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Article

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Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of High Achievers in Siraiki Area

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Abstract

High academic achievement is desired by everyone but a few students are able to reach top position in their class. This study aimed to find out those factors which may be responsible for higher academic achievement of high achievers. The sample was taken from Khairpur Tame Wali and it was found there are a number of cultural factors among others which helped the students to secure higher positions in their classes. It is recommended in the end that children may be given equal opportunity to grow and they may be disciplined from early age to achieve higher goals in studies.

Keywords: high achievers; Siraiki area; high academic achievement.

1. Introduction

Many studies counted the factors affecting the academic achievement but there is a need to know why some students in the same class are low achievers and others are high achievers? It is important to know that culture at home and in the area has great effect on academic achievement of students. The present study was conducted to know some specific implications of Siraiki culture on students' academic achievements along with the known factors.

The Siraiki people are an ethnic or linguistic group native to southern Punjab, northern Sindh, and northeaster Balochistan provinces of Pakistan. Most Siraiki are Baloch or Mir Jat by origin. The "Siraiki speaking belt" consists of districts of Bahawalpur, Multan, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Layyah, Dera Ismail Khan, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Kashmor, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Qamber Shahdadkot

District, Jacobabad, Khairpur, Naushahro Feroze District, Barkhan, Jafarabad District, Jhal Magsi, Naseerabad, and Sibi. The Siraiki speaking people follow many religions, among them mostly Islam but also some are Hindu. The predominantly Muslim Siraiki population supported Pakistan Movement in 1947. After the independence of Pakistan, the minority Hindus and Sikhs migrated to India while a significant number of Urdu speaking and Punjabi speaking Muslim refugees from India settled down in the Siraiki region of Pakistan after independence. A significant number of Siraiki speaking people also reside in India, mostly in Punjab, Gujarat, Haryana, Delhi, and Maharashtra (Saraiki Culture, 2013).

Because the sample students are the part of the Siraiki culture and Siraiki areas there are some special customs which may encourage or discourage a student to perform good or bad in his/her class. So this study is significant for a number of reasons.

It would specifically be helpful for:

1. The Low achiever students to understand the factors of High Achieving.
2. It will create an understanding of cultural influence on academic achievement of high achievers.
3. Educational Administrators to analyze the factors of High achievement at elementary level students.
4. Parents to know about academic high achievement factors.
5. Researchers for further research.

This study was delimited to:

1. High achiever students of class one to class eight.
2. Government and Private Elementary Schools located in Siraiki speaking rural and urban areas of Tehsil Khair Pur Tame Wali District Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

2. Review of Related Literature

Education is a process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences. It is the development of all those capacities in the individual, which enable him/her to control his/her environment and fulfill his/her possibilities (Miller et al., 2009).

The learner is active participant in learning teaching process. Much of the activities of the educational institution are built around the student. As he/she joins the institution, he/she is nurtured and groomed by his/her contact with the teacher and ultimately leaves the alma-mater as enriched, enlightened and valuable human resource (Cavanagh & Waugh, 2011).

Not all the students get equal opportunity to rise on the ladder of education. Each student has a unique personality and unique needs, beliefs and attitudes. Each student enters the class with different background knowledge and different experiences but almost all students wish to stand on first position and on the victory stand in the class. But these opportunities find a particular student who is harder, intelligent and devoted to education than others (Hambleton et al., 2005).

People are characterized by a tendency to seek challenges and a high degree of independence. Their most satisfying reward is the recognition of their achievements (Downing & Haladyna, 2006).

Characteristics of individuals with high achievement motivation include an orientation toward problem-solving and moderate challenges. These individuals also place a high emphasis on accomplishment and success. Usually, these individuals gravitate toward challenging but achievable goals where their abilities and efforts can affect the outcome (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2009). One of the aspects that have received attention by many researchers is children's academic achievement due to the use of computers and other scientific equipment. It is undoubtedly established that positive use of these scientific inventions contribute to higher academic achievement (Nola & Irzik, 2005). In a study by (Kozulin et al., 2003), family and environmental factors were found to affect students' achievement. The factors are parents' expectation and attribution, structure and learning, home effective environment, discipline, and parent's involvement. McCartney (2007) concluded that good teacher-child relationships encourage better achievement of students and harsh attitude of teachers has negative effect on the academic achievement of students while little incentives and rewards affect positively the learning activities.

