VOLITIONAL HELP SEEKING STRATEGIES AMONG STUDENTS OF AGOVERNMENT COLLEGE IN PUNJAB

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Abstract: The objectives of the paper were to prepare a frequency distribution and to find out gender differences in Volitional Control Strategies among Government Mohindra College, Patiala, Punjab. A self-developed scale was used to assess the volitional Control Strategies of the sample of 103 participants. Frequencydistribution was prepared and Chi square (Table Test) was used to study gender differences.
Key Words: Volitional Control Strategies, Peer-control Strategies, Teacher Control/assistance Strategies.

Introduction and Review

In this age of unprecedented technological, knowledge and skill, one has to be responsible for personal betterment through education and personal efforts. Personal efforts require something more than the motivation alone. If only our school could develop skills to accurately access personal self-efficacy and teach strategies helpful in becoming lifelong learners among students as early as in elementary classes; our school would be successful in their duty to enable students a balanced life. The balance in personal life is key to the balance in society. But for this our classrooms must be transformed into learning academies (Zimmerman et al.,1996) The present study was aimed to investigate use of volitional control strategies Mohindra College Patiala, Punjab The following paragraphs embody theoretical framework of the study.

Volitional Control Strategies

However, the social-cognitive theorist Jean Pigetin 1936 proposed that through the process of assimilation and accommodation children can learn without any direct instructing teacher. And it the development of the concept of volitional control was furthered by Khul through his various studies but Corno (1993) defined the volition as the "strength of will", an expression that has weakness as it's opposite on a continuum. She actually put it in applied terms as it is used in educational research today. This construct is intermingled with other attributes of hard working/ successful personalities really have to do something with learning and it should be the focus of educational research. This construct distinguishes good learners from good performers in exams. Volitionally capable students set mastery goals as compared to performance goals of performers. Volitional students want more to learn then they want to reproduce but the other one may be just interested in mere reproduction in exams. Academic tasks demand students to do something by their own resources and through sustained efforts, which are independent of external influences. Students who perform well in school exams are not necessarily good learners. This is because various motivational and volitional characteristics of students influence their attitudes, classroom exchange and other variables related to their learning and achievement. Volitional theorists stress that students should be taught to be responsible for their own learning and performance. (Corno, 1992).

Action Control, Social-Cognitive Learning, Information Processing, gestalt and operant conditioning theories provide bases to contemporary views on volition (Corno, 1989, 1993; Zimmerman, 1989; Schunk, 2012, p.164). This is so because learning does not happen in isolation and a learner learns in a certain social setup unique to their context. She/he gathers new information from

environment (through observation) but not as a mere passive receptor (of information and instruction) instead they use their cognitive processes to understand any new informative environmental cues. They also organise it with their previous knowledge to make new information more meaningful (Schunk, 2012, p.165).

Definition of Volitional Control

From the analysis of various definitions (Corno, 1989; Kuhl and Fuhrman, 1998; Boekaerts and Niemivirta, 2000, p.441; Kuhl, 2009; Schroder, Ollis& Davies, 2013) of volitional control, the construct can be understood as a mediator among diverse faculties of human personalities. That control and co-ordinate these faculties in forming intentions to do something (out of free-will or in reaction to external cues); including decision making about process; bring those intentions to a Rubicon and initiate by crossing that threshold; once that Rubicon is crossed and action has been initiated it (volition) functions in the seat of executive control. While exercising executive control it has a sophisticated tool kit of numerous strategies to govern those faculties such as attention control, encoding control, information-processing control, emotion control, incentive escalation, attribution/ self-reinforcement, self-instruction, task control, setting control, peer control, teacher control/assistance. The the scope of the present work is limited to assess the last two of these strategies therefore, only these are discussed briefly here

Covert and Overt Volitional Control Strategies

Though these strategies were laid down by Khul (1985), he proposed a set of six such strategies according to Zimmerman (1989) Corno (1989, 1992 and 1993) discussed and categorised them into two *covert processes* and *overt processes* of self-control) as they may appear in educational settings. This classification is not mutually exclusive rather these strategies complement one another and are overlapping in nature to some extent.

Covert strategies include strategies that are useful for students in managing their own psychological processes such as motivation and emotion, their fears and aspirations.

