of complex judgmental skills such as critical thinking and problem solving [10].

- Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. It requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing such as do homework, group work, practice in and out of classroom, review lessons, read reference materials, and engagement in the learning process in positive ways...[11], [12]
- Purposes of learning are the reasons for learning activities are done. Although each student learns for different purposes, but in overall view there are 4 primary purposes of learning: (1) learning for passing all subjects; (2) learning for fear of not passing or for external pressures (parents, teachers, requirement of society...); (3) learning to accumulate knowledge and skills (not for fear or for grade point); (4) learning for getting high grade point average.
- Persistence in learning actions are known as learning activities that students still continue learning or try to do their learning tasks even though they meet difficulty or are opposed by other people. These can be expressed through their actions as highly

concentrate in what teacher are teaching despite the noise; overcome obstacles to complete the course; be absent from class only when having serious illness or because of reasons which are particularly important...

- Group working activities require students to cooperate in doing assignment, solving problem... Group working skill requires students to get along with others, well cooperate, actively participate in group, and so on.

- Working alone means that students prefer doing tasks by themselves to cooperating with others and getting good result when working alone.

- Grade point average is the average obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credits attempted [13].

V. RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process can be divided into 3 main phases: design questionnaire, main survey and data analysis.

1. Design questionnaire

There are 5 main steps in this phase: design items in each factor, select measurement scale, pilot survey, factor analysis, 1st reliability of individual items analysis.

- Design items in the questionnaire is based on characteristics of each factor which are shown in part III. Totally, there 55 items belong to 9 factors (SPA: 6 items; EC: 6 items; HOT: 6 items; AL: 7 items; PoL: 4 items; PL: 7 items; GWA: 7 items; WA: 6 item; GPA: 1 item; demographic information: 5 items).

- Measurement scale: These variables are measured on a five-point scale ranging from

strongly disagree to strongly agree. Ranging from 1 to 5:(1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree. Grade point average were divided in 5 levels: Level 1: from 0.00 to under 5; Level 2: from 5 to under 6; Level 3: form 6 to under 7; Level 4: from 7 to under 8; Level 5: from 8 to 10.

- Pilot survey has been conducted on 296 students from some universities in Ho Chi Minh City.

- Using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to confirm that the designed items belong to suitable factors or not.

- After factor analysis, reliability of individual items analysis (Cronbach's Alpha index) are implemented to eliminate inappropriate variables.

- All qualified items after factor analysis and reliability of individual items analysis are set up in the questionnaire.

2. Main survey

There are 35 meaningful items and 5 items of demographic in the questionnaire have been distributed for 498 students of some universities in Ho Chi Minh City.

3. Data analysis

SPSS statistical software is used to analyze the collected data. 2nd reliability of individual items, frequency, mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression are used through appropriate statistical package.

VI. RESULTS

1. Sample analysis

There were 498 students at some universities participated in the survey, detailed distribution of the sample are shown in Table2.

Table 1. Sample analysis

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	329	66.1%
	Female	169	33.9%
Univer- sities	HCMC University of Technology and Education	318	63.9%
	HCMC University of Agriculture and Forestry	64	12.9%
	Other Universities	116	23.2%
Year of student	Freshman	142	28.5%
	Sophomore	174	34.9%
	Third-year student	73	14.7%
	Final year student	64	12.8%
	Not define	45	9%
Total	N	498	100%

2. Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistic represents the calculated means and standard deviations for the variables: extroversion characteristics, high - order thinking, active learning, purpose of learning, patient learning actions, group working, working alone, grade point average and independent variable, planning activities.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	
1. Planned activities	498	3.26	0.931	
2. Extroversion characteristics	498	3.06	0.901	
3. High - order thinking	498	3.32	0.900	
4. Active learning	498	3.10	0.924	
5. Purposes of learning	(1) Learning for passing all subjects	498	2.53	1.115
	(2) Learning for fear of not passing or for external pressures (parents, teachers...)	498	2.99	1.106
	(3) Learning to accumulate knowledge and skills (not for fear or not for grade point)	498	3.87	0.913
	(4) Learning to get highest grade point.	498	2.56	1.068
6. Persistence in learning	498	3.70	0.973	
7. Group working	498	3.59	0.888	
8. Working alone	498	3.04	1.087	
9. Grade point average	498	3.11	0.941	

Table 3 shows that mean of planning activities is at the average level (Mean = 3.26) and standard deviation is 0.931. Mean of extroversion characteristics, high - order thinking, active learning, persistence in learning, group working, working alone, grade point average are 3.060, 3.32, 3.10, 3.70, 3.59, 3.04 and 3.11 respectively, and

standard deviation for these independent variables are 0.901, 0.9, 0.924, 0.973, 0.888, 1.087 and 0.941, respectively. These figures show that all abilities or characteristics of most students about these factors are not so good, in average level (mean from 3.04 to 3.70), thus all of them need to be improved. These numbers also indicated that mean of group working factor and persistence in learning factor (mean =3.59 and 3.70) are a little bit higher than the others. The mean of group working factor (mean = 3.59) is higher than the mean of working alone factor (mean = 3.04). It reveals that most of students prefer working in group to working alone, students can manage their learning despite they meet some obstacles as well.

