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**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ABOUT THE PURPOSE
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A Comparative Study about the Purpose of Counseling to Improve the Progress Rate of Low Achiever Students

Pushpandra Kumar

Research Scholar, Mahatma Gandhi University, Meghalaya

Abstract – This paper presents the role of counseling in progress rate of student. In this paper we provided student performance information as a context and then briefly elaborate on what appear to be endemic problems. We then elaborate on the role and function of school counselors, counseling philosophy, counseling content, counseling techniques. Main approaches in counseling and how they can assist in the delivery of appropriate services to minority schoolchildren and their families.

Counseling is a relationship between the counselor and the counselee wherein the latter is helped to gain better insight into his/her problems, abilities and potentialities. The counselor creates conducive atmosphere where in the counselees talk about their problems openly. The counselor listens empathetically and helps them think independently and creatively.

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INTRODUCTION

We are living in an age; which makes heavy demands upon high achievement. But those are students who find it difficult to meet these demands. There are also students whose scholastic performance lags far behind their academic abilities and they fail to make use of their innate capacities, particularly the intelligence. This results in low achievement. High achievement on the other hand, requires the full blossoming of all kinds of abilities which an individual has. The period of studentship is the most crucial time to nurture these abilities to their maximum. What urged the researcher to undertake this paper is the awareness of the situation of our existing educational system which encourages the high academic achievers while neglecting their counterpart, the low-achievers. Perhaps, the low-achievers are the most neglected sector in the academic world. From the perspective of parents, teachers, administrators and guidance-counselors, it is not only the low achievement but also the low-achievers themselves are serious problems to be dealt with. because, low-achievers often create problems like juvenile, aggressiveness etc. in schools and societies. They are labeled as the 'difficult' the 'problematic' and the 'trouble-makers'. Students with learning problems are often looked down as intellectually inferior, inadequately and improperly oriented to books and study. Many are labeled by their parents and teacher as 'useless', 'stupid', or 'dull'. Low-achievement is a maladjusted behavior which indicates that everything is not all right with the individuals. The students who

fail to reach their expected maximum and those who have behavioral problems need help to become fully developed, fully functioning and fully happy. However, the problem of low-achievement cannot be successfully tackled without first tackling the situations which lead to it- Hence, the first step to be taken is to find out the crucial problems that the low-achievers are faced with and the causes of low-achievement. The reasons for low-achievement may be different for different individuals because children are the product of many combinations of social, material and cultural environments, and the development of intelligence and academic progress depends much on heredity and environment. Psychologists, as well as educators have realized the influence of certain factors on the academic achievement in school subjects. The present paper is an attempt to identify some of these factors which have a negative impact on achievement, and to give assistance to the low-achievers to overcome their problems. The; family, for example, is thought to be a very significant and indispensable influence in the young child's training and in human development. It is considered to be one of the main educational agencies. It is, therefore, necessary to know the family background of the counselees. Certain questions, connected to low-achievement have been constantly bothering the researcher. For example, can low-achievement be explained simply by the individual problems of the students and the family environment? Should the students alone be blamed for their low achievement? Does the educational system play a negative part in producing the low-

achievers? Does the type of school have an influence on the academic performance of these students? and so on.

Since this research deals with the educational, social and behavioral problems of the low-achievers in secondary schools, it can be a contribution to the task of teachers, parents, school administrators and to the school counselors under training. The theoretical views and the study of related literature may be useful reference for guidance and counseling in the school set up.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Counseling is a scientific process of assistance given to a person who is genuinely in need of such help by a professionally qualified person who is competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge. It is usually conducted to an individual in individualized situation.

Counseling is an encounter, an interaction between the counselor and the counselee. It is basically human, dynamic interpersonal relationship which helps the counselee to know himself and to understand his present and future situations and to solve his problems by himself. K. Kochhar¹ says, "counseling is helping a person to come to see who he really is, what he has and does, not have; what he can do easily and what he can do with difficulty; and what he probably cannot do at all." The counselor, the counselee and the counseling situation are the three important components of counseling. The content of counseling is the counselee's problem.