Untrained teachers fail to produce desired changes in the personality of students while trained and active teachers can make their students the cream of nation (Rogoff, 2003). Teaching methodology has also an important role in the learning achievements of the students. Interesting, understandable, flexible, and innovative teaching methods have great impact on the academic achievements of the students (Carter, 2009).

Among these factors there are number of factors which are related to the environment and the area where a student lives. In southern Punjab the most prominent language is Siraiki. Siraiki is not only a language but it is the name of a culture. This study was done to investigate the effecting factors of high achievement of high achievers at elementary school of Siraiki area. Bahawal Pur District's Tehsil Khairpur Tame Wali was selected to investigate the cultural influences on high achievers' achievements. In simple words, this study was conducted to search out the different influencing factors of different aspects of life of a Position Holder or Topper student in the class. This study emphasized on High achiever's Academic, personal and social aspects of life. In academic life, the questions about "sitting position in class, Home tuitions, amount of study, teacher quality, help of family members in studies, usage of dictionaries, library books, newspapers or other academically helping materials and feelings of educational responsibilities etc were investigated.

In personal life, the factors of "motivation, diet, creative and critical skills in communication, writing, ideas, observation, regularity, moral values, analytical power, assertion skills, five personality factors, confidence, co-curricular activities, curiosity, decision power etc were searched out.

In Social life, the factors about "high achiever's family system (joint or separate family), the status of High achiever in his family, friends, economical, professional and social status of high achiever's family in the society, learning environment at homes, and especially the genetic factors influencing on high achievers were investigated in this study.

Main purpose of the study was to explore the social, socio-economic factors affecting high achiever's academic achievement. This is not surprising because family is the first source for children to learn how to behave and how to make decisions in life?

This study was designed to analyze the major affecting factors of high academic achievement of high achievers from class one to eight in Siraike area.

Following were the objectives of study:

1. To search out the effecting factors of academic achievement of elementary level students.
2. To find out the factors from student's personal life effecting on their academic high achievement.

To investigate the social factors effecting on elementary school students' high achievement.

3. Population and Sample

The population of the study was comprised on the academic high achiever students of elementary schools located in the rural and urban Siraike Speaking areas of Tehsil Khair Pur Tame Wali District Bahawalpur.

The sample was selected in the form of high achievers (Position Holders) students from the private and government schools of Khair Pur Tame Wali. Total size of sample was 240 students from ten schools of Khair Pur Tame Wali., 4 schools were rural area's public sector schools, and 6 schools were from urban areas including 3 public schools and 3 urban private schools. Total male students were 126 from which 48 students were from urban areas and 78 students including 48 from urban public schools and 30 from urban private schools. 114 Female students from which 48 students from rural areas public schools and 66 students were from urban areas including 24 students from Public school and 42 students from Urban Private schools of Khair Pur Tame Wali District Bahawalpur. The age of students ranged from 5-12 years.

4. Research Tool Development

A structured interview was prepared for this study. A questionnaire having 25 questions was developed to find out the factors. All these questions were asked verbally from the respondents and were written by the researcher and also by students (those having writing skills). The questions were divided into different aspects of high achiever's academic achievement. The structured interview questions were validated in the light of experts' judgment. The final version of interview questionnaire consisted of 25 questions.

5. Data Collection and Analysis

A structured interview was administered personally to High Achievers by approaching their schools. Questions' and related concepts were clear and easy to understand for respondents. All the dialogues were in friendly mood. 240 Respondents were interviewed and the same number of High Achievers responded. It helped to identify the existing influencing factors for academic high achievement of position holder students of class one to eight. One of the researchers visited the potential respondents in their schools. The introductory meetings facilitated the researcher to build up good rapport with the respondents. After that identified students were interviewed. The data collected through the interview was in the form of narratives
this data was interpreted and analyzed through verbal analysis system. Close ended questions' answers were quantified and interpreted with frequencies and percentage scores.

