

EFFECT OF CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING APPROACH IN SOCIAL STUDIES ON ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION

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Abstract

Co-operative learning is a pedagogical practice that promotes socialization and learning across different curriculum areas and classroom settings. However, while the benefits of implementing co-operative learning are widely acknowledged, many schools and teachers still experience difficulties in knowing how to embed this practice into their teaching curriculum. Placing students in groups and expecting them to co-operate will not necessarily promote co-operative learning. It is only when members understand that they are dependent on each other and cannot succeed unless others do that they learn to co-ordinate their efforts and actively work together. Group cohesion develops as a direct consequence of members' perceptions of their interdependence and their willingness to facilitate and encourage each other's learning and enhancing the achievement motivation. In the present study, pre-test and post-test experimental design was used to assess the effectiveness of cooperative learning approach in social studies on the achievement motivation of secondary school students. A sample of 60 students randomly selected from one of the government schools of Chandigarh was assigned into control and experimental groups by equating them on the basis of their pre-test scores. After the intervention, the subjects of control group revealed no significant improvement in the percent scores of Achievement Motivation, the t-value being 0.52 which is not significant at 0.05 level, ($P>0.05$). However, the subjects of experimental group revealed a highly significant improvement in mean percent scores of Achievement Motivation, as evident from the t-value of 3.21 which is significant at 0.01 level ($P<0.01$). Findings of this study lead one to conclude that while linking group members together so that they experience task and goal inter-dependence which is a key element of successful co-operative learning, ensuring that they are trained in the interpersonal and small group skills needed to promote positive interactions and hence achieve motivation.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning Approach, Achievement Motivation, Social Studies

Introduction

Learning is about change which is brought about by developing a new skill, understanding a scientific law or changing an attitude. It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, awareness, values, ideas and feelings or an increase in the capacity to reflect. Learning is a process of an active engagement with experience. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more. There are many different ways of learning; teaching is only one of them.

In the educational process, students should be offered a wide variety of ways to learn, among which they could choose or with which they could experiment. They do not have to learn different things in the same way. They should learn at a very early stage of "schooling" that learning how to learn is largely their responsibility. Learning is only possible when students are motivated to do so because without motivation, they may

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not learn all the things properly. One cannot motivate others if one is not self-motivated (Ackoff & Greenberg, 2016).

Motivation in education means inculcating and stimulating interest in studies and other such activities among pupil. In an educational programme, the teaching learning process becomes more effective with the help of motivation. Motivation to achieve is instigated when an individual knows that one should be responsible for the outcome of some venture, when individual anticipates explicit knowledge of results that will define the success or failure and when there is some degree of risk which means some uncertainty about outcome of an individual's effort. Motivation helps the students in learning and improves their achievements (Irvin & Miltzer, 2007).

McClelland (1961) defined achievement motivation as a basic desire to succeed and to get a task completed as effectively as possible. He further explained that people with strong need for achievement tend to be characterized by acceptance of personal responsibility, being goal-oriented by setting moderate realistic and attainable goal, seeking challenges and excellence and they are motivated to do better jobs, accomplish tasks and work hard.

Achievement motivation helps in teaching learning process also. It helps the students and teachers to set their goals according to the classroom environment. Many teaching learning approaches help students to improve achievement motivation among them. Cooperative learning is an educational approach which aims to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences.

Co-operative learning is well recognized as a pedagogical practice that promotes learning, higher level thinking, social behavior and a greater understanding of children with diverse learning, social and adjustment needs (Cohen, 1994). There is much more to cooperative learning than merely arranging students into groups and it has been described as structuring positive inter-dependence. Students must work in groups to complete tasks collectively toward academic goals.

Unlike individual learning, which can be competitive in nature, students learning cooperatively can capitalize on one another's resources and skills by asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work, etc. Furthermore, the teacher's role changes from giving information to facilitating students' learning. Everyone succeeds when the group succeeds. Ross and Smyth (1995) describe successful cooperative learning tasks as intellectually demanding, creative, open-ended and involve higher order thinking tasks.

Researches on cooperative learning have demonstrated overwhelmingly positive results and confirmed that cooperative learning modes are cross-curricular. Cooperative learning requires students to engage in group activities that enhance learning and adds other important dimensions. The positive outcomes include academic gains, improved race relations and increased personal and social development.

