Summary, Conclusions and Implications

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to reduce academic stress and improve academic achievement among rural SC/ST school students by implementing stress reduction intervention programs. Stress among school has various ill effects which will hinder their academic performance. The stress reduction intervention implemented in this study will enhance their Text anxiety, self-esteem and academic achievement among the rural students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i.   To determine whether the Integrated Intervention strategy targeted at the SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant gain in their academic achievement.

ii.   To determine whether the Integrated Intervention targeted at SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant decrease in their Text anxiety.

iii. To determine whether the Integrated Intervention strategy targeted at the SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant gain in their Self Esteem.

iv.   To determine whether the Integrated Intervention targeted at SC & ST youth students facilitate to have a significant decrease in their Academic Stress.

HYPOTHESES

1. The Experimental group will have a positive effect on academic achievement after the intervention among SC/ST youth than the control group.

2. The Experimental group will have a negative effect on academic stress after the intervention among SC/ST youth than the control group.

3. The Experimental group will have a negative effect on test anxiety after the intervention among SC/ST youth than the control group.

4. The Experimental group will have a positive effect on self – esteem after the intervention among SC/ST youth than the control group.

5. Academic achievement will have a negative relationship with academic stress and test anxiety among SC/ST youth.

6. Academic achievement will have a positive relationship with self-esteem among SC/ST youth.

7. Academic stress will have a positive relationship with test anxiety among SC/ST youth.

8. Academic stress will have a negative relationship with self-esteem among SC/ST youth.

9. There will be negative relationship between test anxiety and self-esteem among SC/ST youth.

10. There will be significant gender difference in academic achievement, academic stress, test anxiety and self-esteem among SC/ST youth.

11. There will be significant difference in academic achievement, academic stress, test anxiety and self-esteem among different religious groups among SC/ST youth.

12. Family income relates positively with academic achievement, academic stress, test anxiety and self-esteem among SC/ST youth.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

As it was decided to conduct an intensive experimental research to assess the effectiveness of Integrated Intervention strategy on the academic stress and other psychological factors of rural school students, The total sample comprised of 120 SC/ST rural school student as experimental group studying in 9th standard in government high schools in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. In order to ensure the homogeneity of the sample, the demographic information pertaining to age, gender, education, and monthly family income were also collected.

Measures

The following measurement instruments for each psychological construct were employed to elicit relevant data.

Academic Stress (SAAS): The 30 items Scale for Assessing Academic Stress (SAAS) developed by Sinha et al. (2001) was used to measure the academic stress among students who were studying in rural school. It was measured along five dimensions namely cognitive indicators, affective indicators, physical indicators, social/interpersonal indicators, and motivational indicators.

Test anxiety: The Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI) (Spielberger, 1980), a self-report psychometric scale, was developed to measure individual differences in test anxiety. The total score of the Test Anxiety Inventory was used to measure test anxiety. The test is one page and contains twenty items. Based on a Likert Scale, the respondents are asked to report how frequently they experience specific symptoms of anxiety before, during and

after examinations. In addition to measuring individual differences in anxiety proneness in test situations, the TAI subscales assess worry and emotionality as major components of test anxiety.

Self-Esteem: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, M. 1965), a 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Academic Performance: The grades obtained by the students for subjects English, Science and Social Science was collected from the respective schools periodically in two examinations before and after the intervention. The quarterly examination scores were considered as their pre-test values and their final examination academic scores was taken as the post-test values.

Demographic Data: A Demographic Information Sheet was administered to the student to elicit information pertaining to age, gender, education, religion and monthly family income.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Pre-test Post-test Randomized Control Group and Experimental Group Research Design will be followed to assess the effects of the Intervention for reducing academic stress, test anxiety, increasing self-esteem and academic achievement of SC and ST students.

i. Experimental Group: A group of 60 SC/ST rural school student had been given an exposure of a specially designed integrated intervention program for the duration of six weeks period of time.

ii.   Control Group: Another group of 60 SC/ST rural school students had been kept as control group. No such exposure to intervention would be given for this group.

In order to control the influence of certain extraneous factors, it was ensured that all the conditions were kept constant throughout the experiment for both groups. Due care was taken to ensure the validity of the research design. However, the maturation levels and other exposures available outside were the major problems for internal validity.

NATURE OF INTEGRATED INTERVENTION

Methods of Data Collection

The data collection process was carried out in three phases for both experimental and control group of rural school students in a systematic way.

Phase I: Pretest Data Collection

During this phase, the academic stress and other psychological factors were collected from the SC/ST youth school students using the standardized questionnaires/inventories. The Pre-test was carried out for two months. As it was intended to collect data on SC/ST youth school students' Academic Stress and Test Anxiety, Self Esteem, and Academic Achievement were given to the students with the request to complete and return the instruments to the investigator immediately.

Phase II: Administration of a Three Tier Integrated Intervention Program

During this second phase, the Integrated Intervention was offered exclusively to the Experimental Group for about seven weeks. Lecture, Jacobson's Progressive muscle relaxation, Mindfulness Meditation, and SQR3 given to the Experimental Group of SC/ST youth school students.

Phase III: Posttest Data Collection

Soon after the completion of the Integrated Intervention program given exclusively to the Experimental Group of Rural School Students for about 7 weeks period, the academic stress of both the Experimental Group and Control Group was collected along with other psychological factors. For this purpose, once again, the concerned respondents were requested to furnish data on the same parameters such as Academic Stress, Text anxiety, Self Esteem, and Academic Achievement using the same questionnaire/inventory as in phase I.