6. Findings

Following are the findings of this study. There had been number of factors which could influence the academic achievement of students along with the already known but the focus of this study was to know the unknown. Among the known factors a number of factors were studied to whom generally people do not take interest or feel them as positive contributor instead of their actual position. Among the known positives these were verified: sitting position in class room, home tuition, and qualification of family members, other's help in studies through effective group activities, and parental help.

- 20 academic high achievers of 1st class to 8th class, which are the 8.33% of the total 240 academic high achievers sample use computer, dictionaries and library books for increasing their academic capability while as
- 220 academic high achievers (91.67%) of one to 8th class don't use computer, dictionaries and library books for increasing their academic capability.
- 193 students which is the 80.42% of total sample academic high feel their educational responsibilities their self while as
- 47 students which are the 19.58% of the total sample are pushed to feel their educational responsibilities by others.
- 25 academic high achiever students which are the 10.42% of the total sample try to become high achiever only for they want to become a "professional" means that they want to become a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or want to join any other profession.
- 195 academic high achiever students which are the 81.6% of the total sample achieve their victory in the class only for their "own respect".
- 20 academic high achiever students which are the 8.33% of the total sample achiever first position in the desire of only studying.
- 184 academic high achievers (76.67%) say that they feel easy and their understanding process become better after well dressing while as
- 56 academic high achievers (23.33%) say that there is no effect of well dressing. They feel no change in learning after well dressing.
- 79 academic high achievers which are the 32.92% of the total sample make their decision in any trouble themselves.
- 161 academic high achievers which are the 67.08% of the total sample make their decision after consulting with others.
- 200 academic high achievers (83.33%) are in habit of self advance studying the next lesson.
- 40 academic high achievers (16.67%) report that they wait for their teacher to teach their next new lesson before then they read or try to learn the new after teaching their teacher.
- 62 academic high achievers (25.83%) say that their fathers do some type of job. It may they are teachers, clerks, or engineers in any factory/company, or may be in some government or semi government organizations.

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- 31 academic high achievers (12.92%) reply that their father/guardian are shop keeper.
- 147 academic high achievers which are the 61.25% of the total sample state that their fathers' are farmer.
- 122 respondents (50.83%) reply that they are at "First number" by birth among their brothers/sisters.
- 35 academic high achievers (14.58%) say that their family order number is at "Last number" by birth among their brothers/sisters.
- 43 respondents, 17.92% of the total sample say that their birth number is in-between in their family.
- 20(8.33%) academic high achiever's response is that their family order number is at "fourth number."
- 15(6.25%) academic high achievers of the sample say that their number by birth is "fifth number".
- Only 05(2.08%) academic high achiever says that their family order number is at "sixth number" among their brothers/sisters.
- 79 respondents (32.92%) reply that their father is at "first number" by birth among his brothers/sisters.
- 119 academic high achievers (49.58%) say that their father's birth was at "second number" by birth among his brothers/sisters.
- 25 respondents, 10.42% of the total sample say that their father was born at "third number" among his brothers/sisters.
- 11 academic high achiever's (4.58%) response is that their father's family order is at "fourth number."
- 05 of sample (2.08%) say that their father's number by birth is "fifth number".
- Only 01 academic high achiever (0.42%) says that his father's family order number is at "sixth number" among his brothers/sisters.
- 144 academic high achievers (77.92) are belonging to "joint family system.
- 96 academic high achievers (22.08% of the total sample) are belong to "single family system"
- 166 academic high achievers (69.2%) have their 1-5 close friends.
- 56 academic high achievers (23.3%) have their 6-10 close friends.
- 18 academic high achievers (7.5%) have their 11-20 close friends.
- 181 academic high achievers (75%) reply that their family environment is religious while as
- 59 academic high achievers (25%) say that their family environment is not religious but liberal.
- 48 (20%) of the total sample say that their position is due to their "teachers"
- 36 (15%) high achievers reply that their achievement is because of their "Prays"

156 (65%) of the total sample response that their academic high achievement is only because they “work hard.”

7. Conclusion

7.1 Usage of computer, Dictionaries and Library Books

Generally it thought that use of computers, dictionaries and library books help students a lot in academic high achievement but in the given sample from Siraike speaking area it was reviled quite interestingly that this result does not show that use of computers, dictionaries and library books is harmful but it contributes more in higher classes and in given sample lower classes' high achievers were not getting proper benefits of these facilities yet having good results.