On the contrary, in the traditional approaches of teaching social studies, students feel monotonous during the teaching learning process. They don't take part in this subject actively because they are inattentive and dull. To make this subject interesting and to motivate students, teachers need to use some innovative approaches. Co-operative learning approach provides an ideal vehicle for teachers to structure the environment for successful peer interactions and to provide students with the coaching and support they need to develop their social and emotional skills and understanding. Through Cooperative learning approach, teachers will increase the level of Achievement

Motivation among the students studying Social Studies. During this process, students may use their thinking, communication and information sharing skills to increase their contents knowledge as well as their interpersonal skills. So, investigator felt motivated to use this approach which appears to be a promising method by which social studies teachers can simultaneously achieve academic, achievement motivation and socio-moral objectives.

Objectives of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- To develop and teach modules of Social Studies to secondary school students using Co-operative Learning Approach.
- To study the achievement motivation of secondary school students.
- To see the effect of Cooperative Learning Approach in Social Studies on Achievement Motivation of students.

Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were drawn:-

- There is no significant difference in Achievement Motivation of students of control and experimental group.
- There is no significant effect of Cooperative Learning Approach in Social Studies on achievement motivation of secondary school students.

Design of the Study

Pre-test and post-test experimental design was used in the present study to assess the effectiveness of cooperative learning approach in social studies on the achievement motivation of secondary school students.

Sample of the Study

In the present study, one of the government schools of the Chandigarh Administration, namely Government Model High School, Sector 20-D, Chandigarh was randomly selected. There were 100 students in class IX. From those 100 students, investigator selected 60 students randomly. Then, pre-test of Achievement Motivation was conducted on the selected sample of 60 students. On the basis of scoring of the pre-test, investigator equated the two groups of 30 each i.e. Experimental and Control groups. Then, the intervention imparted modules based on Co-operative learning approach in social studies to the subjects of experimental group and control group was taught the same content by traditional method. After the intervention, post-test of Achievement Motivation was administered again on the subjects of both the control and experimental groups.

Tools Used

Following tools were used in the present study:

- 1) Deo-Mohan Achievement Motivation (n-Ach) scale by Deo and Mohan (2002).
- 2) Self-design Modules of Social Studies using Co-operative Learning Approach.

Procedure of Data Collection

The study was conducted on 60 students of Government Model High School, Sector 20-D, Chandigarh. The data from the selected sample was collected personally by the investigator after taking the permission from the principal of the school.

Before conducting the experiment, sympathetic and friendly attitude was adopted to establish rapport with them. The subjects were made to understand about the

significance of the study and ensured that the test will be used only for research purpose and not to evaluate their performance. Students were also assured of the confidentiality of the information given by them. They were asked to be honest and free while answering the test.

For data collection, following steps was followed:

Step 1:- Pre-test: Achievement Motivation test was administered on the students of both the control and experimental groups .i.e. taught through modules based on Co-operative learning approach and the group taught through traditional teaching approach.

Step 2:- Intervention: At this stage, teaching was done through 15 modules based on Co-operative learning approach to the subjects of experimental group, on the topics taken from C.B.S.E affiliated syllabus of Social Studies textbook for class IX. At the same time, subjects of control group were taught through traditional teaching approach. This process continued for one month in which alternatively classes were taken by the investigator for both the groups.

Step 3:-Post-test: After one month of intervention, post-test on Achievement Motivation was administered on the students of both the control and experimental groups .i.e. taught through cooperative learning approach and the group taught through traditional teaching approach.

Step 4:- After that, scoring was done. Raw data was subjected to statistical analysis to draw the inferences.

Statistical Techniques

The following statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data:

1. Descriptive statistical measures such as mean, median and standard deviation were computed in both the groups separately.
2. t-values were computed to determine the significance of difference between the mean percent scores of achievement motivation in group taught through Co-operative learning approach and group taught through traditional teaching approach.

Results & Discussion

Table 1

Showing Measures of Central Tendencies of Percent Scores of Achievement Motivation of Subjects of Control and Experimental Groups

| Measures of Central Tendencies | Control Group (n=30) | | Experimental Group (n=30) | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| | Pre-test (n=30) | Post-test (n=30) | Pre-Test (n=30) | Post-test (n=30) |
| Minimum | 49.00 | 50.00 | 44.00 | 55.00 |
| Maximum | 78.50 | 75.00 | 78.50 | 84.00 |
| Range | 29.50 | 25.00 | 34.50 | 29.00 |
| Mean | 62.47 | 63.45 | 62.78 | 70.23 |
| Standard Deviation | 7.93 | 7.87 | 9.36 | 8.20 |
| t-Value | 0.52# | | 3.21** | |

**P<0.01

Table 1 shows the measures of central tendencies of scores of Achievement Motivation of subjects of control and experimental group. During the Pre-test, there was no significant difference in the mean percent scores of Achievement Motivation of subjects of control and experimental group, the t- value being 0.21 which is not significant at 0.05 level ($P>0.05$).

