

The Impact of Academic Counseling on Study Habits of Adolescent Students-in Indian Government Schools

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Abstract: Utilizing one's full potential is a dream. The aim is to study the impact of academic counseling on adolescents studying in government schools by adopting optimum study habits. Underachievement keeps an adolescent from fully realizing his optimum academic potential. Hence, the impact of counseling on students to utilize their complete ability by practicing optimum study habits was tested. A sample size of 125 adolescents from XI and XII standard, studying in government schools were tested. Academic counseling needs and psychological group counseling was given to the students in three phases regarding correct and smart study habits before examinations. The measure of standardized Study Habits Inventory was used to test adolescents in high school. Academic counseling questionnaire was prepared and put to statistical treatment for standardization. Pearson's Product-moment correlation and regression analysis were used for data analysis. Inverse correlation was observed between counselling needs and class of students. The younger adolescent students studying in XI class with less effective study habits showed greater need for counseling when compared to XII class. Test-retest reliability was performed on 25 adolescents after two weeks of being given counseling. There was no significant difference in academic counseling needs on gender. Hence, this study, gives an insight into the students' requirement for academic counselling and also intellectually prompts to make it mandatory, especially in government schools that have less enriched environment and less awareness about smart study habits.

Keywords: Study habits, Underachievement, Academic counseling needs, Government schools, Adolescents.

I. INTRODUCTION

The universal situation that is common for students from all parts of the world is a threat from underachievement rather than the lack of ability. Mandel and Marcus (1988), presented that intelligence is merely one of the many factors that contribute to achievement and the perception of achievement is, in the eye of person beholding the achiever. It is not about inability but rather to do with incomplete utilization of one's potential to the optimum levels in spite of the complete ability. Under achievement is where the ability far exceeds the actual outcome seen as achievement. Fox (1968) explained the suffering from underachievement as state of affairs where the ability far exceeds the achievement and the finer concepts of underachievement were further researched that involved counseling of college students (Diezmann et al., 2001). Faulty study habits have been keeping students from fully realizing their optimum potential. Achievement involves motivation. The concept of achievement is usually related to what is ordinarily expected and whatever is the agreed average. Some of the reasons for underachievement have been that adolescent students are either lazy or unmotivated procrastinators and little evidence that suicidal ideation, phobias, hallucinations, delusions or other psychiatric symptoms could affect achievement (Mandel & Marcus, 1988). The general characteristics of an academic underachiever were enumerated initially in 1980, in the Diagnostic Statistic Manual, III series (American Psychological association, 1980).

The term 'academic problem' may be used when a focus of attention or treatment is an academic problem that is apparently not due to a mental disorder. The children though with adequate intellectual capacity, in the absence of a specific developmental disorder or any other mental disorder to account for, show failing percentages; then it may be attributed to underachievement (American Psychological Association, 1980). Further, research supports that the learning environment affects the engagement, motivation, self-esteem, attendance, well-being and achievement of students (Mc Gregor, 2004). According to Thornton & Bruton (2007), high quality environment for learning requires to be ridden of everything which is either broken, has a piece missing, or is worn and looks tatty. Hoffman (2008) opined that the desire to realize one's full potential is inherent in every human being and also to progress to higher levels of optimization called a state of self-actualization. Meta motivation is a kind of higher motivation that describes a characteristic feature of self-actualized people. It is featured that they are driven by internal, natural forces that are much higher than the basic needs. This enables self-actualized people to be more exploring and thereby reaching their complete human potential (Globe, 1970).

Underachievers are more likely to perform less and also likely to dislike school and also a possible cause for being drop-outs. Underachievement is interestingly researched through the concepts of performance and drop-out rates by

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Bailey and Bernard, (2003). Gender specific studies in select commonwealth countries were done by Jha and Kelleher, (2006) and specially on underachievement amongst boys. Studies show that even amongst students who have similar scholastic aptitude, some of them may perform better in terms of higher academic achievement when armed with better study habits and strategies. There is research showing the positive influence of better parental education on achievement-motivation of adolescents (Acharya & Joshi, 2009).

Academic interest is the association in a formal learning pattern that directs present and future learning engagement of the self. Interest is more central to intrinsic motivation. Yet the full potential of many students remains underutilized. The purpose of the present research is to test academic counseling needs as a significant intervention to create a change in study habits that may enable to optimize academic potential.

Objectives of the study:

To assess the predictive relationship between counseling and study habits.

To study the impact of counseling on study habits of adolescent students from government schools.

Hypothesis:

The proposed research will attempt to test the following hypothesis during the course of study.

