CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY
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In a higher learning institution where the demands placed on students are based on deadlines and pressures for excelling in tests or examination, the students are likely to be victims of stress. Academic Stress can have both positive and negative consequences, if not well managed. It is important that students should learn and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will in turn make them less stressful. Students who do well in the classroom show a positive self evaluation of their academic status at school and sense of control over their academic success and failure. These students are high on resilience and excel in academics despite stressful events and conditions. Resilience is a dynamic process involving an interaction between both risk and protective processes, internal and external to the individual, that act to modify the effects of an adverse life events. The term resilience has been described as a substance of elastic qualities, the capacity for successful adaptation to the changing environment (Darwin, 1898; Cicchetti & Cohen, 1995), and the character of hardiness invulnerability. Fonagy, Steele, Higgitt and Target (1994) describe resilience as “normal development under difficult conditions”. Martin (2001) has developed a model of motivation – the student motivation wheel that reflects the thoughts, feelings and behaviors underpinning academic engagement at school. He has identified four factors that predict academic resilience, viz., Self-belief, Perceived Control, Persistence and Low Anxiety. Self-belief refers to student’s belief and confidence in their ability to understand or to do well in their academic assignment, to meet challenges they face and to perform to the best of their ability. Perceived control refers to the student’s perception of control over their academic performance. Students with strong sense of perceived control excel in academics than those who do not hold such beliefs. Persistence refers to the extent to which students keep trying to work out an answer or to understand a problem even when that problem is difficult or is challenging. Anxiety is regarded as a normal
response to the pressures of school. A moderate amount of anxiety helps academic performance but higher levels of anxiety can adversely affect performance on tests, as well. Thus, students high on self-belief, perceived control, persistence and low on anxiety are more academically resilient. Academically successful students appear to have a supportive network of family members, friends and teachers whom they rely in difficult or stressful situations. Along with being resilient, the tendency of a student to explain academic success and failure also affect his academic performance. Academic attribution is the explanation that an individual gives to explain the reasons for his academic performance at school. Functional attributional style helps a student to believe his capabilities and perceive a sense of control in the events related to academics. Dysfunctional attributional style works as a hindrance in successful academic performance. Students with such a style make internal, stable, and global attributions for failure outcomes. This, in turn, makes hope for future success less likely. Thus, students should be motivated to adapt functional attribution style, so that they feel a sense of internal control and see the root cause of problem in unstable and controllable conditions. Various theories have been offered to explain attributions in different domains. Weiner (1979) was the first to extend attribution theory to the domain of academic achievement. He identified ability, effort, and luck and task difficulty as the four major reasons that students are likely to use in explaining academic success and failures. In his theory of learned helplessness Seligman (1967) emphasized on the debilitating effects of lack of control over negative outcomes. He argued that to understand human reactions to negative events is the way to explain the causes of these events. Further Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy theory points to the importance of people’s beliefs about the likelihood that they can perform desired behavior. Self-efficacy beliefs are related to attributions, because people who attribute success to internal, stable factors (ability) experience greater self-efficacy than people who attribute their success to external, unstable factors (luck). Thus, Attributions are powerful determinants of students learning achievement and self-esteem.
Researches have shown that dysfunctional attributions can be modified with the help of Reattribution training. It helps students reframe the way they think about success and failure by encouraging them to take responsibility for academic outcome. The main objective of reattribution training is to replace maladaptive, self-defeating attribution with adaptive self-helping attribution.

The present study aimed at providing Reattribution training to students who are high on academic stress and low on academic resilience. RAT was designed to enhance academic resilience of students.

**The main objectives of the present study were**

1. To assess the effect of attribution style on academic resilience (self-belief, perceived control, persistence & anxiety) among adolescents.
2. To assess the effect of attribution style on academic stress among adolescents.
3. To study the effect of Reattribution training (RAT) on academic attributional style of adolescents.
4. To study the effect of RAT on academic stress of adolescents.
5. To study the effect of RAT on self-belief of adolescents.
6. To study the effect of RAT on perceived control of adolescents.
7. To study the effect of RAT on persistence of adolescents.
8. To study the effect of RAT on anxiety of adolescents.

**The following hypotheses were proposed**

1. Attribution style of adolescents with low academic resilience would be dysfunctional as compared to those with high academic resilience.

2. Attribution style of adolescent with high academic stress would be dysfunctional as compared to those with low academic stress.

