Impact of Hardiness on Academic Performance of College Students

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Abstract

Young adulthood is a stage of significance in the developmental cycle of each human being. An important role is played by the teachers and peers in the overall personality development of individuals. Hardiness is a personality style that shows commitment, control and challenge. Academic performance refers to the degree of success or failure attained in some specific area concerning scholastic. This study examines the effect of hardiness on academic performance of college students. Six hundred undergraduate and graduate students were sampled and assessed. The hypothesis is that those who are hardier show better in academics. This is a factorial design and F Ratio and Person’s product moment correlation has been used. For this purpose the tool used is SPHS by A.K. Singh (2005) and for the academic scores, marks in the class tests and assignments given by teachers are taken. Results showed that hardy students performed well in academics.

Key words: hardiness, academic performance, college students.

INTRODUCTION

Today, it is a critical youth who, having considerably increased its cultural assets, is logically led to think more, to reflect, to judge; it is a demanding youth who, though it may sometimes exaggerate and succumb to personal selfishness, wants and claims honesty, truthfulness, justice and consistency; it is a youth that suffers from the contradictory nature of the ideologies that impinge upon it, and from the continual emptying of ideals which it witnesses; it is a questioning youth who wants to account for what is happening, who looks for the meaning of its own life and the significance of the history of man and of the whole universe, who invokes certainty and clarity on its own destiny and with regard to its own conduct; it is a youth anxious for truth, ideals to live, responsibility, moral beauty, innocence and joy. With such bent of mind, driving forces and orientations youth interacts with parents and significant others and develops his unique personality.

According to the development theory given by Arnett (2000), 18 to 25 years of age determines the “beginning of adulthood” instead of the adolescence or adulthood. And, this period is somewhat different from the latter two. Similar to childhood and adolescence, “beginning of adulthood” is
also a part of ever moving, changeable and unstable life (Arnett, 2000).

HARDINESS

Considerable attention has been given to the construct of hardiness as an inner resource that may moderate the effect of stress on physical and mental health. Hardiness is a personality style that shows commitment, control and challenge. The conceptualization of hardiness as a source of resilience to unpleasant effects to stressful life events on health derives from existential personality theory (Kobasa & Maddi, 1977).

Kobasa gave three basic dimensions of hardy personality, which are, commitment, control and challenge. Commitment is a “tendency to involve oneself in (rather than experience alienation from) whatever one is doing or encounters” (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982). Control is a “tendency to feel and act as if one is influential (rather than helpless) in the face of the varied contingencies of life” (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982). Challenge is a “belief that change rather than stability is normal in life and that the anticipation of changes are interesting incentives to growth rather than threats to security” (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982). Hardy persons possess a strong sense of all three dimension, their day to day work is more fun and absorbing (i.e., commitment), which is their own choice (i.e., control), and a necessary learning agent (i.e., challenge; Maddi, Khoshaba, & Pammeter, 1999). People with hardy personality don’t fear commitment as they believe that whatever they do they will have full control over the situations or events and a hardy person is well prepared for whichever change occurs due to this committing and controlling of life events. People with hardy personality have a sense of self, internal locus of control, propose in life, better coping style; they are stress resistant, very tough, motivated and get easily involved with family and friends.

College students are generally not able to keep a balance between their personal and college life. When they are unable to handle any critical situation it affects their health, happiness, behavior and even the academic performance. Researches on resilience and hardiness have focused on college or university students populations (McHenry, 1993), young elementary students (Borman & Overman, 2004) and reported that high hardy students cope up well, have less stress and show better academic performance (Lindberg et al., 2001; Mathis & Lecci, 1999). For example, various researches have reported that the academic performance and stress level of the college students directly depend upon how they evaluate their situational expectations, emotional response and their reaction towards its evaluation (Tomaka, Blascovich, Kelsey, & Leitten, 1993; Tomaka, Blascovich, Kibler, & Ernst, 1997).

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Academic performance refers to the degree or level of success or failure attained in some specific area concerning scholastic or academic work. In general, it refers to the scores obtained in the annual examination. It is measured and assessed by achievement tests and compared to the set norms to evaluate an individual’s performance. These
tests may be either standard or made scholastic. If the individual performs below his tested capacity or not up to what he is capable of achieving, he is labeled as ‘under achiever’. Gowan (1960) and Mohan (1972) have emphasized that an under-achiever is one whose academic performance falls below the normative range of his potentialities. The high or over-achiever is one whose academic achievement surpasses his abilities.