1. Academic counseling has correlation with study habits.
2. Academic counseling has significant impact on gender.

II. METHOD

To study the impact of academic counseling towards adopting optimum study habits was conducted through the research design of descriptive and correlation methods. Pearson's Product-moment correlation and regression analysis were used for data analysis. The sample consists of students from all disciplines to maintain the random quality of the sample.

Participants

The universe of study includes a random sample of 250 such participants who are adolescents in their XI standard and XII standard. The age of the participants was ranged between 16-19 years and the mean age was 17.5. All the students belonged to different government schools from Madhya Pradesh, India.

Instruments

Study Habits Inventory, Manual by M. N. Palsane and Anuradha Sharma, (1989) was used for the study. National Psychological Corporation, Agra, covers the following dimensions/items: Budgeting time, physical conditions for study, reading ability, note taking, factors in learning motivation, memory, preparing well for examinations, and maintaining health.

Measure of academic counseling needs schedule for students

The measure of academic counseling needs was developed after due statistical treatment using factor analysis.

According to James (1890), the experiential component of an individual's interest is the uniquely recognizable awareness that the person has come to associate with particular physiological activity, is of great learning significance. Students as many as a sample size of 25 students were also subjected to test-retest method of testing to specifically study if there is any significant effect of academic counseling effect on adopting effective study habits. The academic counseling questionnaire includes the following dimensions: Classroom climate, curiosity to learn new things, students' perception of teacher and peer group influence.

III. RESULTS

The present study aimed to research the effects of academic counseling and its impact on their existing study habits on class/grade and gender. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted. Also through the test-retest study the impact of academic counseling on adopting smart study habits has also been studied (Table.1.).

Table1: Relationship between the dimensions of academic counseling needs and study habits dimensions.

	CC	SU	CTL	STP	PGI	ACN Total	Study habits
CC	1.000	.333**		.385**			.087
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.012
SU		1.000					.032
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001
CTL		.509**	1.000				.145*
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.012
SPT				1.000			.77
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.130
PGI			.761**		1.000		.671
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.019
ACN Total		.760	.774	.712	.723	1.000	-0.187**
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.10	.001

** Correlation significant at the $P < 0.01$ level (2- tailed), * Correlation is significant at $P < 0.05$ level (2- tailed), CC= classroom climate, SU = Subject understanding, CTL= Curiosity to learn new things, SPT= Students' Perception of Teacher, PGI = Peer group influence, ACN = Academic Counseling Needs. $P < 0.05$.

Attributes like class room climate, subject understanding, curiosity to learn new things, student's perception of teacher , peer group influence were considered for correlation with academic counselling needs of adolescents. The results show inverse correlation between counseling needs and the study habits. The younger adolescent students studying in XI class with less effective study habits showed greater need for counseling. The older students studying in XII class with better study habits showed less need for counseling needs ($r = -.187, P < 0.01$).

Table 2: Illustrates means and standard deviations of scores indicating academic counseling needs for different class/grade.

Gender	Class	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	XI	3.84	.89	75
	XII	3.49	.77	75
Total		3.66	.83	150
Female	XI	3.70	.79	75
	XII	3.59	.78	75
Total		3.64	.78	150

Table.2. Pattern of result indicates that male students studying XI standard (M=3.84) felt higher need for counseling to know appropriate and smart study habits as compared to male students studying in XII (M= 3.49). Similarly, female students studying in XI standard (M=3.70) felt greater need for counseling to understand smart study habits as compared to female students studying in XII. From Table.3., it is evident that there was no significant difference found when tested with ANOVA between academic counseling needs and gender of adolescents studying in different classes., $F(1, 250) = 0.08, P > 0.05$, but the interaction of gender with class was found to be significant $F(1, 250) = 5.69, P < 0.05$. standard (M=3.59).

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA on the measure of counseling needs and study habits

Source of variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Gender	.60	1	.60	.08
Class	1.05	2	1.05	1.96
Gender vs Class	4.39	1	4.39	5.69*

** P< 0.01, * P< 0.05

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Table 4: The following are the norms obtained gender wise of adolescent students studying in XI and XII standard.

Percentile Level	Male Students	Female Students	Category	Interpretation
100-70	49	44	A	Good Study habits
70-40	36	28	B	Average Study Habits
40-10	45	48	C	Unsatisfactory study habits
N=	130	120		
Mean =	43.33	40.0000		
Median=	45.0000	44.0000		
S.D=	6.65	10.5		

From the norms obtained gender wise of adolescent students (Table.4.), we infer that the total number of students showing good or average or unsatisfactory study habits was almost equal irrespective of their gender.

Table 5: Analysis of scores on study habits test-retest method.

