ABSTRACT

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.

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 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.

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.