According to Rogers (1981), a normal achiever is one who accomplishes what may generally be expected of him or her for his or her age. Over-achiever is one who accomplishes more than his or her abilities would seem to justify and under-achiever is one who accomplishes less than his or her abilities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It has been a trend now days that college/university is full of different kind of students (particularly in age) and show an adjoining interest in factors that helps in predicting academic achievement. Sheard and Golby (2006) conducted a correlational study. The aim of their study was ‘to find out the hardiness components that would explain variation in the academic performance of sport and exercise undergraduate students.’ The sample was 134 second year university students. The academic performance of the students was seen at the end of the final year. These students undoubtedly showed academic achievement. Hence, even in this study the total hardiness showed a significant relationship with academic achievement/success.

Sheard (2009) conducted a study for 2-year using correlation as the measure of study and university students as the sample of study. The aim of the study was to find out whether the demographic variables (like age, gender) and hardiness helps in predicting the academic success of the students by checking the university final degree grade point average (GPA) and final-year dissertation mark. Results showed that mature-age students achieved higher final degree GPA compared to young undergraduates. Students who reported a significantly higher mean score on hardiness commitment showed significant positive correlation with academic achievement. The final marks of the students seemed to be significantly correlated with hardiness (commitment). In other words, harder the student better will be the academic performance.

A study by Hauser and Bowlds (1990) investigated the relationships between hardiness, perceived stress, depression, and academic performance. A positive relationship was found between hardiness and academic performance; and negative relationship was found between hardiness and stress. Further a negative relation was found between stress and academic performance mediated by depression.

The above review suggests that academic performance doesn’t seem to be purely dependent on academic preparation but even with the type of personality an individual has.
HYPOTHESIS
When a problem has been stated, a tentative solution in the form of a testable proposition is offered by the investigator. This testable proposition is called a hypothesis. After reviewing the available literature and identifying the gaps, present study attempts to test that those students, who show hardy personality, perform better in academics.

METHODOLOGY
Sample: college students
Sample size: 600 (300 males, 300 females)
Sampling technique: incidental sampling
Statistical technique: One way analysis of variance and Pearson’s product moment correlation
Research design: factorial

Procedure for Data Collection: The present research was conducted to study the impact of hardiness on academic performance of college students. For this purpose, a sample of 600 students (300 boys and 300 girls) was taken from different colleges and universities of Punjab and Rajasthan. The tool of hardiness was given to the subjects along with the instructions and their marks were taken to score their academic performance. Subjects were not forced to do the tests only the willing subjects could participate. The subjects were told that there is no right or wrong responses and their identity will not be revealed. After conducting the tests the scoring was done and results were discussed.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION
Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation were used to check the hypotheses that hardiness is positively related to academic performance of college students. The mean value of academic performance in relation to high hardiness comes out to be 67.28 whereas, the mean value of academic performance in relation to low hardiness comes out to be 62.57. And again large significant difference (p<0.01) was seen between both the Hardiness and Academic Performance. 0.201 was the correlation value (r). This shows that high hardy students perform better in academics as compare to low hardy students.

Many hardiness factors have found to be related to the academic success of college students. In the present study, commitment, control and challenge are positively related to the academic performance of the students. Sheard and Golby (2006); Sheard (2009) found the similar results. Present study depicts that those students who are more committed to their work and are goal focused, show better academic performance. Those students, who have the tendency to influence others and are self motivating, achieve great success in academics. Numbers of empirical studies have demonstrated the association between social performance and academic achievement (e.g., Green, 1980; Havighurst et al. 1962; Wentzel and Asher, 1995). It has been observed that children who exhibit hardiness shall perform better in academic areas in comparison to children who are disruptive and aggressive. Such children are likely to perform poor in the field of academics. Dishion, 1990; Green (1980); Masten and Reed (2005); Wentzel & Asher (1995) also found similar results. Tendencies of social withdrawal and
inhibition have also found to be associated with academic difficulties. Children who are socially inhibited and shy are likely to perform poorer in school that their counterparts who are less inhibited. The movement from high school to college is critical and challenging factors in the development of young adults and many students are not well prepared for this psychological, environmental and academic transition. A fresher in college is faced with challenge of adapting to living away from family and taking self responsibility for tasks of daily living and developing a fresh social relationships with fellow students and academic guides. Francis, McDaniel, and Doyle (1987); Green (1980); Henton, Lamke, Murphy, and Haynes (1980) and Wentzel (1991) reported similar results in their studies.

REFERENCES