For the factor purposes of learning, most of students tend to learn because they want to accumulate knowledge and skills (mean = 3.87) rather than the others such as to pass all subjects (mean = 2.53), to face with fearing of not passing subject and external pressures (parents, teachers...) (mean = 2.99) or for grade point as well (mean =2.56). It shows that students have a good sense for their

learning goals, so we can hope that students have good motivation in learning.

3. Correlation Analysis

There are positive and significant correlations with sig. < 0.01 between SPA with higher - order thinking, active learning and group working factors ($r_p = 0.48, 0.46, 0.4$ respectively) at medium level; with extroversion characteristics, persistence in learning and working alone ($r_p = 0.312, 0.317, 0.174$ respectively) at low level. With sig. < 0.05, there are positive, meaningful and low correlations between SPA with the purpose of learning to accumulate knowledge and skills ($r_p = 0.113$) and GPA ($r_p = 0.091$).

These correlations indicate that if planning activities of students is improved, they will be developed many factors such as active in learning, high order thinking, extroversion characteristics (enthusiastic, talkative, gregarious, dynamic...), ability of persistence in learning and group working skills as well. GPA of student is low related to SPA, it is impacted by other factors that are not mentioned in this model.

Table 3. Correlations between planned activities and other factors

		Planned activities	Extroversion characteristics	Higher - order thinking	Active learning	Purposes of learning				Persistence in learning	Group working	Working alone	Grade point average
						(1) Learning to pass all subjects	(2) Learning for fear of not passing or for external pressures	(3) Learning to accumulate knowledge and skills	(4) Learning to accumulate knowledge, skills and grade point as well.				
Planned activities	Correlation	1	.312**	.480**	.460**	-.003	-.012	.113*	-.018	.317**	.400**	.174**	.091*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.954	.782	.012	.693	.000	.000	.000	.043
	N	498	498	498	498	498	498	498	498	498	498	498	498
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).													
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).													

4. Regression Analysis

Table 4. Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.588 ^a	.345	.334	.65932	1.975

Table 5. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	112.044	8	14.006	32.219	.000 ^b
Residual	212.568	489	.435		
Total	324.612	497			

Table 6. Coefficients in the Regression Model^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.178	.257		-.694	.488
1. Extroversion characteristics	-.027	.056	-.022	-.472	.637
2. Higher - order thinking	.330	.069	.230	4.804	.000
3. Active learning	.316	.058	.249	5.478	.000
4. Learning to accumulate knowledge and skills	-.016	.034	-.018	-.469	.640
5. Persistence in learning	.109	.053	.088	2.055	.040
6. Group working	.294	.060	.228	4.905	.000
7. Working alone	.080	.034	.092	2.347	.019
8. Grade point average	-.051	.033	-.059	-1.534	.126

It reveals from the study that the value of R Square is .334. It means that 8 of the variables together can explain 33.4% of the model and the rest 66.6% may be explained by the other factors not mentioned in this regression model.

F-statistics were carried out to find the overall strength of the model. The value of F-Statistic 32.219 and Sig. = .000^b < 0.005 shows that the model is highly significant as in Table 5 and Table 6.

Coefficient & Hypothesis Testing

B values for extroversion characteristics, learning to accumulate knowledge and skills and grade point average are in negative direction, t and Sig. value are insignificant. So we reject H1, H4 and H8. Therefore, there are not positive relationship between students' extroversion characteristics, learning to accumulate knowledge and skills and grade point average with SPA.

Higher - order thinking, positive self-learning, patient in learning, group working, and self-working are positive direction, T and Sig. values are also significant. So we accept H2, H3, H5, H6, and H7. Therefore there are positive relationship between students' high - order thinking, positive self-learning, patient in learning, group working, and self-working with planning activities.

Discussion

The Beta values in Table 7 show that factors 2, 3, and 6 have most effect as predictors more than factors 5 and 7. It explains that the 3 factors: higher - order thinking, active learning and group working have affected more strongly to the students planned activities than factors patient in learning and working alone. Therefore, it can be inferred that if SPA is improved, high order thinking, active learning, group working, patient in learning and working alone abilities will be enhanced. SPA is currently not so good (mean = 3.26), therefore it is very necessary to improve in order to increase other students' abilities.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This study was designed to explore the important factors in relation with the SPA. Research was conducted on the survey of 498 students from some universities in HCM city Vietnam. It was found that, 5 factors: higher - order thinking, active learning, persistence in learning, group working, and working alone are the factors that had positive and meaningful correlation with SPA and explain 33.4% of the model. It was also indicated that higher - order thinking, active learning and group working were more important factors than the others that influence on SPA.

Limitations

There are certain limitations of this study. Firstly, the sample size taken in this study was small that included only 498 and was conducted at only some universities in

Ho Chi Minh City and was not equal among universities. Secondly, sample of freshman and sophomore students were much more than 3rd and 4th students. Finally, 5 factors could explain only 33.4% of the model. If this study was being carried out again with larger sample, better distribution of the sample in universities and added more independent variables, the results would be improved more than the current study results.

Suggestions and Recommendations

In order to develop some personal abilities, students should develop their planning activities by defining objectives and/or goals, clarifying tasks before doing, making schedule of time, personnel, and finance... to achieve their objectives. Meanwhile, teachers should guide and encourage students to make meaningful plan before doing their learning tasks and other tasks. For administration, it should add training content related to planning activities in training curricula.

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