

Belief in Personal Control and Life Satisfaction among Blind Students: In the Case of Bahir Dar University. Implication for Intervention

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the belief in personal control and life satisfaction among blind students. With this intention, the research was done employing descriptive survey research design where the quantitative approach was used to tackle the research problem. Accordingly, the quantitative data were collected using questionnaire from 102 blind undergraduate students of Bahir Dar University. To collect these data, beliefs of personal control and life satisfaction scales were used. Then, the analysis of data collected from the subjects of the study about their own perception toward the levels of general external locus of control, exaggerated locus of control, God mediating dimension and life satisfaction focused on assessing the relationship between locus of control dimensions and life satisfaction. Here in, one sample t-test and Pearson correlation coefficient were used for analyzing the data. The findings revealed that the participants were more of internally oriented and have exaggerated belief in personal control with less belief in God as a mediator of control and have good satisfaction with their life. Life satisfaction was directly correlated with internal control and God mediated dimension but inversely related with exaggerated belief in personal control. The participants with internal locus of control were satisfied with their life.

Keywords: Life satisfaction, External locus of control, exaggerated locus of control, God-mediated dimension and blind

Introduction

Life satisfaction is a construct of cognitive judgmental process which is influenced by life events (Westaway & Maluka, 2005). As Borg et al. (2008) stated, life satisfaction is a fundamental concern for everybody. Hence, it is logical to see that individuals usually involve in judging their life satisfaction in relation to different events in life.

Self-esteem is believed to be one of the major determinants of life satisfaction (Honget al., 1993; Hu et al., 2016). Research findings revealed that though many people assume that more material possessions will make them satisfied in their life, the more material possessions, the greater the expectations, and they no longer appreciate what they have (Bannink, Pearce, & Hope, 2016; Pajor, Broniarczyk-Dyla, & Switalska, 2015). Studies also indicated that individuals with fragile self-esteem and give more value for material possessions are not satisfied with their life (An et al., 2008; Banaczek & Saracen, 2016; Bannink et al., 2016).

A real sense of satisfaction comes from identifying, cultivating and using personal strengths in work, social life and love (Thomas, 1988; Wong et al., 2010). Studies indicated that self-esteem partially mediated social avoidance and locus of control (Zhang et al., 2014). It is also indicated that people with high self-esteem tend to have the potential to identify their strengths and cultivating them (Yao et al., 2014). Other studies also revealed that individuals with high self-esteem tend to be internally oriented and it is true that people with high self-esteem attribute both their failure and success to themselves (Forrester, 1982; Rizza et al., 2015).

In spite of the existence of many variables as moderators of life satisfaction, locus of control is the major determinant (Enger, Howerton, & Cobbs, 1994; Frost & Wilson, 1983). Individuals considering themselves as master of their world accept that both their success and failure are the results of their

own action or reaction. That is, they consider themselves to have internal locus of control. Conversely, those who externalize whatever happens to them and feel it is a result of their fate or they feel they have little power to control things that occur tend to have an external orientation (Frost & Wilson, 1983). Research findings also revealed that internally oriented individuals perceive their life differently than individuals with external locus of control and as the result their life satisfaction also differs (Frost & Wilson, 1983).

Although there is much speculation of the relationship between disability and life satisfaction, some research findings revealed that there is no relationship between disability and life satisfaction as well as future aspiration (Arnold & Chapman, 1992; Grana, Camplan, & Carda, 2016). Another research finding revealed that disability and life satisfaction are related but not linearly (Mailhan, Azouvi, & Dazard, 2005). Other research findings also revealed that disability has a significant negative effect on life satisfaction (Dural et al., 2003; Garaigordobil & Perez, 2007; Mollaoglu, Tuncay, & Fertelli, 2010; Pagan-Rodriguez, 2010).

Although adequate infrastructures including libraries, resource centers, and guidance and counseling services and so on are needed for all university students, blind students are particularly in need of many additional resources for being outfitted for the teaching-learning process. These students are learning together with seeing students and are also expected to take examinations with these students without any satisfactory material support (Bahir Dar University Senate Legislation, 2014).

While providing a life skills training for blind students at Bahir Dar University, they have been talking about their dissatisfaction with the way they have been treated in the university, and what they have been complaining about are clearly stated in the university legislation (Bahir Dar University Senate Legislation, 2014). Thus, the idea of conducting this study emanated from the researcher's concern to the grievance of blind students which is supported by the legislation of the university.

Although the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction of people with disability is examined, particularly blind students' life satisfaction in terms of the locus of control dimension point of view was seldom investigated in Ethiopian context. Thus, this research was conducted to examine the life satisfaction of blind students in line with their locus of control point of view at Bahir Dar University.

