

STUDENTS' DEEP, SURFACE AND STRATEGIC LEARNING APPROACH: A COMPARATIVE REVIEW FROM LAHORE, PUNJAB PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The way that students approach learning activities is referred to as their approach to learning. Approaches cover two important facets of learning: students' choice of learning tactics and their motivation to study. The objective of the study was to identify the deep, surface, and strategic learning approach at secondary level. The population was comprised of all public and private secondary school. Researcher used multistage sampling technique. The instrument of the study was questionnaire. SPSS was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that deep, surface and strategic learning have positive impact on students' learning. There was a statically significant difference between public and private students' regarding learning approaches.

Keywords: Deep learning, surface learning, strategic learning, secondary level

Introduction

Learning approaches take into account the intents and motivations of a student in relation to a particular learning scenario, as well as the many processing levels that are employed to accomplish those intentions and motivations (Hussin, et al., 2017). The ways that students learn are not fixed traits of who they are. Instead, approaches are flexible answers and deliberate decisions that partially rely on how students view their classroom (Faranda, et al., 2021). In order to succeed, the surface technique is characterised by the replication of knowledge, frequently by rote memorization. This type of learning leads to surface-level study habits that satisfy course requirements with the least amount of effort (Liu, et al., 2023). According to Lucas (2001), students don't seem to love studying and think it's something that is forced upon them. The surface method has unfavourable effects on low levels and quality of comprehension (Rabault, & Kuhnle, 2019). Because surface approaches are associated with worse academic performance and educators' evident discomfort with them as appropriate learning methods, they are therefore discouraged and viewed with reduced favorability (Bradford, 2004).

The body of research suggests that methods to surface learning might not be the best for getting students ready for careers in the demanding and dynamic world of marketing. In order for today's students to be able to analyse data, integrate information, create insightful recommendations, and make critical marketing decisions that add value, they need to be exposed to specialized skills and

modern technologies (Crittenden et al., 2019). Nonetheless, an increasing number of tasks are being recognized as favoring and embracing the surface approach. Examples of these tasks include receiving an instant assessment regarding newly learned content or understanding fundamental information and facts as a prerequisite to advanced learning (Richardson, 2005). Additionally, research by Trigwell et al. (1999) shown that when teachers approach their lessons from a "information transition" perspective, students are more likely to use a surface learning approach (Dolmans, et al., 2016)

Scholars frequently feel that "critical thinking" is the ultimate goal of higher education (Entwistle, 2001). This idea of extremely complex processing forms the foundation of the deep approach to learning. Pupils that employ a deep approach make a conscious effort to comprehend the meaning of the material. Intellectual difficulties, investigating the connections between ideas, and learning for its own sake are things they take pleasure in doing (Sun & Richardson, 2012). Marketing majors are frequently expected to apply a deep approach due to indicated interest in their chosen programme of study, since students are more inclined to do so when the topic is relevant to their interests. The deep approach to learning is highly recommended by many business educators (Luthfa, 2019), and some even think it is necessary to prepare students for careers in business (Hall et al., 2004).

The marketing education literature provides a wealth of innovative ideas for particular assignments, deep learning-promoting instructional delivery methods, and course and programme material (Vander Schee, 2011). The development of critical thinking abilities (Dahl et al., 2018), increased flexibility and adaptability (Schlee & Karns, 2017), perceptions of relevance and laying the groundwork for lifelong learning have all been associated with deep approaches. Furthermore, deep techniques are frequently cited as the most valuable and desirable way (Bradford, 2004), frequently due to their persistent associations with excellent teaching and favourable learning outcomes. However, some research revealed little to no correlation between academic success and deep methods (Diseth & Martinsen, 2003).

A third method of learning is called strategic learning. The major journals for marketing education do not formalize the strategic learning method, despite much discussion in other fields. The significance of implementing pedagogy that supports the development of higher order learning techniques is acknowledged by our discipline literature. Dahl et al. (2018) recently provided a historical overview of the body of literature and underlined the need for more research on reflective learning and critical thinking. Although they dedicate a portion of their assessment to both surface and deep learning, the strategic approach is not acknowledged (Labrecque et al., 2019). The strategic learning approach's fundamental goal is success, with the goal being to surpass peers to attain the best grades and perform at the greatest level (Ballantine et al., 2018).

Surface or deep processing components may be included in the strategic approach, depending on which has a higher chance of yielding high grades. As a result, the strategic method might lead to a deep level of comprehension of the subject matter, but the student views this kind of learning as accidental rather than the main objective (Gordon & Debus, 2002). There are educators who view the strategic method favourable and advocate for its application. It should come as no surprise that

the strategic approach and academic performance outcomes like grades have numerous beneficial correlations.

According to Entwistle and Peterson (2004), students who take a strategic approach to learning exhibit an achievement orientation, are likely to closely monitor the course assessment criteria, actively look for cues about what will be tested, and develop highly regulated study strategies through deliberate effort organisations and efficient use of time, resources, and environments. These certainly seem like admirable traits in a student who approaches their academic endeavors. On the other hand, some teachers might not approve of pupils starting their studies with the primary objective of getting the best scores possible. Academic accomplishment does matter, especially in undergraduate programmes that prepare students for the workforce, like marketing.

