

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS: IMPLEMENTATION OF A THEORETICAL MODEL OF PERSONAL CAUSATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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This paper is based on an interventional training programme, implemented among the high school students of Kerala state. The study, by implementing the personal causation training programme, intended to help students to originate their own behaviour and to seek their own goals and to improve their Academic Achievement, not being pushed around by others like a pawn. The Origin- Pawn dimension, drawn originally from motivational theories could potentially be applied to educational settings. If children could be encouraged to originate their own behaviour, then, it would seem, they could be more of origins in school. The students were exposed to the training programme developed by the researcher for about one month after a pre test on Origin belief. A post test was then conducted. Academic Achievement scores were collected from the school records. The results of the study showed that the students improved their Academic Achievement significantly with a significant improvement in Origin behaviour which is associated with taking responsibility to control their own learning behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

India is going through a transitional period. There is a fundamental shift from traditional outlook towards education. This change is not very unprecedented, considering the vast changes in the rubric of society, its polity and economics. This is a period of open entry to all. Everyone now stands a chance to contribute towards development by their own way of changing, irrespective of the caste, creed, religion, ethnicity and gender in various spheres of the society. This is by accepting responsibilities, aspiring to lead the society, being oriented, being focused and important of all, refusing to be pushed around by others. All this can be achieved by originating one's own behaviour that is by being an origin, not a pawn. In this background, it is important to train the youngsters to walk a very fine line to be origins, not pawns, to help them to take up independent learning strategies and ultimately lead them to achieve high in academics and other fields too.

The objective antecedents of behaviour of people may be external events, but to them they are the cause of behaviour when they decide to act from personal commitment. This is personal causation. Man strives to be a causal agent, to be the primary locus of causation for, or the origin of his behaviour, s/he strives for personal causation, (de Charms 1968, p.269). de Charms adopted the terms origins and pawns to distinguish between two motivational states that are basic to personal causation. An origin is a person who perceives behaviour as determined by one's own choosing, a pawn is a person who perceives behaviour as determined by external forces beyond control. Feeling like an origin has strong effects on behaviour as compared to feeling like a pawn. The distinction is continuous, not discrete. A person feels more like an origin under some circumstances and more like a pawn under other circumstances. Origins engage in activities they value and they believe that outcomes will be consistent with their expectations. In contrast, pawns believe that causes of behaviour are beyond their control and reside in external factors. Pawns typically have feelings of powerlessness and ineffectiveness. People typically are not wholly one or the other, but rather may shift their perceptions depending on the context. This point notwithstanding, de Charms's principles are highly germane to class rooms.

de Charms (1976) derived the origin-pawn dimension initially from motivation theory, but it seemed obvious that it could potentially be applied to educational problems. The child in the traditional classroom is most often a pawn to the dictates of the teacher. If the children could be encouraged to originate the learning behaviour, then, it would seem, they could be more of origins in school. People are not always origins, nor are they always pawns. Some people are more characteristically one or the other and hence the concept applies to personal predispositions. In addition, situational constraints may interact with personal predispositions. Situations may induce more origin or more pawn feelings (de Charms 1964). In some situations people are forced to act in predetermined ways by external circumstances. In other

situations people are free to choose for themselves and originate their own actions. Locus of control (internal/external) and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation are concepts used synonymously with origin-pawn concept.

Origin behaviour is a basic motivational concept. de Charms (1976) found in his studies that Origin behaviour in students lead to better Academic Achievement. The relationship between motivation (Intrinsic/Extrinsic) and Academic Achievement is well established (Wentzel 2002). Stipek & Weisz (1981) suggested that Perceived control of events (locus of control/origin behaviour) is one motivational variable that appears to affect children's Academic Achievement. Wolters (2004) in a study investigated how different components of intrinsic motivation were related to each other and to students' motivation, cognitive engagement, and Academic Achievement. Results of these studies imply that it is possible to improve the Academic Achievement of students by enhancing motivational orientations in students. The present study was conducted in order to improve the Academic Achievement of students using a personal causation training programme by helping them to originate their own behaviour.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the effectiveness of the training Programme on Origin behaviour of students
2. To find out the effectiveness of the training Programme on Academic Achievement of students.