The objective of this study was to examine the levels of general external locus of control; exaggerated locus of control; God mediating dimension and life satisfaction as well as assessing the relationship between locus of control dimensions and life satisfaction.

Methods

The study was conducted by employing a descriptive survey research design at Bahir Dar University which is found in Bahir Dar city. The participants of the study were 102 totally blind students selected using convenient sampling technique with the inclusion criteria of being an undergraduate student, without having multiple disability, and existing during the data collection time which was a semester break (February 15 to February 28, 2017).

Belief in personal control scale (BPCS) was the main data collection tool which was developed by Berrenbeg (1987). This scale has 45 items which is designed to measure personal control. The instrument measures 3 dimensions of personal control. The first part is designed to measure general external control (F1), the extent to which an individual believes that their outcomes are self-produced (internality) or are produced by fate or other people (externality). The second part is designed to measure exaggerated control dimension (F2). It measures an extreme and unrealistic belief in personal control. The third part is designed to measure God-mediated dimension (F3). It measures the belief that God can be listed in the achievement of outcomes. This Likert scale instrument has good internal consistency .85(F1); .88(F2); .97(F3) and it has also very good stability and test-retest correlations of .81 (F1); .85 (F2); and .93 (F3). Higher scores mean more internal control (F1), a more exaggerated belief in control (F2), and less belief in God as a mediator of control (F3) (Berrenbeg, 1987).

The data were collected by four students who were attending a master programme of Special Needs Education at Bahir Dar University. Before data collection, training which lasted three hours was given to data collecting students about the procedure of the work. Therefore, each participant was informed about the purpose of the study and the procedure of data collection. Ethical clearance, permission,

and informed consent were obtained from the Research, Community Services and Ethical Standard Committee (RCSESC), department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Bahir Dar University and the study participants, respectively. Before starting the interview, informed consent was obtained from each participant and the participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they feel discomfort to participate. Confidentiality of data was maintained throughout this study. A lot of effort was made to safeguard participants against any risk. Privacy of respondents was violated at any stage of the study. Finally, the collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics; t-test and Pearson product movement Correlation coefficient.

Results

Although 105 participants were expected to respond to items of data collecting instruments, only 102 participants responded to the items of the data collecting instruments. Hence, due to the presence of non-response, the analysis was done based on the data secured from 102 participants who completed the data well.

Table 1: *Background information of the participants of the study*

Characteristics		Frequency (N=102)	Percent (%)
Sex	Female	77	75.5
	Male	25	24.5
Age	<20 years	4	4.0
	20-25 years	33	33.0
	>25 years	63	63.0
Place of birth	Urban	54	52.9
	Rural	48	47.1
Campus	Peda (Main campus)	76	74.5
	Yibab campus	26	25.5
Year of study	First year	55	53.9
	Second year	27	26.5
	Third year & above	20	19.6

As it is shown in Table1 above, the majority of the respondents were male (75.5%). With regard to the age of the participants, the table displays that the majority of participants (63%) belong to the age category of 25 years and above. On the other hand, when the other 33% of participants belong to the age of category of 20-25 years old, the age of the remaining 4 % of participants has been below 20 years. With regard to the campus of the study, it is displayed in the table that majority of the participants (74.5%) attended in the main campus and the rest (25.5%) attended in Yibab campus. On the other hand, in terms of year of study the majority (53.9%) of the participants are first year students whose number is followed by second year students (26.5%).

Table 2: *The Levels of general external, exaggerated, and God mediated belief in personal control*

Variables	Rated Mean	Expected Mean	SD	df	t	Sig.
General external control	74.28	57	9.941	101	18.11*	.000
Exaggerated belief of self-control	61.76	51	10.000	101	10.87*	.000
God mediated control	32.97	27	8.991	101	6.70*	.000
Life satisfaction	22.74	20	4.541	101	6.10*	.000

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

As indicated in the above table, the levels of general external control, exaggerated self-control and God mediated control were computed using one sample t-test. The results revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the set test values used (expected mean) and the actual mean (rated mean) of each belief of sense of control.

At 0.05 level of significance, $t(101) = 18.11$, $P = .000$, there was statistically significant difference in the general external belief of participants. This indicates that the participants are more of internally oriented which is explicitly indicated in the difference between the calculated and the test value means used (calculated mean is greater than that of the test value where the test value is the cut off point for being internally oriented or externally oriented).

With regarding to exaggerated belief in personal control, it is possible to see from this table that at 0.05 level of significance, $t(101) = 10.87$, $P = .000$, there was statistically significant difference. This indicates that the participants have more exaggerated sense of personal control. It is explicitly indicated in the difference between the calculated and the test value means used (calculated mean is greater than that of the test value where the test value is the medium of exaggerated sense of personal control and submissiveness belief of personal control).

