

Eclectic Counselling: Its Effectiveness In Improving Study Habits And Academic Achievement Of School Students

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Abstract

The study in hand was conducted to examine the effectiveness of Eclectic Counselling Approach on senior secondary school students in Punjab. The study observed whether eclectic counselling had a significant impact in improving the study habits and consequently the academic performance of school students. For the purpose of the study, a sample of 120 school students between the age group of 13-16 years, were selected through purposive sampling technique from the schools of Punjab. To identify the effectiveness of eclectic counselling, the total sample was divided into experimental and control group. The obtained data was statistically analyzed using t-test. Results showed that experimental and control group are not different to each other in terms of study habits and academic performance before intervention but after intervention experimental and control groups showed significant differences in terms of academic performance but not in terms of study habits. The present study has its implication in guiding teachers and education policy makers for designing programs aimed specifically at improving the two variables.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Study Habits, Eclectic Counselling, School Students.

Introduction

Individuals require counselling at some or the other stages of their life and quite often it is provided by one who is less skilled and has no experience of what actually a counselling means, whereas counselling refers to a scientific process of providing assistance given to a person who is sincerely in the need of the help and is provided by a professionally qualified person who has prerequisite and psychological skills to provide the same (Koottiyaniyil, 2010).

According to Reber, Allen and Reber (2009, p. 162) Counselling is a “generic term that is used to cover the several processes of interviewing, testing, guiding, advising etc, designed to help an individual solve problems, plan for the future etc.” Therefore, the conceptual explanation of counselling refers to the process in which two individuals come in contact with one another with the main aim of finding solutions to the problem. Hence, it requires that counselling should be done by a professional who is an expert and is able to use different range of counselling approaches with their clients. Counselling has also been defined by Perez (1965) as an “interactive process of confirming the counselee who needs assistance and the counsellor

who needs assistance and the counsellor is trained and educated to give this assistance.”

The major aspect of counselling lies in the fact that it is most often provided by the one who is trustworthy but at the same point does not fits into the category of a friend, family member or a colleague. Counselling is a time-consuming process and gradually progresses over a period of time with various systematic steps and procedures, where the counsellor is viewed by the counselee as someone who is often reliable, gives support and considers the counselee as someone who is a person and not merely a bundle of problems. Major principles of counselling include acceptance, regard for the individual, tolerance and competence on the part of the counsellor (Pal, 2007). Skills such as being non-judgemental, empathetic and understanding people are extremely valuable for a person undergoing counselling (Pattison et al.,2007).

Counselling in Educational Sector

The educational sector has seen an increase in counselling among students as quite recently there has been a change in the family structure with the traditional support system being coming down,

hence, creating a lack of physical, social and psychological needs of the child and counselling in schools is narrowing down this gap for the students. With the breaking down of the traditional joint family system and with increase in the competitiveness, technological advances, peer and parental pressures on the children, school counsellors have come as a blessing in disguise for these children and their parents (Kodad and Kazi, 2014).

McLaughlin (1993) argued that counselling in schools serve three functions which include an educative function which helps students to develop personally and socially in the context of schools, a reflective function which is the positive exploration of the possible impact of personal, social and mental health practices in the classroom, also it serves the welfare function which is for the planning and working upon the issues which have an impact on the welfare of the students.

School counselling has recently been given importance given that school counsellors have been actively working with the students in improving the academic performance of the students, providing vocational guidance and even serving as a bridge between the parents and students, moreover, off lately they have assumed the role of leader in the school for teachers, parents and other members of the staff of the school (Kodad and Kazi, 2014).

Counselling and Study Habits

The main aspect of every counselling session is to help a person come out of a challenging situation in a more strong and efficient manner. Passing and getting through an examination is a predicament of every student in which case counselling in schools become even more necessary (Ghosh, 1980). In schools much of the emphasis is on the improvement of the academic performance of the students, therefore, in such cases most school counsellors and teachers adopt and focus on the techniques that make students learn. The school counsellor here plays a significant part in the formation of pupils' study habits and evaluates them based on their reading skills, aptitude, and study plans. Having an effective study habit in schools show how effectively the counselling programmes are working and whether the students are being made aware of the importance of study habits which may later contribute to the steady and regular learning (Ogbodo, 2010), therefore, it becomes an immense responsibility on the part of the school counsellors that they should focus on all such aspects that can help a student overcome the educational fears, therefore, working upon

their study habits and counselling students on the aspects that can improve their academic performance (Ghosh, 1980).