HYPOTHESES

1. The training Programme does not have any significant effect on Origin behaviour of students.
2. The training Programme does not have any significant effect on the Academic Achievement of students.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

This is an experimental study conducted among class IX students of Kerala state to improve their origin behaviour through a personal causation training programme. The study intended to see the influence of the experiment on the level of Origin behaviour in students and thereby its influence on their Academic Achievement. The students were exposed to an Origin behaviour training programme (Personal Causation) developed by the researcher. The program was conducted in class room in integration with other regular subjects taught by the researcher. Stepwise random sampling method was used to select control and experimental group of students for the study. The two groups were matched on several criteria. Thirty five Class IX students of St. Thomas High School Koorachund, Calicut District, Kerala formed the Experimental group and thirty five Class IX students Perambra High School, Perambra, Calicut district, Kerala, formed the sample for Control group in the study. The Pre-tests on origin behaviour were given to the students of both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group was then exposed to the intervention programme followed by post-tests for both the groups on origin behaviour. The Academic Achievement scores of the students for different school subjects were collected from school records before commencement of the programme to form the pre-test and at the end of the programme to form the post-test. The programme was conducted for a period of one month.

TOOL

Origin Climate Questionnaire: The origin climate questionnaire developed by Koenings & Hess (1976) and widely used by de Charms (1968, 1976) in his projects was used in the study to measure the origin behaviour. The coefficient of reliability for Origin behaviour in the scale was found to be 0.868.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE ORIGIN TRAINING PROGRAMME

A brief sketch of the Origin training programme is given below with limited examples.

STRATEGIES

1. Model personal responsibility and believe you can develop it in students

The investigator always organised books and materials, cleaned the board, picked the trash up, and straightened her desks at the end of each class period. Debates were arranged to foster open and active group discussions. Free exchanges of ideas were encouraged. Each student's response was accepted as a valuable contribution.

Student-led conferences

Students did conferencing with their own parents, parents of class fellows and teachers. They prepared for the conference well in advance.

Student-led classes

Students engaged the classes with topics of their own choice.

2. Provide students with options to choose from and have them consider the consequences of each choice

After each test the investigator conducted, the low scored papers were selected and strategies were chalked out to improve the result by consulting the students. The investigator discussed various ways to handle the situation and what the consequence of each solution could be.

3. Foster internal attributions. Do not allow students to blame others for their failures

The investigator met the students individually to go over the result of each test conducted. While looking at each section of the test,

she discussed with the students why they felt they had done well or poorly and what they could have done differently to have prepared and performed better.

4. Have students set goals, evaluate their progress periodically, and decide if a change in strategy is necessary

The students identified the areas to be worked on from the previous units of each subject and the new goals for the current topic. They were required to complete an individual checklist, that included the progress they were making and how well they were doing with the topics.

The investigator reviewed the checklists, made comments related to progress, and set up individual meeting with students who were having difficulty and need additional assistance or a change in activities. The students were encouraged to make suggestions for better strategies for improvement. The investigator assisted them to make decisions based on various learning strategies.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Origin Behaviour

The hypothesis, stating that the training Programme does not have any significant effect on the origin behaviour of Class IX students, has been tested and the results are presented in [table I](#).