As seen in the table, the subjects of control group revealed no significant improvement in the mean percent scores of Achievement Motivation, the t-value being 0.52 which is not significant at 0.05 level, ($P>0.05$). Since the subjects of control group were taught through traditional approach, whatever the marginal improvement mean percent scores of Achievement Motivation was there that could be attributed to sharing of information off- campus, their previous knowledge and information gathered from internet, visit to library regularly, influenced by other teachers', information given in traditional classroom, read another supported books of social studies, help given by parents, their tuition teachers' told them about the new concepts, they might have read newspapers, magazines and journals for new information, which might have resulted in marginal increase in mean percent scores of Achievement Motivation of subjects of control group.

So far as the subjects of experimental group were concerned, a significant improvement in mean percent scores of Achievement Motivation was observed, as evident from the t-value of 3.21 which is significant at 0.01 level, ($P<0.01$). The probable reasons for this significant difference could be the effect of intervention, comprising of imparted modules based on Co-operative Learning Approach, which lead to an increase in their motivation level, increasing interest in subject like social studies, actively listening to each other during group discussions; considering the other person's perspective on issues; stating ideas freely without fear of derogatory comments; being responsible for one's own behavior; constructively critiquing the ideas presented, taking turns to present ideas and share resources; sharing tasks equitably among group members; resolving differences of opinion and conflict; ensuring decisions that affect the group are decided democratically.

In a study that examined the effect of training in interpersonal and small group skills on children's interactions and achievement during small group work, Gillies and Ashman (1996) found that the children who were trained to co-operate and help each other used language which was more inclusive of others and gave more detailed explanations to assist each other than children who had not received explicit training in these skills. Some of the benefits that were evident in the children from the trained groups were increased autonomy and more successful learning outcomes.

Another study by Johnson & Johnson (1987) also revealed that subjects learned to interact appropriately with each other; they felt more supported in their endeavors and were more willing to work together on their problem-solving activities. Certainly, social support is related to achievement, successful problem-solving, satisfaction, persistence on challenging tasks, more appropriate ways of seeking assistance and greater compliance with group routines and expectations.

Social support tends to increase group cohesion and through group norms, affects the pressure to be productive (Deutsch, 1949). Children perform more effectively in small groups (e.g. peer tutoring and group investigation) than they do when they work in traditional whole class settings.

Placing students in groups and expecting them to work together will not necessarily promote co-operative learning. Some children will defer to the more able children in

the group who may take over the important roles in ways that benefit them at the expense of other group members. Similarly, other students will be inclined to leave the work to others while they exercise only token commitment to the task. In co-operative learning, each student is required not only to complete their part of the work but to ensure that others do likewise. The technical term for this dual responsibility is 'positive interdependence' and it is the most important element of co-operative learning (Deutsch, 1949).

Positive interdependence exists when students perceive that they cannot succeed unless others do and they must learn to co-ordinate their efforts to ensure that this occurs. Cohesiveness develops in the group as a direct result of the perception of goal interdependence and the perceived interdependence among group members (Deutsch, 1949). It is this sense of commitment to each other that helps children to feel accountable for their efforts. In fact, the more students perceive that they are linked together, the more they feel personally responsible for contributing to the collective effort of the group.

Thus, the importance of co-operative learning approach in contrast to the traditional classroom, as an effective approach to teaching cannot be undermined. Co-operative learning is well recognized as a pedagogical practice that promotes learning, higher level thinking, pro-social behaviour and a greater understanding of children with diverse learning, social and adjustment needs. Children co-operate and work better together when they have been taught the interpersonal and small group skills needed to facilitate interaction and involvement with each other. Another important aspect of successful co-operative group work includes ensuring that group members understand that they are each responsible for contributing to the group's task or goal. Contributions include encouraging others, suggesting ideas and actively promoting the group's efforts. Being willing to help group members reflect on their achievements and evaluate what they need to do as a group is also an important part of successful co-operative learning.

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