

Psychological Correlates of Academic Achievement among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT: The psychological correlate of academic achievement i.e. academic stress and academic hardiness has been considered very important for children's grooming academic achievement. Present study was conducted to explore and evaluate the impact of academic stress and academic hardiness on the academic achievement of the adolescents. Academic achievement of the adolescent has been taken as a dependent variable. In the Present study a convenient sample of 300 students studying in 9th class in various Govt. and Private Schools of Patiala district was taken giving due representation to gender and type of school. The indigenously designed questionnaire was used to collect the data. T-test and correlation were applied to assess the significance of the results. Hence the present study is a humble effort to explore academic stress and academic hardiness as correlates of academic achievement among adolescents.

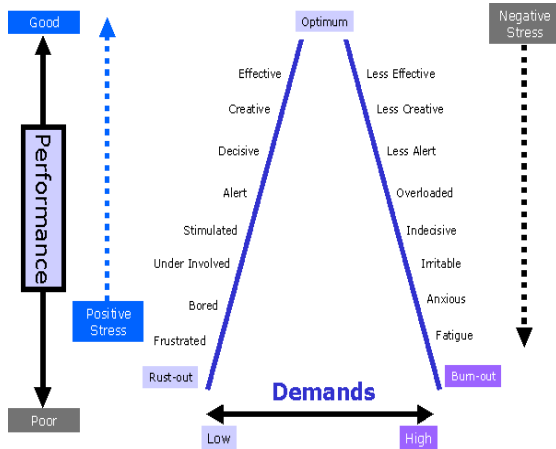
I. INTRODUCTION

Modern cyber era is full of competition. In this age everyone has developed a competitive zest to compete with others to achieve life goals. Amongst the various areas where people try to compete with others, the academic pursuit seems to emerge as the most important and relevant aspect of life where people try to do their best over others. The future of any country depends on the quality of young people, their motivation, their aspiration, and their character. In all such efforts there is the notion of excellence. Excellence in education has been of prime importance for their parent's teacher etc.

Hence all school machinery along with the parents of school going children makes all efforts to create such an academic environment where excellence is nourished and developed. Human being brings meaning and organization into almost every new encounter. When a the child is born his mind is just like a clean slate but as soon as he comes in contact with his environment, he starts reacting and in this process of interaction of the individual and his environment, the foundation of learning is laid down. If one of the roles of the education system is to prepare citizens to become productive members of the society then it is clear that new methods are required to better prepare students in an excellent manner for today's informative society. Stress has become an important topic in academic circle as well as in our society. Many scholars in the field of behavioral science have carried out extensive research on stress and its outcome and concluded that the topic needed more attention (Rees and Red fern, 2000; Ellison, 2004; Angora and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009). Stress in academic institution can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed (Smith, 2002; Tweed et al, 2004; Stevenson and Harper, 2006). It is important for the society that students should learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will in turn make them contribute positively to the development of the general economy of any nation.

The literature available on psychological hardiness among adolescents is mainly on gender differences, its relationship with grade point average and as a buffer against stress and illness. (Hannah and Morissey 1986;

Collins, 1991; Ridgeway Stevens, 1991; Shepperd and Kashani, 1991; Hoblit, 1993; and Benishek and Lopez, 2001).



Academic achievement is the end product of all educational endeavours from initial stages of school education to higher level of education. The main concern of all educational efforts is to see the learner's achievement to the maximum or at least optimal up to desired level of expectancy.

RESEARCH TOOLS USED

For each research problem, the researcher used certain devices to gather new facts or to explore new fields. The devices that the researchers used for the purpose of data collection are called as the tools of research. In the present study, the researcher has used following tools:

1. Stress inventory for school students by Rani and Singh (2008).
2. Academic Hardiness scale by Benishek and Lopez (2001).
3. Background information sheet prepared by investigator herself.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

Descriptive statistics namely mean, median, mode and standard deviation was used to study academic achievement among adolescents. The use of t-test was

made to study the significance of mean difference in academic achievement, academic stress and academic hardiness among adolescents across gender and type of school. Correlation was used to study the relationship of academic achievement with academic stress and academic hardiness among adolescents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of the present study may be seen in the light of some related research evidence. The results of the present study revealed that majority of the school students possess an above average level of academic stress. Similar results have been obtained in numerous studies (Ross et al., 1999; Lee and Graha, 2001; Shaikh et al., 2004; Sreeramreddy, 2007; Agolla and Ongri, 2009; Kumar et al., 2009; and Gao, 2011) where medical, dental and degree college students have been found to possess higher level of stress.

Also, a significant and positive relationship was observed in academic stress with academic achievement among adolescents. i.e. high academic achievers possess more academic stress among adolescents. The literature does support similar findings (Healy and Mourtan, 1987; Deshmukh, 2000; Ajwani and Sharma, 2004; Botswana, 2009; Parker et al., 2009; and Sharma et al., 2011). Also, a significant and negative relationship between academic stress and academic hardiness was observed. Similar results have also been found in a number of researches (Pengilly 1997; Maddi et al., 2006; kaur 2004; Julie et al., 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of data, following conclusions were drawn:

I. Academic Achievement, Academic Stress and Academic Hardiness among Adolescents

1. Majority of the adolescents possess an average level of academic achievement.
2. Majority of the adolescents possess an above average level of academic stress.
3. Majority of the adolescents possess a below average level of academic hardiness.

II. Gender differences in Academic Achievement, Academic Stress and Academic Hardiness among school Adolescents

1. There are no significant gender differences in the academic achievement among adolescents i.e. male and female adolescents do not differ in academic achievement.
2. There are no significant gender differences in the academic stress among adolescents i.e. male and female adolescents do not differ in academic stress.
3. There are no significant gender differences in the academic hardiness among adolescents i.e. male and female adolescents do not differ in academic hardiness.

III. School-wise Differences in Academic Achievement, Academic Stress and Academic Hardiness among Adolescents

1. There are significant school-wise differences in academic achievement among adolescents i.e. adolescents studying in government and private schools differ significantly in academic achievement.
2. There are no significant school-wise differences in academic stress among adolescent i.e. adolescents studying in government and private schools do not differ in academic stress.

3. There are no significant school-wise differences in academic hardiness among adolescents i.e. adolescents studying in government and private schools do not differ on academic hardiness.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. The students should be provided counseling sessions for stress management in order to reduce its impact on mental health and academic achievement of the students.
2. The students should be given proper training for time management so that they are able to utilize the time in proper manner leading to better self-regulatory practices and less stress.
3. Teachers can adopt various methods that will help to reduce stress among school students.
4. Academic hardiness is conceptualized as a personal stance that facilitates coping effectively with stressful circumstances. The training of hardiness can help school students in building attitudes and managing resources with adversity to advantage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Keeping in view the delimitations of the present study, the following suggestions may be laid down for further research:

1. More variables like self-concept, achievement motivation and locus of control may be included in the research design to determine their impact on academic achievement.
2. Experimental studies may be undertaken to determine the effect of certain stress reduction programmes for students.

3. Since the present study is delimited to Patiala district only, in future studies comparison of two or more districts may be taken.
4. Similar studies may be conducted by taking large sample of school students so that the results may be generalized.
5. Comparative study may be undertaken to find out relationship of academic achievement with academic stress and academic hardiness across cross cultural groups in the country.
6. Further researches may focus on determining the extent to which different combinations of coping and defence mechanisms can prevent stress by using psychological hardiness.

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