3. RAT would enhance attribution style of adolescents.
4. RAT would reduce academic stress of adolescents.
5. RAT would enhance self-belief of adolescents.
6. RAT would enhance perceived control of adolescents.
7. RAT would enhance persistence of adolescents.
8. RAT would reduce anxiety of adolescents.
9. Post intervention scores on attribution style (locus of control, Personal control & stability) and academic resilience (Self-belief, Perceived control and Persistence) among adolescents in experimental group would be significantly higher than their pre-intervention scores.
10. Post intervention scores on anxiety and academic stress among adolescents in experimental group would be significantly less than their pre-intervention scores.
Method
Sample:

The sample for the present study consisted of high school boys and girls studying in 9th and 10th class. The participants were drawn randomly from various secondary schools situated in Fatehgarh Sahib, Ludhiana and Patiala cities. The age range of the participants was from 13-16 years. Participants who were low on academic resilience (low on self-belief, persistence, perceived control and high on anxiety), high on academic stress and had dysfunctional academic attribution style were screened in for the present study. These participants were then randomly assigned to experimental (N=100) and control group (N=100). The pre-intervention scores of participants were obtained for all the aforementioned variables. The participants in experimental group and control group were matched as they didn’t differ significantly on academic resilience. Experimental group was given four sessions of reattribution training. To engage the participants of control group issues like family and parenting styles were discussed with them. After the intervention, all the participants (both in experimental and control groups) were administered academic resilience scale, academic stress and academic attribution style questionnaire. One way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied to analyze the significance of difference between experimental and control group collectively on all the dependent variables. Further a series of univariate analysis of variance was applied to analyze the significance of difference between experimental and control group on all dependent measures for combined samples.

Results of the study show that reattribution training was effective in enhancing academic resilience, academic attribution style and decreasing academic stress among the participants.
Following Tools were used in the present study:

1. Academic resilience scale: The subscales of the Student Motivation Scale – Martin (2001) were used to assess self belief, perceived control, anxiety & persistence of high school students.


Main findings of the study were as follows:

- Adolescents with low academic resilience showed dysfunctional attribution style as compared to adolescents with high academic resilience.

- Adolescents with high academic stress showed dysfunctional attribution style as compared to adolescents with low academic stress.

- Adolescents in experimental group showed functional attributional style after intervention as compared to adolescents in control group.

- Adolescents in experimental group showed less academic stress after intervention as compared to adolescents in control group.

- Adolescents in experimental group showed higher self-belief after intervention than adolescents in control group.

- Adolescents in experimental group showed more perceived control after intervention than adolescents in control group.

- Adolescents in experimental group showed more persistence after intervention than adolescents in control group.

- Adolescents in experimental group exhibited less anxiety after intervention than adolescents in control group.
• Post- Intervention scores of adolescents in experimental group were high for functional attribution style as compared to pre-intervention scores.

• Post- Intervention scores of adolescents in experimental group were low for academic stress than their pre-intervention scores.

• Post- Intervention scores of adolescents in experimental group were high for self-belief, persistence and perceived control than their pre-intervention scores. However the difference between pre-post intervention scores on persistence was not found to be significant.

• Post- Intervention scores of adolescents in experimental group were low for anxiety than their pre-intervention scores.

Thus it can be inferred that adolescents in experimental group benefitted from RAT. Their level of self belief and persistence improved after intervention. RAT was also effective in reducing the participant’s level of anxiety and academic stress. The attributional style of the participants became functional after RAT.

The findings have been discussed within the framework of Weimer’s theory of attribution, Abramson reformulated learned helplessness model, Bandura’s theory of self efficacy and other previous researches. RAT was effective in changing the participant’s cognitions about their academic success and failure. Making internal, stable and controllable attributions for success helps an individual to be hopeful regarding future success. Similarly, attributing failure to factors like lack of effort (internal, unstable, specific and controllable) makes an individual believe that he can come across success in future by putting in more efforts. This determines one’s affect state (Weiner, 1979). Functional attributions enable an individual to perceive control in the events that affect academic outcomes (Perry & Weinberg, 1993). Greater sense of perceived control is related to higher sense of belief in one’s own capabilities which is further related to better performance.
The findings are in line with previous researches that have successfully provided RAT to high school and college students. These researchers have successfully modified maladaptive cognitions of students with dysfunctional attributional style resulting in reduced academic stress and enhanced academic performance. The findings of the present study have significant implications for counseling in the area of academics and problems of adolescents. Individual with dysfunctional attributional style hold themselves responsible for academic failure and doubt their capabilities to deal with adverse circumstances. Changing attributional style can help such individuals to conquer self-defeating thought patterns. These findings can work as guidelines for teachers and counselors for helping students with dysfunctional attributional style to overcome maladaptive cognitions and restructure the same. This can enable them to deal with academic failure more effectively and become resilient in the academic domain.