

RESEARCH PAPER

Study on prevalence, causes and emotional maturity of academically backward children

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Abstract: The present study on academically backward children was taken up in urban and rural areas of Dharwad taluk, Karnataka state during 2015-16. The sample for the study comprised of 120 higher primary children in the age of 10-14 years who were selected from eight schools from Dharwad city and two villages of Dharwad taluk. The emotional maturity level of children was assessed using emotional maturity scale developed by Singh and Bhargava (1990). Self structured schedule was used to collect reasons for academic backwardness, and socio-economic status was assessed with the scale developed by Agarwal *et al.* (2005). The results revealed that prevalence of academically backward children was 29.84 per cent and it was slightly higher in rural area (30.60 %) compared to urban area (29.08 %). Further main reasons for academic backwardness were related to personal problems followed by school and familial related problems. Majority of academic backward children were found emotionally unstable and they were better in independence dimension compared to other four dimensions of emotional maturity.

Key words: Academic, Emotional maturity, Prevalence, Problem

Introduction

In the present competitive society poor scholastic performance is being recognised as big concern to both parents and teachers. Academic achievement is considered as a key criterion to judge one's academic potentialities and capacities and it occupies a prominent place in education as well as in the learning process. However there are differences within the individual from time to time, which is known as behaviour oscillations which account for differences in the academic achievement of the same individual. Secondly, individual of the same age group, same grade and of the same potential ability usually differ in the academic achievement.

Academic achievement is a multi-dimensional and multifaceted phenomenon. There are several factors that are responsible for high and low achievements of the students and these factors can be grouped into two broad classes: subjective factors and objective factors. Subjective factors are related to individual himself while influencing ones achievement e.g. intelligence, learning ability, motivation, self- efficacy, learning style, study habits, creativity, level of aspiration, self-concept, locus of control, *etc.* Objective or environmental factors related to the environment of the individual which includes socio-economic status, educational system, family environment, evaluation system, value system, teacher's efficiency, school situation, school environment *etc.* Family background and socio-economic status of the parents also influence the academic achievement.

However, most of the students in secondary school experience academic problem that manifest itself in the form of poor performance. Viewing academic backwardness in terms of poor academic achievement or repeated failure in grades, several Indian school surveys in the past decade have recorded prevalence rates that ranges between 10-15 per cent (Shenoy

and Kapur, 1996 and Vijayalaxmi *et al.*, 2015). Poor school performance should be seen as a 'symptom' reflecting a higher problem in adolescents. Because of this problem, children may not concentrate on their studies, become educationally backward, in most of the contexts feel secluded. These difficulties later leads to many psychosomatic problems such as anxiety, tension, frustration, emotional upsets and school dropout especially after primary classes.

Emotional maturity is an important aspect of human life which is highly responsible for success in life. Where individual learn to develop emotional stability by balancing feelings and self-control. It implies controlling our emotions rather than letting emotions. Emotionally immature persons tend to prefer inefficient coping methods than that of useful methods while more mature people prefer more wise and useful methods. Emotional stability and maturity are considered as the major components in mental health (Anand *et al.*, 2014; Pastey and Aminbhavi, 2006). This indicates the pressing need in today's society to consider this issue as a research problem.

Material and methods

The sample for the present study comprised 120 academically backward children who were studying in 5th, 6th and 7th standards. They were selected from eight schools *i.e.*, two government and two private schools in Dharwad city and four government schools in rural areas of Dharwad taluk. Children were selected based upon their academic achievement in the previous academic year (*i.e.*, those who secured C and C+ grades) and intellectual level (*i.e.*, IQ score between 90-110).

The emotional maturity level of children was assessed by using emotional maturity scale developed by Singh and Bhargava (1990) and the scale measures five aspects *viz.*,

emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence. Background information of children was collected with the help of self structured schedule and socio-economic status was assessed with the scale developed by Agarwal *et al.* (2005).

Results and discussion

Demographic characteristics of children is presented in Table 1. More number (57.5 %) of academically superior children were in the age of 10.1 - 12 years and remaining (42.50 %) belonged to the age group of 12.1-14 years. With regard to gender, majority (55.00 %) of them were boys and 45 per cent were girls. Regarding ordinal position, more number (83.33 %) of them were later born and 11.30 per cent were first born. With respect to educational status of parents, more number (45.83 %) of fathers had education upto PUC/high school/ middle school level followed by professional qualification/ post graduation/graduation, primary and illiterate (38.33, 14.16 and 1.67%, respectively). While, majority (63.33 %) of mothers completed PUC/high school/middle school, followed by professional qualification/post graduation/graduation degree, primary and illiterate (15.00, 14.16 and 7.5 %, respectively). Regarding occupation of fathers, majority (48.33%) of them were working in private sectors or doing independent business followed by working at shops/home/transport/skilled workers, unskilled workers and working in services in central/public/ state undertakings (24.16, 15.00 and 12.50 %, respectively). Regarding occupation of mothers, it was found that majority