Overt strategies refers to behaviour management strategies these strategies help students to regulate their personal behaviour and the environment around them. Sometimes they may adjust themselves to the demands of a task and constraints of the environment and at other time they maybe able to alter the conditions around them. For instance, leaving a noisy place or asking others not to make noise. These strategies are classified into two categories i.e. the strategies to control the environment in which they have to complete a certain task and secondly the strategies to control or seek help from other people (peers and teachers) in that given environment.

Peer-control Strategies

Peers are great sources of help students in learning in many ways such as peer-assisted learning, peer tutoring, co-operative learning and reciprocal learning with their classmates (Schunk, 2012, p-269-70). But sometimesthey distract them from academic activities by asking or at situations compelling to leave work and accompany them in recreational activities such as going for a party, playing an outdoor game during exam days. They may create barriers in classroom learning by behaving non-serious during the classroom teeaching. Situations like these pose demand for volitionally controlling impact on learning. Students do it either by verbally telling their peers not to disturb or by just simply avoiding them.Peer Control refers to student's statements indicating their efforts to use peers as a resource or to arrange situations so that friends do not detract from educational goals.

The use of Peer-control Strategies depends upon certain inter related factors such as social intelligence, capacity to socially interact and help seeking tendencies. It effects motivation, task value, and amount of efforts or effort regulation (Kaur, 2013).

Teacher Control/assistance Strategies

Academic tasks do not generate themselves randomly rather the teachers craft and assign them to students. Teachers can develop or hamper an instructional atmosphere into a learning congenial or otherwise environment. Teachers can influence to increase or decrease student involvement and cognitive indulgence. Blumenfeld and Meece (1988) summarised ways for a teacher for developing a conducive environment so that students can become active participants of the teaching-learning process rather than mere passive recipients of instructions. A teacher can facilitate student learning by providing clear directions, relating new information to what his/her students already know, they can suggest/implement new modelsand ways to organise and learn material, they can help students through immediate as well as informative feedback and correct errors.

Students on the other hand though remain busy completing their assignments in these environments in variety of tasks relatively different from their teacher. They read textbooks, participate in class discussions, complete worksheets, and contribute to group projects. They also negotiate with peers on social relationships; they try to outwit the teacher and love to play in schoolyard(Marx and Walsh, 1988).Corno (1993) illustrated that students behave so predictably when a task is first given to them by their teachers. They mumble and complain about the stipulated deadline show their inability to finish the assignment in the stipulated time and try to negotiate on it students convince their teachers to depart a little from his/her previously set agenda. Then they follow through this negotiated agenda, it students feel being heard. Teacher Control/assistance refers to student's statements indicating their efforts to obtain special assistance from teachers.

Operational Definitions of the terms:

1. The term, "*peer control strategies*" refers to those overt strategies of volitional control that learners deploy to secure relevant help from their peers during the course of their studies.

2. The term, "*teacher control/ assistance strategies*" refers to those overt strategies of volitional control that learners deploy to secure relevant help from their teachers during the course of their studies.

Objectives:

1. **To prepare** thefrequency distribution of scores based on volitional peer control strategies among students of Government Mohindra College, Patiala.

2. **To study the gender differences** based on volitional peer control strategies among the participants.

Research and the Null Hypotheses

Based on personal observations and review of related literature the following research and null hypotheses were stated:

A. **Research Hypothesis:** There will be significant gender differencein terms ofvolitional help seeking strategies among the participants.

B. **The Null Hypothesis:** There will be no significant gender difference in terms of volitional help seeking strategies among the participants.

Methodology

Research method

Descriptive method of research was used for the study.

Sampling and Participants

Researcher distributed the scale with the help of college students to other students in small groups or classrooms, using snowball-sampling technique. The potential participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and requested to respond to the scales statements honestly so that, their responses reflect their actual personal study habits and learning strategies. Total 150Scales were distributed randomly and on demand to graduate and post-graduate students out of which 103 returned.

Research Tools

Volitional Control Strategies Scale for Higher Education students (VCSSHES) prepared by the

researcher himself was used. The scale assesses respondents on eleven volitional control strategiesincluding peer and Teacher control/ assistance. Statementsunder the peer control and Teacher control/ assistance sub scales were usedfor the purpose of analysisfor this paper.