Academic Performance

Good (1973) defined academic performance as “knowledge attained or skills developed in school subjects usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or by both” and is an important aspect that often defines a student's performance in school and academics. Quite often this term is used interchangeably with academic achievement, but both the terms are quite different in certain aspect, where, on one hand academic performance is identified by the performance of the student over a short period of time and is mostly depicted by the grades that student receives during the course, e.g. cumulative grade point average/grade point average (CGPA/GPA). Academic achievement on the other hand is more of a long term and includes aspects such as achieving academic goals overall.

Impact of Counselling on Study Habits and Academic Performance

Students who received regular counselling sessions on aspects such as academic difficulties, absenteeism in school and career difficulties through regular counselling session did showed an improvement in these aspects. The researchers further concluded that students who were counselled on regular basis on the importance of study habits had an improvement in concentration, spend their study time effectively and had a significantly increased performance in academics. Therefore, the researchers concluded that if students have to study effectively, they require a definite study technique so as to have an improved memory function which later contributes to an increased academic performance, similar view is shared by Rathod (2015) who suggested that if students use certain techniques for developing their study habits it might lead to positive results, therefore, counsellors and teachers can help students to understand the importance of techniques that can improve the study habits of the students which ultimately can lead to a desirable effect on their academic performance, not only this, the impact of counselling can also be seen on the other aspects of student's life like helping them overcome various emotional issues which also have shown to have an impact on their study habits.

In the view of above it becomes important to address the issues faced by the students in today's competitive academic scenario, hence, creating the need for the present study. This research also paves

a way for students and educators to identify the importance of having counsellors in schools and how having a structured counselling session will eventually lead to an increase in the socio-emotional wellbeing of the students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the significant differences between the control and experimental group in study habits before counselling.
2. To identify the significant differences between the control and experimental group in academic performance before counselling
3. To assess the significant differences between the control and experimental group in study habits after counselling
4. To ascertain the significant differences between the control and experimental group on academic performance after counselling.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There would be no significant differences between the control and experimental group in study habits before counselling.
2. There would be no significant differences between the control and experimental group in academic performance before counselling.
3. There would be significant differences between the control and experimental group in study habits after counselling.
4. There would be significant differences between the control and experimental group in academic performance after counselling.

Method

Sample:

The study in hand comprised of a total sample of 120 students further divided into (60 experimental and 60 control group) belonging to secondary section (i.e. Classes 9th and 10th) from the age group of 13-16 years, from different schools of Ludhiana. For the purpose of study, Study Habits Questionnaire was used and to measure the Academic Performance, a self-designed Academic Performance questionnaire was used.

Measure

1. Study Habits Scale (Rani and Jaidka, 2015) was used. The questionnaire consisted of 46 items and the response format included a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Always to Never and also consisting of positive and negative items. Scoring was done as per the manual.

2. For assessing Academic Performance, a self-designed academic performance questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice items from five different subjects as prescribed by the CBSE board, namely, English (5 items), Hindi (5 items), Science (5 items), Maths (5 items), Social Science (5 items), making a total of 25 items. The test was made with the help of the teachers teaching the respective subjects. The main purpose of making such test was to ensure objectivity. The scores of this test ranged from 0-100 marks with 4 marks given each to the correct response and 0 marks for the incorrect one.
3. Eclectic Counselling for students who were selected for the sample of the study.

Ethical Considerations:

Informed consent was taken from all the participants of the study and they were assured of the confidentiality that would be maintained throughout the study.

Procedure: The study was done in two phases: -

Phase I: - The questionnaires on study habit and academic performance were individually given to 400 students. Further, 120 students were identified who had below average study habits. These 120 students were then given academic performance questionnaire. After, then the subjects were divided each into experimental and control group using odd even method. The subjects were also assured of confidentiality.

Phase II: - The subjects after dividing into experimental and control group were given eclectic counselling, which was based on each specific client's needs devised unique counselling intervention strategies that targeted each problem that contributed to poor study habits and academic performance.

Statistical Analysis: To compute the results descriptive statistics and t-test was used.

Results: Paired sample t-test was conducted to identify the significant difference between experimental and control group in the pre-intervention levels of study habits and academic performance among school children.

Table-1: Scores on Study Habits of Experimental and Control group before Intervention

| Group | N | M | Sd | MD | t-value | P-value |
|--------------|----|--------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| Study habits | | | | | | |
| Experimental | 60 | 102.18 | 18.43 | | | |
| Control | 60 | 108.26 | 13.42 | -6.08 | -2.06 | .041 |

The findings from Table 1 unveiled that average value of study habits of experimental group was found to be 102.81 and for control group it is 108.26, with t-value (-2.06) and p-value ($p < .05$) reveals significant differences in study habits of experimental and control group.