(39.16 %) of mothers were unemployed/housewife followed by working in shops/home transport/ skilled workers, working in private sectors or independent business and working in service in central/state/public undertakings (34.33, 13.33, 9.16, and 4.16 %, respectively). Further, more number (64.16 %) of children belonged to forward caste and 35.83 per cent belonged to backward caste. Data on family size revealed that majority (58.33%) of children belonged to large and 41.66 per cent belonged to small family size. The data on overall socioeconomic status (SES) revealed that 50 per cent of children belonged to poor followed by middle and high SES (41.66 and 8.33 %, respectively).

The prevalence of academically backward children by locality and standard in selected urban and rural schools is presented in the Table 2. Irrespective of locality, overall prevalence of academically backward children was 29.84 per cent and it was observed slightly higher in rural area (30.60 %) compared to urban area (29.08 %). However, the prevalence of academically backward children in both urban and rural areas is quite higher than many reported Indian studies (Shashidhar *et al.*, 2009 and Shenoy and Kapur, 1996). The possible reasons may be that majority of children in the present study belonged to culturally deprived background which was characterised by parental deprivation, low caste, unemployed, low education and occupational level of parents and economic deprivation. Further, data on standard wise indicated similar trend in both urban and rural areas wherein prevalence of academically backward children was noticed more in 5th standard (30.27 and 33.34 %, respectively) followed by 7th (28.65 and 30.68 % respectively) and 6th standards (28.08 and 27.77%, respectively).

Table 3 depicts the personal, familial, school related reasons for academic backwardness of children. The reasons for academic backwardness of children were related to personal problems followed by school and familial problems.

Personal reasons for academic backwardness of children in case of urban children were related to fear of teacher, exam fear, not able to remember subjects and shyness (73.34, 70.04, 68.34 and 66.67 %, respectively). While, in rural area the causes for academic backwardness of children were not able to remember, fear about exam, and fear of teacher (76.66, 75.00 and 71.66 %, respectively).

Data on familial reasons for academic backwardness of children in urban area indicated that poverty was the main factor (68.34 %) followed by, poor family relation, no one to guide at home, both parents working and lack of facilities at home (46.67, 45.02, 33.34 and 31.67 %, respectively). While, in case of rural area, majority of children indicated poverty (71.01%), as the main reason followed by no one to guide at home, lack of facilities and both parents (58.33, 43.34 and 43.33%, respectively).

With regard to school related reasons for academic backwardness of children in urban area majority of children indicated that they were unable to answer the questions in

Table 1. Background characteristics of children			N=120
Characteristics	Category	Academically backward children	
		N	%
Age	10.1-12 yrs	69	57.50
	12.1-14 yrs	51	42.50
Gender	Boys	66	55.00
	Girls	54	45.00
Educational Level of the Parents			
Father	Professional qualification/		
	Post Graduation /		
	Graduation	46	38.33
	PUC/High school/		
	middleschool	55	45.83
	Primary	17	14.16
Mother	Illiterate	2	1.66
	Professional qualification/		
	Post Graduation /		
	Graduation	18	15.00
	PUC/High school/		
	middleschool	76	63.33
Socio-economic status	Primary	17	14.16
	Illiterate	9	7.50
	High	10	8.33
	Middle	50	41.66
	Poor	60	50.00

Table 2. Prevalence of academically backward children in urban and rural areas

Schools	Urban area							
	5 th std		6 th std		7 th std		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
Us-1	39	15(38.46)	31	11(35.48)	45	12(26.66)	115	38(33.04)
Us-2	31	13(41.94)	43	10(23.25)	32	9(23.07)	106	32(29.09)
Us-3	78	17(21.79)	63	13(20.63)	48	13(27.08)	188	43(22.87)
Us-4	37	11(29.72)	41	16(39.02)	46	15(32.60)	124	42(33.87)
Total	185	56(30.27)	178	50(28.08)	171	49(28.65)	533	155(29.08)
Rural area								
Vs-1	30	9(30.00)	32	8(25.00)	24	9(37.50)	86	26(30.24)
Vs-2	60	22(36.66)	62	18(29.03)	43	10(23.25)	165	50(30.31)
Vs-3	32	10(31.25)	47	13(27.66)	51	14(27.45)	129	37(28.67)
Vs-4	49	16(32.65)	39	11(28.20)	58	21(36.20)	146	48(32.87)
Total	171	57(33.34)	180	50(27.77)	176	54(30.68)	526	161(30.60)
Grand total	356	113(31.74)	358	100(28.77)	347	103(29.68)	1059	316(29.84)

Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage

Us- 1 indicates urban school-1
 Us-2 indicates urban school-2
 Us-3 indicates urban school-3
 Us-4 indicates urban school-4

Vs-1 indicates village school-1
 Vs-2 indicates village school-2
 Vs-3 indicates village school-3
 Vs-4 indicates village school-4

Table 3. Personal, familial and school reasons for academic backwardness of children

Reasons	Urban (n=60)		Rural (n=60)		Total(N=120)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Personal						
Feel tired	38	63.34	35	58.34	73	60.83
Ill health	28	46.67	26	43.34	54	45.00
Not able to understand	24	40.00	30	50.00	54	45.00
Not able to remember	41	68.34	46	76.66	87	72.50
Exam fear	42	70.01	45	75.00	87	72.50
Fear of teacher	44	73.34	43	71.66	87	72.50
Shyness in class and shyness	40	66.67	36	60.00	76	63.33
Feel inferior	37	61.67	34	56.66	71	59.16
Feel lonely	39	65.00	31	51.76	70	58.33
Familial						
poverty	41	68.34	42	70.01	83	69.16
Living with single parent	15	25.00	14	23.34	29	24.16
Poor family relation	28	46.67	19	31.66	47	39.16
Lack of facilities at home	19	31.67	26	43.34	45	37.50
No one to guide at home	27	45.02	35	58.33	62	51.66
Both parents	20	33.34	26	43.33	46	38.33
School						
School far from home	22	36.67	16	26.67	38	31.66
Dislike from peer group	28	46.66	27	45.00	55	45.83
Restriction in school	29	48.34	26	43.33	55	45.83
Punishment for not doing homework	28	46.66	44	73.33	72	60.00
No interest in studies	27	45.00	34	56.66	61	50.83
Unable to answer in class	37	61.67	45	75.00	82	68.33

class (61.67 %) followed by punishment for not doing homework, not interested to study, restriction in school, dislike from peer group, and school far from home (48.34, 46.66, 46.66 and 36.67 %, respectively). While, in case of rural areas, majority of children were unable to answer the questions in class (75.00 %) followed by dislike from peer group, punishment for not doing homework and restriction in school (73.33, 56.66, 45.00 and 43.33 %, respectively).

Table 4. Percentage distribution of academically backward children based on level of emotional maturity (N=120)

Level of emotional maturity	Number	Per cent	Mean (SD)
Extremely stable	-	-	98.28
Moderately stable	19	15.83	(±10.04)
Unstable	63	52.50	
Extremely unstable	38	31.66	
	120	100	

The result with regard to level of emotional maturity of academically backward children is presented in Table 4. It is evident that more number (52.50%) of children was found in unstable category followed by extremely unstable and (31.66%) and less number in moderately stable category (15.83 %). This indicates that academically backward children tend to be emotionally unstable, which means they lack capacity of solving problems and tendency of irritability and always want help from others, seem to be more stubborn and usually showcase temper tantrums.

Table 5 shows that the mean score of the children for the different dimension of emotional maturity scale such as emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence which are 23.36, 27.54, 24.94, 24.13 and 19.29, respectively. While comparing the mean scores of dimensions of emotional maturity, group has low score in area of independence, which indicates that children tend to be independent dimensions than that of other dimensions such as emotional regression, social maladjustment, emotional instability and personality disintegration. With respect to emotional regression children tend to have feeling of inferiority, restlessness, hostility, self-centeredness, etc. Individuals who have social maladjustment lack social adaptability and have hatred, seem to be exclusive but always boasting and they are mostly identified as liars. In case of personality integration they exhibit fears, phobias etc.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it is very much evident that the prevalence of academically backward children in both urban

Table 5. Mean scores of academic backward children by emotional maturity dimensions

Emotional maturity dimensions	Mean score (\pm SD)
Emotional instability	23.36 (\pm 4.65)
Emotional regression	27.54 (\pm 4.69)
Social maladjustment	24.94 (\pm 5.29)
Personality disintegration	24.13 (\pm 4.55)
Lack of independence	19.29 (\pm 4.96)

and rural schools is quite high. It is also important to identify risk factors for scholastic backwardness as early as possible to initiate corrective measures and optimum benefit of remedial education can be made which can make a big difference in child's future. On the other hand, academic achievement is considered as a key criterion to judge one's academic potentialities and capacities and it occupies a prominent place in education as well as in the learning process. So there is increasing pressure on students to excel in academic performance and this has created a need for children to develop good study habits in their lives to cope with academic expectation. Secondly, emotional maturity plays an imperative, effective and determinant role in shaping the personality, attitudes and behaviour of a person. So, it is the responsibility of the parents, teachers and administrations of the educational institutions to provide favourable and conducive environment to the students for fullest development of their emotional maturity to act according to situation and need of the time. This will also be helpful to the students for satisfactory performance in the field of academics to become a successful person in the society.

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