Analysis of scores on study habits scale of variable	Mean Gain Score		S.D.		T-value		df.	Sig.
	Experimental n=25	Control n=25	Experimental	Control	Experimental	Control		
Study Habits	8.23	2.06	9.43	9.81	3.51	51	0.010	

P < 0.01

A total of 50 students were identified as sample for test-retest reliability. 25 among them were control group who were not counselled for study habits and were studied after appearing for exams and interviews. 25 experimental group students were given counselling before exams for study habits and once they appeared for exams and interviews, they were again studied, to know the impact of counselling (Table.5.).

We could find significant impact (Student T-test) of counseling on academic performance on students who were given counselling before exams when compared to group who did not undergo any counselling.

The overall results from the study indicate that the first hypothesis is proved true, that the nature and type of study habits problems will vary significantly across levels of their age. However the research proves the second hypothesis to be false that the impact of academic counseling needs on gender will be of positive significance.

IV. DISCUSSION

The study suggests that good study habits will provide ground to overcome underachievement. Few studies that have been done on study habits show close correlation with academic achievement, whatever their aptitudes in school may be. It is interesting to find that even students with low scholastic aptitudes, but with good study habits, may obtain better results than those with higher aptitudes (Weigel & Weigel, 1967; Wikoff & Kafka, 1981; Matt et al., 1991; On & Watkins, 1994). Optimum achievement and especially academic achievement is a challenge.

The influence of pleasant home and parental involvement will help overcome underachievement. Homes where there is considerable instability within the family unit often make way for underachievement. Some earlier research on underachievement and home environment suggest that most often, the underachieving students have been found to be from families facing turmoil, stress, marital discord, job pressures, financial concerns, lack of emotional support, no leisure or family time and isolation from family (Coil, 2007).

To make classroom teaching effective, the use of computer aided instructions is better and more effective way of delivery than traditional methods of teaching science, in developing study habits (Dange, 2013). According to Geiser (2000), students have their individual differences and that is the reason they learn in varied ways and which teaching approach may be effective, should be left to intuition. Also he opined that not all methods of studying will be effective across world (Geiser, 2000). The present study purports to introduce counseling as a strong intervention to improve academic performance. So far the research done on government schools is limited. Hence it is felt that there is need and relevance for this kind of research study on adolescents studying in government schools. Very recent studies involving brain based teaching approach is helping the students to reduce their stress level (Thoman & Swamy, 2014)

Our study showed that younger adolescent students studying in XI standard showed greater needs for counseling than the older adolescent students studying in XII standard irrespective of gender. The reason being that the younger adolescents did not figure out how to handle their issues on their own as much as their older school mates have been able to do. Also the older adolescent students are serious about the career that unfolds after XII standard, so are more focused on their studies. This focus make them better implementers of smart study habits even without actually scientific knowledge as to what constitute optimum study habits. Counseling cells to address academic and as well as

psychological issues. The future research should study how counseling can enable in better achievement motivation, school culture, emotional well-being, and self-efficacy. To bring about academically optimum environment in adolescents, it is necessary to keep the academic climate conducive to achievement orientation. There is a strong suggestion to all the stakeholders of students' well-being—parents, teachers, schools, policy makers and media to contribute to a conducive climate which alone will make the adolescents to become achieving and responsible adults for the next generation.

Findings

This study suggests to adopt the following study habits to overcome academic underachievement and utilize optimum potential:

- Sleep patterns to be regularized for optimization. It matters less if a student is nocturnal or early rising. But erratic, disturbed, incomplete sleep, cause problems. Over stressed physically or mentally can lead to further damage.
- Reading from books and other paper based sources is less stressful than reading from internet based technologies.
- Use of handwriting, especially pencil would lead to greater memory and recall over keypad noting and saving in a file.
- More than required amounts of sugars in food can lead to health problems and keep students from optimum performance.
- Hobby and interest can help to maximize potential, breaks monotony, provides relief and breaks barriers of mind and body.

If social scientists can find a possible bridge program to make the research findings into an applied science, this research will be more useful than being just an intellectual reference and another worthy citation. Smart study habits will enable the students to overcome underachievement. Counseling needs have to be tested for all students in schools on a regular basis, at least twice in a year. Also psychological counseling in schools will have a greater bearing on providing emotional as well as learning issues, identifying learning disabilities. This in turn will lead to providing related support to students of all age groups, especially in handling adolescent issues. Appropriate psychological counseling has to be available in the school campus to inculcate better study habits that have direct bearing on academic performance.

V. CONCLUSION

Academic counseling has to be made mandatory in all government schools where the learning environment is challenging in many ways. This will motivate and also provide scientific direction to help them achieve their optimum potential. Future research should be directed towards potential optimization of students from under privileged and less enriched schools, starting with government schools.

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VII. REFERENCES

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