Table-2: Scores on Academic Performance of Experimental and Control group before intervention

| Academic performance | Group | N | M | Sd | MD | t-value | P-value |
|----------------------|--------------|----|-------|-------|-------|---------|-----------|
| | Experimental | 60 | 59.60 | 11.58 | -1.95 | -.929 | .355 (NS) |
| | Control | 60 | 61.55 | 11.41 | | | |

It is also observed from the Table 2 that the average academic performance of experimental and control group was 59.60 and 61.55 with t-value (-.929) respectively. Also, insignificant p-value ($p > .05$) shows no significant difference in experimental and control group with respect to academic performance.

Table-3: Scores on Study Habits of Experimental and Control group after intervention

| Study Habits | Group | N | M | Sd | MD | t-value | P-value |
|--------------|--------------|----|--------|--------|-------|---------|---------|
| | Experimental | 60 | 105.61 | 17.08 | -4.48 | -1.70 | .09(NS) |
| | Control | 60 | 110.10 | -11.18 | | | |

It is also observed from the Table 3 that the average study habits of experimental and control group were 105.61 and 110.10 with t-value (-1.70) respectively. Also, insignificant p-value ($p > .05$) shows no significant difference in experimental and control group with respect to study habits.

Table-4: Scores on Academic Performance of Experimental and Control group after intervention

| Study Habits | Group | N | M | Sd | MD | t-value | P-value |
|--------------|--------------|----|-------|-------|-------|---------|---------|
| | Experimental | 60 | 57.30 | 11.25 | -4.35 | -2.08 | .04 |
| | Control | 60 | 61.65 | 11.69 | | | |

It is also observed from the Table 4 that the average academic performance of experimental and control group were 57.30 and 61.65 with t-value (-2.08) respectively. Also, significant p-value ($p < .05$) shows significant difference in experimental and control group with respect to academic performance.

Discussion

Differences in the study habits of experimental and control group before counselling

The analysis performed in this study showed significant differences in the study habits of experimental and control group before counselling. The results, thus, revealed that the experimental and control group are different to each other in terms of study habits because study habits can include concentration, time devoted to study, note taking, and interaction with teachers,

the group, while homogeneous in terms of age, class, and type of schooling, did show differences in study habits, thus, resulting in such results.

Differences in the academic performance of experimental and control group before counselling
The analysis of the study showed no significant differences in the experimental and control group in the academic performance before counselling. The results, thus, revealed that the experimental and control group are different to each other in terms of academic performance before the counselling started and therefore, proving the fact that the groups that were divided into experimental and control group are homogeneous in nature.

Differences in the study habits of experimental and control group after counselling

The analysis of the study showed no significant differences in the study habits of the experimental and control group after counselling. According to the findings, the counselling sessions used an eclectic approach, it's possible that counselling for study habits took a back seat in favour of counselling for other variables such as phobias associated to studying, anxiety, or other socio-personal causes. Egbo (2015) discovered no significant variations in students' study habits counselling, which supports the findings.

Differences in the academic performance of experimental and control group after counselling

The analysis of the study revealed significant differences in the academic performance of the experimental and control group after counselling. The experimental and control groups' academic performance differed significantly. The findings are reinforced by Beharu (2018), Biasi et al., (2016), and Renuka Devi et al., (2013), all of whom found that counselling enhances students' academic performance.

Limitations

The present study has its limitation in the number of sample size and the sample population that was taken. The sample population focused on school going adolescents, hence cannot be generalized on other student populations. The sample size can also be taken into consideration and can be increased to observe more accurate effects, moreover, this study limited to students of 9th and 10th class. Also only two variables were considered in study, whereas, other variables like family environment, different teachers teaching the classes, selective favouritism of the teacher etc can also be studied, moreover, the present study had a 6-week duration for counselling

sessions given to each student, this, duration can be increased to see more desirable effects, further researches can consider other variables that form the core part of study habits.

Conclusion

The study is highly valuable for teachers, educators and students in particular. In the increasing competitive scenario where, academic performance has become a major indicator of being successful and where students are always pressurised to perform well such a kind of study can help them in identifying their faulty study habits and improve them to get the results as expected. Also, this study will shed a light on the role of counselling in improving study habits and academic performance of school children.

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