

Correlates of Academic Achievement: A Study of Social Science Students

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ABSTRACT

Aim: Present paper identifies the factors associated with the academic achievement of students in a social science subject. Factors studied in the present study associated with achievements were-interest in studies, reading ability, and critical thinking.

Methods: A total of sixty students studying in class VII in government senior secondary schools of Delhi were selected randomly for the data collection. Interest Inventory by R P Singh (2010), critical thinking scale prepared by C. G. Venkatesha Murthy (2014), reading ability test, and achievement test prepared by researchers themselves were administered on the selected sample.

Findings: This study reveals that academic achievement in social subjects, reading ability, and critical thinking are significantly and positively correlated with each other.

Keywords: Achievements in social science, Critical thinking, Interest in studies, Reading ability.

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PROLOGUE

Education is the most vital instrument which has been developed by the man for his own growth. Therefore, all the dynamic and developed countries claim such an instructive system that will take control in directing and handling a future, which will ensure a healthier life to all. Hence, the progress of any society depends mainly on the utilization of the potential of its individuals and of the best educational ideas in all disciplines of knowledge. This is only possible if we have a good academic system to educate our future generation, and if any lacuna occurs, it has to be curbed out well in time. Pieces of evidence show that teachers are overburdened because they are engaged in some other tasks which are not directly related to the curricular or co-curricular achievements of the students. In such cases, they find that their students are getting slow in their learning and other school-related activities. If the teachers give time to think who are backward in their studies or even genius, definitely a shining solution will come out. It is also proof in history that many slow learners or academically backward students have qualified themselves as great scientists or writers in their lives. The discussion in the real classroom situation may help the teacher to improve the skills of such children. It has also been observed that sometimes the reading ability, mental ability, and background influence their academic achievement.

Reading is not a natural human ability but instead is a socio-cultural artifact that inter-plays between language, socio-cultural norms, and a collective body of knowledge. (Dimitra and Barbara, 2000). A total of 60% of knowledge comes through reading only (Nautiyal, 1995). Early reading was associated with early academic success. (Kumar Harish, 2014–2015). It was found that early emergence and persistence of achievement gaps related to poverty, the high and accumulating risk for migrating students, and the significance of oral reading in first grade as both an early indicator of risk and a potential protective factor.

Critical thinking is that manner of rational about a subject in which a thinker improves the quality her thinking by competently

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examining, assessing, and rebuilding it. Critical thinking is self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It assumes agreement to demanding standards of distinctive and attentive understanding of their use. It involves actual proclamation and problem-solving abilities, as well as a grantee to overcome our native egocentrism and socio-centrism.

The history of critical thinking is not new. Dimensions of critical thinking have been engraved out in intellectual debate and dispute through 2400 years of intellectual history. Even during ancient times, many competitions were organized by the then kings were based on debates. Either to select a person for the main administration or to invite the grooms for their daughters. The *Shastrarth* between *Kalidas* and Princes *Vidyotma* is the most reliable example of critical thinking.

A number of studies have been conducted on the variable-namely critical thinking and learning, which showed a positive impact on student's achievement. Paul and Binker (1990) reviewed 39 studies on critical thinking and published a book on critical thinking. Both the reviewers strongly argued that conduction the studies on critical thinking is a need of the hour. Norris and Ennis (1989) investigated various methods being applied to assess students' critical thinking at the class level. The findings of this study can be established with the achievement of students. Gokhale (1995) found that critical thinking can be enhanced by applying various methods like collaborative and blended teaching-learning.

It was logical decision that helps the learner to enhance his thinking ability. Velea and Lache, (2015) declared that the logical outcomes or conclusion helps in increasing reasoning ability. Finding of various studies showed positive impacts of critical thinking on getting up of academic achievement (e.g., Wang, Pascarella, Laird, and Ribera, 2015; Tiruneh, Verburgh, and Elen, 2014; Chan, 2013; Boghossian, 2006; Fleming, Garcia, and Morning, 1995).