Counseling is a learning-oriented process. During counseling, the counselee comes with a bundle of negative feelings such as hatred, anger, confusion, insecurity, and so on. The counselee shares his problems with the counselor who listens with empathy. The counselor concentrates not so much on the problems but on the feelings or the inner experience of the counselee in order to identify the causes of the problem. Then the counselor builds up the confidence of the counselee through positive strokes, warmth, acceptance, support and encouragement, and makes him see the more positive side of himself. Finally, the counselee is helped to make options or plans of action and to become responsible for his actions. After the counseling, the counselee normally goes back relieved, cleared of doubts and feeling more secure.

Counseling is basically a learning function. These include clarification of the counselee's self-concepts through objective information on his aptitudes, achievements, and personality traits; learning ways of reaching sound decisions by weighing evidence and acquisition of new attitudes that will improve his efficiency, happiness, and relationship with others. Such effectiveness of counseling is observed after a period of time i.e., after the counselee has assimilated the different experiences. As a result, the counselee

tends to become more confident of himself, more self-directing and autonomous. Moreover, he would be less frustrated by stress and would recover from stress more quickly. He would be more real and his reactions would be more appropriate to the immediate situations. In short, the counselee may eventually become his own guide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The influence of counseling on academic achievement has been the subject matter of research studies for long all over the world. A large number of these studies have been on underachievers explicitly on the relationship between the non-cognitive factors and academic achievement. As regards the studies on counseling the low-achievers, the researcher, in spite of a wide search, could come across only a few. Since some of the low-achievers are identified as underachievers, studies on underachievers are also examined.

Dosajh N. I. and Sharma (2000) explored the impact of guidance and counseling on academic achievement. What was conspicuous about this study is that it involved only a small number of 46 students but the programme was intense with a variety of activities, namely, the experimental group was given constant career talks, career exhibition, career visits and intensive counseling. Changes in the achievement of experimental group was described to counseling and guidance programme.

Roberta J. and others (2000) reported a Bilingual ERL Mainstream Instructional Support Programme for one hundred and seventy high school students at Washington. This was conducted by one resource teacher and three instructional assistants. The latter assisted in completing assignments, developing reading and skills, counseling, outreach and translating services. Staff development, materials development and parent involvement were also important aspects of the programme. The evaluation looked at both the programme implementation and student outcomes. The latter were presented by examining students' academic success and other indications of successful progress toward graduation such as attendance rates, grade point averages, and credits toward graduation. The programme had no statistically significant effect in raising students' standardized test scores, grades or attendance rates when compared with like data for students in a similar but unserved comparisons group. However, narrative data administration and teacher responses, and other indicators suggested that the programme had a significant positive impact.

Michael Cams (2001) designed and presented guidance study skills approach to improve academic achievement in intermediate students by increasing self-efficacy and awareness of metacognitive skills, learning strategies and learning style information. Findings from 1118 fourth graders showed that

participants made improvement in all California Test of Basic skills sub tests greater than that would be expected from the elapsed time. What is special about: this study is that the achievement problem was tackled using the indirect approach. Here the counselor might have followed the behaviorists' theory of counseling which say:5 that any change in the precedence will result in changes in the consequence. In other words, increase in the study skills resulted in increase in academic achievement, Guidance and counseling was the stimulating factor. In short, changes were brought about mainly by changing the learning methods and learning style.

Mary L. Ford's (2001) report describes a model academic improvement programme for 18 Third Graders with low-achievement. Data from a questionnaire filled out by four teachers and from observations by the teachers revealed that student targeted for the programme demonstrated low learning readiness skills, which resulted in less than desirable behaviour, study skills, and academic performance. In order to enhance performance in these areas, a 10-week programme was implemented. The programme included the (1) Assertive discipline programme in which teachers received training concerning discipline competence, (2) study-skills enhancement plan, and (3) Academic excellence Growth plan which included the 'Bring up Grades Honor Roll Programme.' Student's progress after 10 weeks was assessed by questionnaires filled out by teachers. Results indicated a decreased number of behaviour problems, increased learning readiness skills and improved academic performance.