Companies frequently set GPA requirements that students must satisfy in order to be invited for an interview. After completing one or two years of lower level prerequisite courses, prospective marketing majors must meet the requirements of many business programmes in order to be admitted. The cumulative GPA probably counts for a lot while applying to MBA programmes and undergraduate business schools. Bacon (2017) stated that there was a favourable correlation between final GPA and remuneration in relation to the financial results of marketing graduates in the future. These conditions could play a significant role in encouraging students to adopt a strategic learning strategy. There is still a lot to discover, so to help direct the investigation into how marketing students learn, we have formulated two primary study topics.

Objectives

- 1- To identify the students deep learning approach at secondary level.
- 2- To identify the students surface learning approach at secondary level.
- 3- To identify the students strategic learning approach at secondary level.
- 4- To compare the difference between public/private regarding students' learning approaches at secondary level.

Research Design and Methodology

The research has a quantitative and descriptive approach. All higher secondary schools and colleges, both public and private, made up the population. There are 216 higher secondary schools and colleges in total, 79 of which are public higher secondary schools and colleges and 137 of which are private (HED, 2022). The sample was acquired using a multistage sampling method. First, the researcher distinguished two strata (public/private) using the stratified sample technique. The researcher used the cluster sampling technique to divide the whole population into five clusters (Tehsils). 6 private and 3 public higher secondary schools and colleges were picked from each cluster using simple random sampling. Data were supplied by 45 higher secondary schools and colleges in total. 20 students from each public and 10 students from each private were selected using a simple random sample technique. Questionnaires were the study's primary tool. Mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were used to find the answer of research objectives.

Data Analysis

Overall mean and standard deviation

Learning approaches

Table 1

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|------------------------|-----|--------|----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Deep learning | 600 | 3.8867 | .73067 |
| Surface learning | 600 | 3.6975 | .72587 |
| strategic learning | 600 | 3.7468 | .67359 |
| Learning approaches | 600 | 3.7860 | .60163 |

The sample description based on mean and standard deviation is shown in the above table. The deep learning (M= 3.88: S.D=0.73), surface learning (M= 3.69: S.D=0.72), strategic learning (M=3.74; SD=0.67), overall learning approaches (M=3.78; SD=0.60). Overall responses of the respondents reflected toward the level of agreement.

Deep learning

Table 2

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|--|-----|------|----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| I focus on concepts and arguments to solve problems. | 200 | 3.99 | 1.019 |
| I relate new knowledge to previous learnt knowledge to solve problems. | 200 | 3.77 | 1.024 |
| I always relate theoretical ideas to everyday experience. | 200 | 3.83 | 1.055 |
| I relate knowledge from different courses and focus is on what is significant. | 200 | 3.96 | 1.109 |

The aforementioned table shows Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level. According to the students' responses on deep learning approach, I focus on concepts and arguments to solve problems (M=3.99; SD=1.01), I relate new knowledge to previous learnt knowledge to solve problems (M=3.77; SD=1.02), I always relate theoretical ideas to everyday experience (M=3.83; SD=1.05) and I relate knowledge from different courses and focus is on what is significant (M=3.96; SD=1.10) were reflected toward the level of agreement.

Surface learning

Table 3

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|---|-----|------|----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| I try to learn in order to repeat what I learned. | 200 | 3.77 | 1.136 |
| I always memorize facts and procedures without examine the logic of the argument. | 200 | 3.75 | 1.140 |

| | | | |
|--|-----|------|-------|
| I always collect examples and facts about a topic but neglect underlying principles. | 200 | 3.56 | 1.076 |
| I always focus on assessment outcomes and syllabus requirements. | 200 | 3.71 | 1.192 |

The aforementioned table shows Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level. According to the students' responses on surface learning approach, I try to learn in order to repeat what I learned (M=3.77; SD=1.13), I always memorize facts and procedures without examine the logic of the argument (M=3.75; SD=1.14), I always collect examples and facts about a topic but neglect underlying principles (M=3.56; SD=1.07), and I always focus on assessment outcomes and syllabus requirements (M=3.71; SD=1.19) were reflected toward the level of agreement.

Strategic learning

Table 4

| Descriptive Statistics | | | |
|--|-----|------|----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| I always intend to obtain high grades in class. | 200 | 3.77 | 1.053 |
| I always organize time and distribute efforts for greatest effect. | 200 | 3.67 | 1.035 |
| I always ensure that the conditions of material for study are appropriate. | 200 | 3.77 | 1.090 |
| I use previous exam papers and assessment to predict questions. | 200 | 3.87 | 1.152 |

The aforementioned table shows Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level. According to the students' responses on strategic learning approach, I always intend to obtain high grades in class (M=3.77; SD=1.05), I always organize time and distribute efforts for greatest effect (M=3.67; SD=1.03), I always ensure that the conditions of material for study are appropriate (M=3.77; SD=1.09), and I use previous exam papers and assessment to predict questions (M=3.87; SD=1.15) were reflected toward the level of agreement.