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 60 students studying in class VI in government Senior Secondary Schools, Delhi was selected. Researchers themselves prepared interest inventory by R P Singh (2010), reading ability test, and critical thinking ability scale designed by C. G. Venkatesha Murthy (2014) was used. This scale carries the items on the components like - process of thinking and product of thoughts. The test was administered on the selected sample. Similarly an achievement test in social science and reading ability test was prepared and administered by researchers themselves.

Hypothesis

Following hypothesis were formulated and statistically tested.

HO1 There may be no significant relationship between academic achievements in social science and interest in studies.

HO2 There may be no significant relationship between academic achievements in social science and reading ability.

HO3 There may be no significant relationship between academic achievement in social science and critical thinking.

Analysis of the Results

It may be observed from Table 1 that interest in studies is significantly positively correlated with academic achievement in social science. Hence, it may be concluded that interest and achievement increase or decrease proportionally. Thus, the above

stated hypothesis that there may be no significant relationship between academic achievements in social science and interest in studies is rejected.

It may be seen from Table 1 that the value of the coefficient of correlation of reading ability and achievement is found to be significant. Hence, it may be inferred that there is a significant relationship between reading ability and academic achievement. Therefore, the hypothesis that there may be no significant relationship between reading ability and academic achievement of students is rejected.

Table 1 reveals that critical thinking is significantly and positively correlated with academic performance. This result rejected the hypothesis that there may be no significant relationship between critical thinking and the academic achievement of students in social science.

Table 2 indicates that academic achievement and spelling are positively and significantly correlated. Similarly, academic achievement and critical thinking are positively and significantly correlated. So it can be concluded if these variables are given more concentration by the students during their study definitely there will be positive results in the achievements of students.

EPILOGUE

Education is not only responsible for providing the reading and writing skills to the learners, but it goes beyond to this and helps learners in providing them value education and making them up-to-date and opening their horizons of thinking. It is well understood that quality education has to make the learners competitive in the present day. It has also been experienced that all over the world, the present education system is under fire in all sections of the society, mainly because it is not delivering the goods properly. The emphasis has always remained on memorization. Thus the qualitative development of the pupils remains helpless, even up to

Table 1: Inter-correlation matrix of variables–interest in studies, reading ability, critical thinking and academic achievement in Social Science.

S. No.	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	Interest	1.00				
2	Reading ability	.28*	1.00			
3	Critical thinking	.29*	.32*	1.00		
4	Academic achievement in social science	.36**	.21	.21	1.00	
5	General mental ability	.46**	.23	.36**	.32*	1.00

Note: **P<.01, *P<.05

Table 2: Inter-correlation matrix of the components of, critical thinking, reading ability, and academic achievement of students. (N 60)

Broad areas	S. No.	Components	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Critical thinking	1	Critical thinking process	1.00									
	2.	Critical thinking product	.36**	1.00								
	3	Language	.18	.39	1.00							
Reading ability	4	Reading speed	.19	.20	.47	1.00						
	5	Comprehension	.14	.34	.12	.26	1.00					
	6	Vocabulary	.50	.25	.03	.21	.71**	1.00				
	7	Spelling	.15	.19	.17	.01	.60**	.39**	1.00			
	8	Hand-writing	.48	.18	.08	.04	.43**	.16	.63**	1.00		
	9	General mental ability	.29	.33	.42	.45	.28	.41	.32	.27	1.00	
Achievement in social science	10	Academic achievement	.26	.34*	.15	.26	.45**	.26	.36**	.28	.35	1.00

Note: **P<.01, *P<.05



adulthood. That is why a majority of students are found below to their mental level, and they fail to develop their thinking as per the need of the hour. Hence it is very essential to develop psychological inputs to the achievement of the students. Undoubtedly, continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) is a progressive and qualitative sign in the development of learners, and its result will be seen in the form of 100% pass result. Here, teachers and policymakers and planners will also have to construct such a curriculum so that the learners could develop the interest in their studies.

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