Moreover, the finding which is displayed in the above table also revealed that at 0.05 level of significance, $t(101) = 6.70$, $P = .000$, there was a statistical significant difference between the expected mean and the calculated mean in terms of God mediated belief of control among the participants. It is to mean that the calculated mean is greater than the test value. This indicates that the participants have less belief in God as a mediator of control.

Furthermore, as presented in the same table above, at 0.05 level of significance $t(101) = 6.10$, $p = .000$, the findings of the study revealed that there was statistical significant difference between the calculated and test value of life satisfaction scale. This result indicates that the participants are more satisfied in their life.

Table 3: *The relationship between belief in personal control and life satisfaction (N=102)*

Variables	Mean	SD	r	Variance shared	Sig
General external control	74.28	9.64	.93*	86.49%	.000
Life Satisfaction	22.74	4.54			
Exaggerated control	61.76	10.00	-.63*	39.69%	.000
Life satisfaction	22.75	4.54			
God-mediated dimension	32.97	8.99	.32*	10.24%	.001
Life satisfaction	22.74	4.50			

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

The relationship between belief of personal control which has been sorted out in to general external control, exaggerated control dimension and the God-mediated dimension point of view and the life satisfaction of blind students was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. As the finding of the study displayed in table 3 shows, there was a strong positive correlation between the general external control and life satisfaction where $r = .93$, $n = 102$, $p = 0.000$. This indicates that high levels of general external control associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. Regarding with exaggerated dimension, there was strong negative correlation where $r = -.63$, $n = 102$, $p = 0.000$. This is to mean that high levels of exaggerated dimension associated with lower levels of life satisfaction. Regarding with the God-mediated dimension of belief in personal control and life satisfaction, there was a weak relationship where $r = .32$, $p = 0.001$. It indicates that high levels of God-mediated belief associated with higher levels of satisfaction in life but with small variance shared.

Discussion

The findings revealed that participants were more of internally oriented and even they had exaggerated belief in personal control and a less belief in God as a mediator of control as well as a more belief of life satisfaction. This finding was contradictory with research findings which revealed that disability has a significant negative effect on life satisfaction (Dural, Atay, Akbostanci, & Kucukdeveci, 2003; Garaigordobil & Perez, 2007; Mollaoglu, Tuncay, & Fertelli, 2010; Pagan-Rodriguez, 2010). However, this finding was consistent with a research finding which revealed that locus of control is the major determinant of life satisfaction (Enger, Howerton, & Cobbs, 1994; Frost & Wilson, 1983). It was also similar with a research finding which revealed that there is no relationship between disability and life satisfaction as well as future aspiration (Arnold & Chapman, 1992; Grana, Camplan, & Carda, 2016). This might be due to the fact that these students have been provided life skills education since they joined the university which possibly enhances their self-esteem. In addition to this, awareness creation that was made about their rights and benefits by the university special needs students' union might have enhanced their self-esteem.

The finding also revealed that life satisfaction was directly related with general external control and God-mediated control dimension but inversely related with exaggerated control dimension. This might be due to the fact that individuals who had exaggerated belief in personal control were suffering from inferiority complex and in reality dissatisfied in their life.

Conclusion

The result of this study revealed that the participants were internally oriented and had more of exaggerated belief in personal control with less belief in God as a mediator of control and they were satisfied in their life. Their life satisfaction was directly related with general external belief in personal control and God as a mediator of control but inversely related with exaggerated belief of personal control. Therefore, based on the findings of the study it is likely to conclude that blind students with internal locus of control remain satisfied in their life. That is, they were leading successful life in the university. This might be due to the fact that these students have been provided life skills education since they joined the university which possibly enhances their self-esteem.

In addition to this, awareness creation that was made about their rights and benefits by the university special needs students' union might have contributed positively to enhance their self-esteem. However, it might be possible to take in that the participant's exaggerated belief of personal control which was inversely related with their life satisfaction seems to have negative impact in their life satisfaction. This might be to mean that individuals who had exaggerated belief in personal control were suffering from inferiority complex and in reality dissatisfied in their life.

Although the blind students of Bahir Dar University who were internally oriented in their belief of locus of control were satisfied in their life, the university has a lot to do with students having exaggerated sense of self control. That is, it is required from the university to exert effort to improve their life satisfaction by working hard to resolve problems related to students' exaggerated sense of self control. Moreover, students with this sense of self control should also look at themselves so as to be satisfied in their life and become a fully functioning person particularly in their academic life.

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