An Assessment Into Predictive Validity Of Islamic Azad University MA Entrance Exam In Iran

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Testing Program) etc., while others administer locally-developed examinations to screen students for pursuing their academic career. The major purpose behind any one of these examinations, no matter well-established standardized or locally-developed ones, is the assessment of the proficiency in English language so as to determine eligibility criteria.

In Iranian educational system, any MA candidate should participate in a selection test. It consists of academically general and specific questions. Iranian measurement organization and Islamic Azad University are responsible for designing, developing and administering such tests for MA candidates.

The purpose of this research is to assess the predictive validity of Islamic Azad University MA Entrance Examination and to show if there is any relationship between the candidates´ score on such tests and their future success in the universities where they study. In teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) section, these tests include academically general questions consisting of

ABSTRACT:

The main purpose of this article was to study the predictive validity of the Islamic Azad University of the MA Entrance Exam (IAUMAEE) in Iran .The aim of the study was to find probable relationship between Grade Point Average (GPA) in MA courses in the field of their study and their entrance admission test results. The researcher have used the GPA of 135 MA students in teaching English major and their rank in MA University Entrance Exam in Shiraz Azad University. According to the data there is positive relationship between MAEE and GPA of the students by using pearson product movement index.

INTRODUCTION

Students in many countries are required to take an entrance examination into their academic institutions. Some of these institutions administer certain types of well-established globally-recognized examinations like TOEFL, IELTS, SAT1 (Scholastic Aptitude Test), ACT (American College

Furthermore, as with many aspects of social science the magnitude of correlations obtained from predictive validity studies is usually not high, Higher values are occasionally seen and lower values are very common.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of these tests is to assess the proficiency of the students, when they enter the university at MA level and to determine the extent to which scores in MA entrance exam at Islamic Azad University, in English section, could predict future academic achievement of Iranian English major students in such a university.

Review of Literature

Propphal (1990) conducted a research on predictive validity. He wanted to know the predictive validity of three subtests of the national English entrance examination in Thailand on academic achievement in freshman general English and English for academic purpose courses at two different universities. He selected 264 science students randomly. They had taken the national English entrance examination in Thailand in 1982. The result indicated positive relationship between scores of the test and university English achievement in all 3 tests. These are tests involved general English. The three testes account for more variance with the general English course than with the English for academic purpose course. He also suggested that test format can play an important role in predicting future academic achievement in English. However, Dooey

vocabulary, grammar and reading tests, specialized questions on testing issues, teaching and linguistics. These questions are in multiple choice formats. The nature of these tests, in- fact, dictates that educational experts discover to what extent admission tests can predict the academic success of the students in future (Mohammadi, 2009).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Construct validity has traditionally been defined as the experimental demonstration that a test is measuring the construct it claims to be measuring, proficiency tests are indeed assumed to be interpreted as a measured of the attribute which we call proficiency, while it is not operationally defined. Construct validity (Messick, 1998, P. 42) is referred to as the appropriateness of inferences made on the basis of observations or measurements (often test scores), specially whether a test measures the intended construct. Constructs are abstractions that are deliberately created by researchers in order to conceptualize the latent variables, which are the causes of scores on a given measure (although they may not be directly observable). In lay terms, (Messick, 1998, P. 35) "construct validity examines the question: Does the measure behave like the theory says a measure of that construct behaves?" So the problem is that many times it happens that the proficiency tests do not correlate with the predicted success or failure in learner's academic career. In psychometrics, predictive validity is the extent to which a score on a scale or test predicts scores on some criteria measures. This type of validity has always been questionable to human beings.

continued. "An entrance test can only predict those who cannot necessarily those who will" (p.6).

A study conducted by Educational Testing Unit researchers, Ramist, Lewis and McCauley-Jenkins (2002) investigated the correlations between SAT II Subject Tests and freshmen GPA. The results pointed out that English composition had a correlation of 0.51 with freshmen GPA. This was the highest correlation among SAT II Subject Tests. French, German, Hebrew, Latin and Spanish sub-tests showed lower correlations with freshmen GPA.

There was another study conducted by Stofflet, Fenton, and Strough (2004) to predict Alaska state high school graduation qualifying examination (HSGQE) and benchmark examination on the performance on California achievement tests (CAT).

Alavi (2009) also indicated that there is a positive relationship between each of the exams and the INUEEE (Iranian national university entrance English exam). Indeed, the results he came to showed a strong and direct relationship between performances on the benchmark test or HSGQE reading and writing scores and performances on the CAT total reading scores and total language and arts scores, respectively (Alavi, 2012).

Furthermore, he added that a transfer of sub-skills from one content area (general English content) to another (English for academic purposes) is possible (Alavi, 2012). Mohammadi (2012) holds that there is high correction between the total score of Iranian EFL students (IAVEE) (Azad University

(1999) failed to find any relationship in this investigation between IELTS and academic success.

A study by Marvin and Simner (1999) showed that there is relationship between TOFEL scores and first year performance in university English courses however, this correlation, as they found out, may not continue beyond the first year. Pack (1972) (in Marvin and Simmer, 1999) carried out a study on 402 Canadian students and found out that TOFEL scores were "significantly related to the grade obtained in the first English course taken; however, they are not related to grades obtained in subsequent English course nor are they related to the probability that an examinee will graduate" (Hale et al.p.161) (Marvin and Simner, 1999).

Huong (2001) investigated the predictive validity of IELTS scores. She found a positive and significant relationship between IELTS test and grade point average (GPA) among 202 Vietnamese students sponsored by the Australian agency for international development (AUSAID) at Australian universities.