Table I

Significance of 't' between experimental and control groups on pre-test and post-test with respect to Origin behaviour

Test	Group	AM	SD	N	t	Sig.
Pre-test	Experimental	74.09	8.12	35	1.128	0.002
	Control	81.11	10.26	35		
Post-test	Experimental	90.14	9.48	35	4.006	0.000
	Control	81.03	9.56	35		

The value of 't' between experimental and control groups on

post-test is significant and hence the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the students of experimental group differ significantly from the students of control group in post-tests of Origin concept. The mean value of experimental group (90.14) is found superior to the mean value of control group (81.03) on post-test of Origin concept. From this it may be inferred that experimental group improved

their Origin behaviour compared to the control group after exposure to the origin training Programme. This finding is in conformity with de Charms (1976) who found that the students demonstrated significant increases in Origin behaviour as a consequence of the training programme. It is clear from this study that the origin behaviour or intrinsic motivation in students can be improved by carefully introducing personal causation training programmes in classroom. This can be done in integration with the regular school subjects or as a separate programme. Motivational concepts were introduced as a part of the regular teaching in this study.

Academic Achievement

The results of the test of the hypothesis, "The training Programme does not have any significant effect on the Academic Achievement of Class IX students" are presented in table II.

Table II

Significance of • 't' between experimental and control groups on pre-test and post-test with respect to Academic Achievement

Test	Group	AM	SD	N	t	Sig.	Pre-test	Experimental	340.22
93.23	35	0.132	0.87				Control	350.23	116.44
Experimental	359.91	95.97	35	1.986		0.05	Control		321.25
112.07	35								

The • 't' value between the experimental and control groups in post-test is significant and hence the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there exists a significant difference between the experimental and control groups for the post-test on Academic Achievement. On

observing the means it is found that the mean value of experimental group is higher than that of control group. This implies that the students of experimental group were better than their counterparts in control group in their Academic Achievement.

The • 't' value for the pre-test is not significant which makes it clear that there is no significant difference between the experimental and control group in pre-test. From these results, it is evident that there was no difference between experimental and control group in Academic Achievement before experimental treatment. At the entry level, the students of both the groups were almost similar in their Academic Achievement. After exposing the experimental group to the Origin training Programme, a difference appeared between the groups and the supremacy of experimental group is evident on Academic Achievement. Hence, it may be inferred that the Origin training Programme, had a significant effect on Academic Achievement of students. This finding is in conformity with the experimental findings of de Charms (1976), Kolb (1965), Mehta (1969) and Desai (1970) who found that their experimental treatments especially on enhancing the motivation yielded an improvement in Academic Achievement of students. Wentzel (1989) documented that high achieving high school students pursue cognitive and task related goals. It is to be noted here that the personal causation training programme was embedded in regular teaching in the classroom. A well planned training in motivational concepts in classroom can improve Academic Achievement in students as indicated by this study by helping them to take responsibility and originate their own behaviour.

DISCUSSION

The Origin Pawn distinction is often seen as synonymous with internal /external locus of control and intrinsic/ extrinsic motivation (de Charms 1976) .Whenever a person experiences the self to be the locus of causality for own behaviour (feelings of origin), the person is considered to be intrinsically motivated. In the present

study, the Personal causation training helped the students in taking personal responsibility and they improved their Academic Achievement when embedded in subject matter. An attribution training conducted by Perry, Hechter, Menec & Weinberg (1990) suggest that cognitive factors influencing students' perceived control (e.g., internal/external locus) must be taken into

consideration when remedial interventions for Academic Achievement are developed. This study confirms the results of the present study. Wentzel (2002) found that social and task-related goal pursuit contributing to personal locus of control independently contributes to Academic Achievement. Garrison & Broussard (2004) found in their study that higher levels of mastery motivation and judgment motivation were related to Academic Achievement in elementary school children. The findings from the current study were consistent with previous researches in that the relationship between motivation and academic success has been well established. It is to be noted here that in the present study, the personal causation training was given in integration with the Academic subjects. Models need to be incorporated to real classroom activities to help the students to improve their motivation and Academic Achievement. The school systems that stress competitive achievement in their pupils and base teacher evaluation entirely on the current popular accountability may be overlooking one of the most important sources of motivation, the feeling of personal causation that derives from internally imposed personal responsibility. These training programmes are not an end in itself. Students need to be continuously motivated and kept on the track to be more focused on their goals to contribute towards national development.

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