N. S. Wilson (2005) studied the effects of a classroom guidance unit on sixth graders' examination performance. Guidance consisted of study skills training and counseling support in structured or: leader- directed format in group setting. Forty-seven failing sixth graders participated in either the experimental programme or non-treatment control programme. Experimental students were found to have significantly higher examination averages than did control students.

A. E. Gottfried's (2005) study on academic intrinsic motivation in elementary and junior high school students demonstrates the significance of academic intrinsic motivation for children's education. As predicted, academic intrinsic motivation was found to be significantly and positively correlate with children's school achievement and perceptions of academic competence.

Richards G. (2006) designed an outward sound bridging course, which was a six-week residential programme to improve academic achievement and self-concepts in low-achieving high school males. During 1980-1984, five courses were conducted for sixty-six Australian high school males. Most of them

were ninth grade students, chosen on the basis of poor academic performance. After the first two years, standardized mathematics and reading tests, the self-esteem instrument (SEI) and self-description, questionnaire (5D0) were administered before, during and after each course. The programme was found to be effective in improving academic achievement and academic self-concept.

P. Deo (2007) investigated the patterns of study methods of the high and low achieving students of tenth grade. Their study showed faulty learning and bad study habits among other factors related to underachievement. The results also showed significant differences in the study habits scores on high and low achievers. Monteith J. L. and Wet J. J. compared fifty gifted achievers with fifty underachievers.. The subjects were obtained from :he total standard 10 Afrikans speaking Cohort in the Orange Free State (Republic of South Africa). Among the factors examined were the academic achievement and study habits. Substantial differences between achieving and underachieving gifted pupils were found in all study habits and attitude variables except study time, suggesting less efficient study-methods by underachieving students. Gifted underachievers had less favorable attitude toward school. Mabel K. Lum, using the survey of study habits and attitudes by Holtzman, found that academic drive differentiates the over achievers from the underachievers. Her study revealed that the latti tend to become easily discouraged when confronted with long and difficult assignments and admit that unless they like the course they exert only the minimum effort required to jet a passing grade. The less successful students show a marked tendency toward procrastinaticm with regard to assignments.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is an experimental one in which a pre-test, post-test approach is used. The low-achievers were identified and divided into four groups, namely, Group A consisting of low-achievers who had undergone 4 individual counseling sessions. Group B consisting of low-achievers who had undergone two individual counseling sessions. Group C consisting of low-achievers who had undergone 4 group counseling. Group 0 consisting of low-achievers who received no special treatment. It was the control group.

Both the experimental and the control groups were tested before and after the counseling programme. The experimental study covered a one-year period. Counseling alone lasted 6 months. Groups A, B, C and D consisted of 46, 48, 49 and £-8 students respectively. It was decided to have samples which were nether too large nor too small. Samples were

selected so as to ensure a fair representation of schools and diversities in educational set-up.

The major hypotheses were tested by the use of reliable measuring instruments and the minor hypotheses by interviews, observations, etc. The scoring was done by the scoring keys specially designed for the purpose. Different statistical techniques* and calculations were used to analyze the results. Thus, the scores were compared (1) within the group, (2) with other counseled groups and (3) with the control group. The results were, then, interpreted and conclusions; were drawn based on the findings of the present study.

CONCLUSION

The present paper was undertaken to find out the effects of student-centered counseling on low-achievers in secondary schools. Since academic achievement is intimately linked with such factors as study habits, academic motivation and self-concept, the effects of counseling not only on academic achievement but also on these other factors have also been analyzed into their important components, and special care has been taken to tackle the most frequent among them during the counseling.

Counseling, both individual and group, is effective in improving the study habits and study skills, academic motivation, self-concept, and academic achievement of the low-achievers. These affects are; beyond 1% level of significance with regard to Group A, B and C (the counseled groups). The non-counseled group (Group D) showed the significant improvement in any of the 4 variables under study.

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