Results

1. Frequency Distributions

1.1. Frequency Distribution of Peer Control Strategies

Treatment of the Data

In order to analyse the data the frequency distributions were prepared and Chi-Square (Table Test) was used to study gender differences. The data were organised, tabulated and analysed with the help of MS-Excel and CranR.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of students on the basis of Peer Control Strategies

Measured Element	Gen.	Rating Frequency (Statement Acceptance %)				
		1 (0%)	2(25%)	3(50%)	4 (75%)	5(100%)
Suggestively directs others not to disturb	M	12	3	1	11	3
	F	2	5	9	24	21
Clarifies/help seeking through discussion	M	2	7	2	8	18
	F	5	15	14	29	10
Speaks plain to others about objectives	M	6	7	5	7	4
	F	6	12	15	25	15
Seeks help from peers	M	4	6	4	7	9
	F	9	14	7	30	13
Spares time for discussion	M	5	6	5	5	9
	F	6	14	12	33	8
Does not go with the wind	M	2	4	5	11	8
	F	10	14	6	26	17
Prioritises academic goals over peers	M	8	5	6	6	5
	F	14	11	14	19	15
Total	M	39	39	28	55	49
	F	55	89	82	186	99

1.2. Frequency Distribution of Teacher Control/ Assistance Strategies

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of students on the basis of Teacher Control/ Assistance Strategies

Measured Element	Gen.	Rating (Statement Acceptance %) Frequency				
		1 (0%)	2 (25%)	3 (50%)	4 (75%)	5 (100%)
Exhibit clear help seeking behaviour	M	6	9	4	5	6
	F	8	8	9	32	12
Hesitates- low volition	M	6	10	4	6	4
	F	10	25	14	19	5
Overcomes hesitation- high volition	M	2	7	8	7	6
	F	6	10	16	24	17
Does own work on his/her own	M	1	8	5	9	7
	F	7	15	6	35	10
Content specific help seeking	M	2	9	8	4	7
	F	4	17	10	23	19
Seeks favour	M	5	8	3	10	4
	F	2	10	4	30	27
Seeks teacher to repeat the difficult content	M	2	7	3	13	5
	F	2	12	7	21	26
Takes own responsibility	M	4	11	7	3	5
	F	1	14	10	25	23
Total	M	28	69	42	57	44
	F	45	111	76	209	143

2. Gender Differences

2.1. Gender Differences in Peer Control Strategies

Table 3: Chi-Square (Table Test): Gender Differences in Peer Control

			Frequency					R-Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
Gender	M	f_o	39	39	28	55	49	210
		f_e	27.38	37.28	32.04	70.19	43.11	
	F	f_o	55	89	82	186	99	511
		f_e	66.62	90.72	77.96	170.8	104.89	
C-Total			94	128	110	241	148	721

X^2 on the degree of freedom 4 is 13.568. Therefore, it can be concluded from the test that since we are getting p-value (0.008811 less than 0.05. So we may not retain our Null hypothesis based on the given data and we have to go for the Alternate Hypothesis

2.2. Gender Differencesin Teacher Control/ Assistance Strategies

Table 4: Chi-Square (Table Test): Gender Differences in Teacher Control/ Assistance Strategies

			Frequency					R-Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
Gender	M	f_o	28	69	42	57	44	240
		f_e	21.26	52.47	34.37	77.47	54.47	
	F	f_o	45	111	76	209	143	584
		f_e	31.89	78.67	53.86	148.13	101.35	
C-Total			73	180	118	266	187	824

X^2 on the degree of freedom 4 is 23.27.Therefore, it can be concluded from the test thatsince we are getting p-value (0.000119) less than 0.05. So we may not retain our Null hypothesis based on the given data and we have to go for the Alternate Hypothesis

Educational Implications

- Attitude of the teacher and their ways of expressionof their feedback to students influence development of volitional skills.
- Teachers shouldpositively help students instrategically managing their learning environments and concentrate on their academic tasks.
- Teachers should help their students in developing work habits to support their motivation for, and cognitive engagement with, academic learning tasks.

Suggestions for Further Research

- Peer control strategies of students can be studied across the students belonging to different socio-economic status.
- Influence of teacher attitude on students' help seeking from them can also be studied

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