Analysis of Data

Results

The results showed that Integrated Intervention was highly effective in improving the overall academic performance of the SC/ST students. The findings also revealed that the integrated intervention was very effective to reduce academic stress among the students. Analyses showed that all the sub-dimensions like Cognitive Indicators, Affective Indicators, Physiological Indicators, social indicators and motivational indicators are significantly reduced after integrated intervention. Sub-dimensions of test anxiety were also significantly reduced after integrated intervention. Further, the Integrated Intervention was effective in increasing the self-esteem of the SC/ST students.

Academic achievement was not correlated with any of the sub-dimensions of academic stress, test anxiety and self-esteem. The sub-dimension of academic stress – cognitive indicator was positively correlated with self-esteem and the sub-dimensions of test anxiety – worry and emotionality. Affective indicator was positively correlated with the both sub-dimensions of test anxiety but it did not show any correlation with self-esteem.

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Physical indicator was positively correlated with self-esteem and the emotionality – the sub-dimension of test anxiety. Social indicated did not show any correlation with test anxiety and self-esteem. Motivational indicator was positively correlated with self-esteem and the sub-dimensions of test anxiety – worry and emotionality.

Gender played a significant role on some of the study variables. Variables like cognitive indicator, affective indicator, motivational indicators, worry and emotionality have shown significant gender differences. However, variable like academic achievement, physical indicator, social indicator and self-esteem did not have any gender differences. Socio-demographic variable such as religion and family income of the student did not show any importance in the present study.

Lecture, Deep Breathing Exercises, Mindfulness Meditation, SQR3, and Play therapy would have had significant impact in reducing inhibiting factors and promoting psychological resources among the experimental group of SC/ST Students. Based on the results of this study some pertinent conclusions were drawn which is presented below.

Conclusions

- The Integrated Intervention was effective in improving overall Academic achievement of the SC/ST Students.

- The Integrated Intervention was effective in reducing all the sub-dimensions of academic stress such as cognitive indicators, affective indicators, physical indicators, social indicators and motivational indicators among SC/ST Students.

- The Integrated Intervention was effective in reducing both the sub-dimensions of test anxiety such worry and emotionality among SC/ST Students.

- The Integrated Intervention was effective in improving self-esteem of SC/ST Students.

- The sub-dimension of academic stress – cognitive indicator was positively correlated with self-esteem and the sub-dimensions of test anxiety – worry and emotionality of the SC/ST Students.

- Affective indicator was positively correlated with the both sub-dimensions of test anxiety but it did not show any correlation with self-esteem of the SC/ST Students.

- Physical indicator was positively correlated with self-esteem and the emotionality – the sub-dimension of test anxiety of the SC/ST Students.

- Social indicated did not show any correlation with test anxiety and self-esteem of the SC/ST Students.

- Motivational indicator was positively correlated with self-esteem and the sub-dimensions of test anxiety – worry and emotionality of the SC/ST Students.

- Variables like cognitive indicator, affective indicator, motivational indicators, worry and emotionality have shown significant gender differences.

- Variable like academic achievement, physical indicator, social indicator and self-esteem did not have any gender differences.

- There were no significant differences in the study variables based on their religion of the SC/ST students.

- Family incomes of the SC/ST students have not any significant relationship between study variables.

However, as with any research findings, the result of this study has to be viewed in the backdrop of the following limitations. This would then help to draw meaningful conclusions. The limitations of this study are presented below

Limitations

- This study relied entirely on self-report data from students therefore recall accuracy and the inherent deficiencies of the questionnaire method will be prevalent.

- This study employed the purposive sampling technique, hence the global representativeness of the sample could not be ensured. Cross-sectional analysis limits the ability to identify cause and effect relations. Hence generalizations regarding findings have to be done with caution.

- This study had a total sample size of 120 SC/ST students, with two groups having 60 students each. A larger sample size would have been more reliable.

- The students were selected only from Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu. Generalization to other geographical locations has to be done with caution. Moreover, school culture tends to vary from government to private schools, and between schools within a particular type.

- The students of 9th grade were only selected. The ranges of other grades were not studied.

- Follow up study was not conducted due to time constraint. Even with the limitations noted, the findings of this study are clear enough to identify essential elements for design of effective interventions.

Implications

The major implications of this study shall be found in the effectiveness of the Integrated Intervention towards facilitating SC/ST rural youth student better coping with their day-to-day school activities by enhancing their academic as well as adaptive behavioral responses. The successful implementation of Integrated Intervention comprising Jacobson's Progressive Relaxation Techniques, Mindful Meditation, and SQR3 in a systematic manner as a part of or as an additive to regular classroom teaching has significant implications for students.

1. Mindful meditation is effective and restores the body to a calm state, help the body to repair itself, and preventing new damage due to mental and physical effect of stress. The benefits of meditation can reverse one's stress response, thereby shielding one from the effects of stress and contribute to maintain academic pressure. When practicing meditation, heart rate and breathing slows down, blood pressure normalizes. Mind also clears and creativity increases. Meditating regularly can defend oneself from stress and able to avoid academic pressure.

2. The study on stress among rural SC/ST youth students' needs high quality research that is applicable to the unique challenges of rural education and also necessary for such conclusions to be made.

3. The schools need compulsory counselor role to enhance the students' performance.

4. Certain special strategies should be added to improve reading, communication and presentation skills.

5. The learning strategy (SQR3) will built the students in reading appropriate path, and helps in memorizing practices. Such reading practices would help the students to manage stress during examination time.