7.2 Realizing the Educational Responsibilities

Culturally in Siraike speaking areas it is normal practice of parents to ask their children to work hard and get positions in their classes. But the results of this study showed that the children working hard by themselves are more successful than the persuaded ones.

7.3 High Achievement's Motives

Majority of respondents confirmed that they worked hard and motivated by and for their own respect, name and fame. At the stage they do give weight to other factors but self-respect is the most important motivator for them.

7.4 Dressing

In the area from which sample was selected people do not care for the dressing of their children generally due to financial constraints but the data suggested that dressing of students may has positive effect on learning.

7.5 Decision Making

Good decision making is a necessary quality of high achievers in life but in the given sample high achievers did not agree with it. First reason may be the age of respondents and other is the culture and parental care they get. So they do not feel any immediate need of decision making by them when they are in any sort of trouble.

7.6 Self-Study

Majority of respondents had the habit of advance studying. They do not wait for their teacher to come and teach them. They start their studying their lessons and review when teacher explains. So they always remain one step ahead.

7.7 Parental Profession

As farming is the largest earning source in the sample area so it not surprising that high achievers' parents are also farmers. The land they cultivate may be owned, or they borrow someone's land for farming.

7.8 Birth Order

The family order of high academic achievers (what is the number of academic high achiever by birth among his/her own brothers/sister) has been an interesting finding, as a vast majority of high achievers were first child or the last child of their parents. The reason can be found in its cultural roots. Culturally in Siraike areas first child and the last child are the most important and the most loved children in the family. So whole family

supports them in their education and takes care of their needs as a result they become high achievers in their respective classes. Another interesting finding was that the majority high academic achievers' fathers' birth order is neither first nor the last. Most of them are in-between in their birth order. It reflects the problems they had faced at their time and they try at their level's best to remove all those troubles from the life of their children. So they properly take care of their children and support them for their academic performance.

7.9 Family System

Majority of high achievers belong to prevailing family system in the area i. e. joint family system. In Siraike area only urban areas there is nucleus family system so according to representation in the sample they have their part. So it is concluded that family system cannot be identified as a differential factor.

7.10 Religious Practices

Sample area is Muslim majority area, people generally are practicing Muslims. Respondents who think themselves as liberal they do not mean modern as European or western. Majority of high achievers belong to more practicing Muslim families but other high achievers also belong to religious families but they do not feel hard persuasion for performing religious duties.

7.11 Owing to Achievement

Owing of high achievement is given to the hard work not to prayers by the students. Although students gave due respect and weight to their teachers and the prayers of their parents and self yet the ultimate reason of getting position in the class is hard work despite having firm belief in Allah.

Hence it is concluded by this study that there are number of different factors which operate in Siraike area. Socially and culturally this area is hard working, caring, practical, religious, and having a great potential for nurturing the high achievers. The data of this study provide us some suggestions for betterment of the area as well as for further studies.

8. Recommendation

- The students may be given a sense of self-respect that motivates students for high academic achievement.
- The students may be given a sense of their responsibilities.
- Parents must take care of dressing of their children that contribute in good learning.
- Use of computers, dictionaries and library books contributes more in higher classes and in given sample of lower classes high achievers were not getting proper benefits of these facilities they may be trained for using the libraries, computers and dictionaries for their educational use as they have to proceed for higher classes.
- Self-study was found to be very effective for high achievement, so all students may be motivated for self-study.

- In the sample area birth order of students was found to be related to academic achievement where it is not a real physical or biological factor that may contribute to high academic achievement. It is only the customary factor which is based on disparity. It is customary in the sample area to give special attention to first and last child as generally birth rate is very high so all children are not able to get equal attention and care of their families. Similarly birth order of father is also related to higher academic achievement that is again a reactionary factor as they as a child could not receive proper attention and care so they give more attention to their children. Hence it is recommended that parents should treat equally to all of their children.
- Family system, religious practices and belief in hard work are positive factors which contribute to higher academic achievement, these practices should continue.
- Further experimental researches may be conducted to verify these factors.

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