Difference

Table 5

Difference between Public and Private Sector Students' Perceptions

| Variable | School Sector | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value (df = 498) | p (α = 0.05) |
|---------------------|---------------|-----|--------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Learning Approaches | Public | 150 | 3.1976 | .61751 | 3.856 | 0.000 |
| | Private | 150 | 3.4084 | .58615 | | |

The above table illustrates that Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level. Public schools students ($M = 3.19$, $S.D. = 0.61$) reflected higher level of agreement about learning approaches of students, while Private schools students ($M = 3.40$, $S.D. = 0.58$) reflected low level of agreement about Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach. The difference between the groups' mean scores were significant, $t(148) = 3.856$, $p = 0.000$, at alpha level 0.05. Therefore, there was statistically significant difference between public and private schools' students regarding the Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level.

Table 6

Difference between Public and Private Sector Students' Perceptions

| Variable | School Sector | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value (df = 498) | p ($\alpha = 0.05$) |
|--------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Deep Learning Approaches | Public | 150 | 3.9236 | .76580 | 2.812 | 0.009 |
| | Private | 150 | 4.8397 | .68702 | | |

The above table illustrates that Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level. Public schools students ($M = 3.92$, $S.D. = 0.76$) reflected higher level of agreement about deep learning approach of students, while Private schools students ($M = 3.83$, $S.D. = 0.68$) reflected low level of agreement about Students' Deep learning approach. The difference between the groups' mean scores were significant, $t(148) = 2.812$, $p = 0.009$, at alpha level 0.05. Therefore, there was statistically significant difference between public and private schools' students regarding the Deep learning approach at secondary level.

Table 7

Difference between Public and Private Sector Students' Perceptions

| Variable | School Sector | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value (df = 498) | p ($\alpha = 0.05$) |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Surface Learning Approaches | Public | 150 | 4.0236 | .76580 | 3.127 | 0.030 |
| | Private | 150 | 3.8397 | .68702 | | |

The above table illustrates that Students' surface learning approach at secondary level. Public schools students ($M = 4.02$, $S.D. = 0.76$) reflected higher level of agreement about surface learning approach of students, while Private schools students ($M = 3.83$, $S.D. = 0.68$) reflected low level of agreement about Students' surface learning approach. The difference between the groups' mean scores were significant, $t(148) = 3.127$, $p = 0.030$, at alpha level 0.05. Therefore, there was statistically significant difference between public and private schools' students regarding the surface learning approach at secondary level.

Table 8

Difference between Public and Private Sector Students' Perceptions

| Variable | School Sector | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t-value (df = 498) | p (α = 0.05) |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Strategic Learning Approaches | Public | 150 | 3.9125 | .69931 | 4.104 | 0.000 |
| | Private | 150 | 3.8611 | .58298 | | |

The above table illustrates that Students' strategic learning approach at secondary level. Public schools students ($M = 3.91$, $S.D. = 0.69$) reflected higher level of agreement about strategic learning approach of students, while Private schools students ($M = 3.86$, $S.D. = 0.58$) reflected low level of agreement about Students' strategic learning approach. The difference between the groups' mean scores were significant, $t(148) = 4.104$, $p = 0.000$, at alpha level 0.05. Therefore, there was statistically significant difference between public and private schools' students regarding the strategic learning approach at secondary level.

Discussion and conclusion

The present study reveals that Students' Deep, surface and strategic learning approach: A comparative review from Lahore, Punjab Pakistan. The deep learning ($M = 3.88$; $S.D = 0.73$), surface learning ($M = 3.69$; $S.D = 0.72$), strategic learning ($M = 3.74$; $SD = 0.67$), overall learning approaches ($M = 3.78$; $SD = 0.60$). Overall responses of the respondents reflected toward the level of agreement. A person who takes a deep approach, is said to critically evaluate new information and concepts, integrating them into preexisting cognitive frameworks and drawing multiple links between them. Conversely, a surface-level learner accepts new information and concepts without question and makes an effort to categorize them as disparate, unrelated things. Students who adopted surface learning, according to Biggs (1989) and Tagg (2003), concentrated on the content knowledge and placed an emphasis on rote learning and memory strategies. For these surface learners, the purpose of studying was to pass the test. They failed to grasp and comprehend the subject's fundamental ideas. As a result, they did not use the information in different situations. Students who engaged in "deep-level processing," on the other hand, paid attention to both the information's content and its underlying meaning (Tagg, 2007). A personal dedication to comprehend the content by utilising a variety of techniques, including reading, combining resources, discussing concepts, and applying knowledge in a practical setting, was the embodiment of deep learning. There was statistically significant difference between public and private schools' students regarding the Deep, surface and strategic learning approach at secondary level. The outcome further demonstrates that respondents preferred a deep approach to learning. In comparison to the surface approach and deep approach, the study's subjects' mean scores on the deep approach scale were higher.

The limited sample size of this study prevents generalization of the findings, nevertheless. If learning-related activities can be used to investigate the evidence of the deep approach, then future study will be extremely valuable. This is because the methods that students employ in their studies

are crucial and have a big influence on their academic performance as well as the calibre of their learning.

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