Power (2001) also showed that there was a significant positive relationship between both undergraduate grade point average and GRE general test scores with first year graduate in veterinary medicine. In her report on the predictive validity of BMAT for the first year examination performance at the university of Cambridge, Emery 2007 could not find any relationship between two variables and concluded that the reason for poor performance at university are many and

will seek the probable relationship between several pairs of data, because this research is correlational one. Two sets of data will be obtained from the universities' administrative office. These two sets of data are: subjects´ MA IAUEE scores and their GPA during 3 semesters of their study. A Pearson product – moment correlation coefficient will be used to calculate their relationship between them.

Instruments/Data

Specific information available from universities' administrative office included:

Students' GPA during 3 semesters and Students´ MA IAUEE score. Then a Pearson product - moment correlation coefficient will be used to calculate their relationship between them.

Data Collection

The data will comprise both participants´ grade point average (GPA) during three semesters and their score on the Entrance Exam Test. Two sets of data will be obtained from the universities' administrative office.

DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, the researcher will correlate the subjects´ MA IAUEE scores in 1390 and 1391 with their GPA in their three semesters up to now. After collecting the required data, they will be run through SPSS version 20 to have them analyzed. To estimate the coefficiency correlation between the participants' performances on their MA Entrance Exam and on their three semestral achievements, a Pearson product – moment correlation coefficient will be used.

Enterance Exam) and English proficiency subtest (IAVEE).

There are many other studies which related to predictive validity of tests in different parts of the world with the same results (Ayear and Peters, 1971; Meritt, 1972; Nagi, 1975; Hosseini, 1978; Shepared, 1979; Synder and Elmore, 1982; Paolillo, 1982 Camp, Drumnnond, Carter, and Parker, 1988).

Research Questions

How well can Iranian English major students' scores on MA entrance exam predict their academic performance in their future academic career?

Research Hypothesis

There is a positive relationship between Iranian English major students' scores on MA entrance exam and their academic performance in their future academic career.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants in this study will be all the English major students admitted to two Fars Province Islamic Azad Universities in MA Entrance Exam in 90 & 91. The sample will consist of 100 students in 3 different majors of English including English teaching, English translation, and linguistics. The participants are both holders of BA and students of MA.

Procedure

This study is a quantitative research and in descriptive type. In this study the researcher

grade point average, and rank of the student could predict grade point average.

Hypothesis 3: There is a meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2012 and their total grade point average. In order to test the above hypothesis, I have used Pearson product movement correlation index. The result of the first hypothesis and their meaningful level are as below:

Correlation index between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2012 and their total grade point average.the third hypothesis which is relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2012 and their total grade point average is accepted, $(p < 0/01, r=0/57)$. So, there is meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2012 and their total grade point average, and rank of the student could predict grade point average.

Hypothesis 4: There is a meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in Jan20and their total grade point average. In order to test the above hypothesis, I have used Pearson product movement correlation index. The result of the first hypothesis and their meaningful level are as below:

Correlation index between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted

Hypothesis 1: There is a meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2010 and their total grade point average. In order to test the above hypothesis, I have used Pearson product movement correlation index. The result of the first hypothesis and their meaningful level are as below:

the first hypothesis which is relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2010 and their total grade point average is rejected, $(p < 0/06, r=0/42)$. So, there is not any meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2010 and their total grade point average, and rank of the student could not predict grade point average.

Hypothesis 2: There is a meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2011 and their total grade point average. In order to test the above hypothesis, I have used Pearson product movement correlation index. The result of the first hypothesis and their meaningful level are as below:

the second hypothesis which is relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2011 and their total grade point average is accepted, $(p < 0/007, r=0/43)$. So, there is meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2011 and their total

Jenkins (2002), Marvin and Simner (1999), and Kuncel, Hezlett, and Ones (2001). They found out that the entrance examinations (in their case, IELTS, GRE, SAT II, and TOEFL) indicated acertain degree of predictive value for the students/ academic success. This is in spite of the fact that, like Ramist, Lewis and McCauley-Jenkins (2002), A number of studies also failed to offer conclusive evidence with which the results of this study more or less contradicted such as Dooey (1999), Emery (2007), Morrison & Morrison (1995), to name just a few. They found out that entrance examination possessed minimal or no predictive value and could not hence be considered as a valid source of predicting academic success of the students.

The results of the study show that there is a positive relationship between the exams and GPA, in combination. Most of the hypotheses that we had raised were confirmed in different levels of significance. However, as mentioned above, lack of high correlation between the variables do not allow the researchers to use the exams in question for predictive purposes. So, Iranian MA professors in English major should be aware that, the tests which they construct for final exams do not have very high relationship with MA Entrance Exam, though the contents are the same.

This study is not intended to dwell on the possible reasons of this low relationships .However among the possible reasons that can be investigated for further research are different ability levels that each of the exams is measuring or, lack of correlation between

to the university in Jan 2013and their total grade point average. The fourth hypothesis which is relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2010 and their total grade point average is rejected, ($p < 0/33$, $r = 0/14$). So, there is not any meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam who admitted to the university in September 2010 and their total grade point average, and rank of the student could not predict grade point average.

Hypothesis 5: There is a meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam and their total grade point average (total students). In order to test the above hypothesis, I have used Pearson product movement correlation index. The result of the first hypothesis and their meaningful level are as below:

The fifth hypothesis which is relationship between rank of total students in MA University Entrance Exam and their total grade point average is accepted, ($p < 0/01$, $r = 0/34$). So, there is meaningful relationship between rank of students in MA University Entrance Exam and their total grade point average, and rank of the student could predict grade point average.

CONCLUSION:

The results of this study were in line with certain studies conducted so far.

This study supports, in one way or another, the results of the studies by Huong (2001), Power (2001), Ramist, Lewis and McCauley-

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different forms of tests that are used in each of these exams.

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