

## **Effect of Guidance Services on Study Attitudes, Study Habits and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students**

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### **Abstract**

The substantive aim of the study was to examine the effect of guidance services on students' study attitudes, study habits and academic achievement. An experimental study was devised for the purpose. A guidance programme for secondary school students was developed by the researcher. An experiment was conducted to explore the effectiveness of guidance services in terms of improvement in students' study attitudes, study habits and academic achievement. Ten null hypotheses were tested to explore the effect of guidance services on students' study habits, study attitudes and academic achievement in five subjects. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study indicated that the guidance services have significant effect on the students' study attitude, study habits and academic achievement

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### **Introduction**

The quality of a nation depends upon the quality of its citizens. The quality of citizens depends on the quality of their education and quality of education besides other factors depends upon study habits and study attitude of the learners. Quality of education is reflected through academic achievement which is a function of study habits and study attitude of the students. Thus to enhance the quality of education, it is necessary to improve the study habits and study attitudes of the students. To improve study habits and study attitude, those factors are needed to be identified which affect these characteristics adversely. Identification of these factors may lead towards remedial measures. To identify factors having negative effect on study habits and study attitudes, to propose remedial measures and to employ strategies for the development of good study habits and study attitudes, well organized guidance services are needed in schools.

Guidance refers to leading a person to self-actualization or helping him to develop his full potential. This objective of self-actualization is difficult to be attained if a student is unaware of, or unrealistic about his potential. Bhatnagar & Gupta (1999) define guidance as a process of helping the individual find solutions to his own problems and accept them as his own". They further say that guidance is an integral part of education; a

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continuous service; both generalized and specialized service, for the “whole” child and is not confined only to some specific aspects of his personality.

Shertzer (1976) defines guidance:

“It is the process of helping an individual to understand himself and his world. Conceptually, guidance involves the utilization of a point of view to help an individual as an educational construct. It refers to the provision of experiences which assist pupils to understand themselves and as a service it refers to organized procedures and process to achieve a helping relationship.” (p. 172)

Guidance programmes for secondary school students are designed to address the physical, emotional, social and academic difficulties of adolescence. By resolving physical, emotional, social and academic difficulties of the students and by helping students understand their learning strengths and weaknesses, their study habits can be improved. Better study habits and study skills lead to better achievement scores. The guidance programmes promote academic, educational, personal, social and career development. Guidance programmes foster positive attitude towards school learning and work and hence, improve academic achievement. A study was conducted by Hudesman et al., (1986) to compare the impact of structured and non-directive counseling styles on academic performance of high-risk students. Results indicated that students in structured counseling condition had higher GPAs than those in non-directive counseling condition at the end of semester. Francis and others (1987) also examined the positive effects of counseling on students communication patterns, study habits and academic achievement. The secondary school guidance programme should be a part of the total school programme and complement learning in the classroom. It should be child centered, preventive and developmental. The guidance programme should aim at maximizing the student’s potential by encouraging their social, emotional and personal growth at each stage of their development.

Kochhar (2000) considers guidance necessary to help the pupil with specific problems like lack of relationship between ability and achievement, deficiency in one or several school subjects, faulty study habits, defective methods of learning and poor motivation. Bhatnagar and Gupta (1999) are of the opinion that for better student achievement, it is necessary to aid pupils make progress in their education by removing their difficulties and developing good study skills. Hence guidance programs must include this aspect of student aid. Guidance plays a vital role in removing the educational, personal, social, mental, emotional and other similar problems of the students.

The main purpose of instruction is to enable the child to learn, whereas the teacher's task is to facilitate the learning process and develop study habits and right attitude toward learning. A teacher who has the guidance point of view in teaching will keep all this in mind (Bhatnagar and Gupta, 1999).

According to Braddock (2001) the purposes of guidance and counseling services for school children are to:

- Improve academic achievement
- Foster positive attitudes toward school, learning, and work
- Increase acquisitions and application of conflict resolution skills.
- Decrease dropouts.

In modern times the complexity of life has intensified the need of organized guidance services. Both developed and developing countries lay great emphasis on the guidance of their youth to channelize their energies. Students need to be guided for developing good study habits and adequate preparation to sit in the examination (Kochhar, 2000).

Attitudes are predispositions which have developed through a long and complex process. Anastasi (1990) defined attitude as, "a tendency to react favourably or unfavourably toward a designated class of stimuli." It is evident that when so defined, attitudes cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred from overt behavior, both verbal and non-verbal.

Vaidya (1989) explained attitude as "a condition of readiness for a certain type of activity." Attitudes held by the individuals may be simple or complex, stable or unstable, temporary or permanent and superficial or fundamental. Judgments based upon insufficient facts are likely to yield wrong results and thereby develop biased attitudes.

Attitudes offer great possibilities for successful achievement in studies. They are an important motivator of behaviour and affect the achievement of the students. A great deal of research literature provides an evidence for positive link between attitude and achievement. Simpson et al (1994) reported a correlation of .84 between an affective behaviour checklist and achievement in Biology.

According to Crow & Crow (1979) a child's attitude towards his work affects his worthwhileness in his activity. A child should not be permitted to do completely as he wishes. He should be stimulated toward desirable activity through the arousal of interest in worthwhile projects. Constructive, objective attitudes encouraged during childhood serve well during adolescence. The attitude of the teacher, group leader is important, in a child's study habits.

Good (1973) define the term study habits as: "The student's way of study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient etc." Good study habits are perceived to be the determinants of the academic performance. That is why efforts are made to develop and improve study habits in students. Secondary

school students in public schools of Pakistan come from economically poor and average income families. These families face various problems causing emotional disturbance among their children. They have poor study habits hence they show poor academic performance. A great deal of evidence is present to show the positive correlation between study habits and academic achievement.

Ansari (1980) found that study habits and study attitudes are both significant variables which determine the academic performance of the students. Russell and Petrie (1992) have cited a research study aimed to find out the relationship between study habits and student attitude and academic performance (cumulative GPA) of college students. Findings of this study indicate a positive correlation between study attitude, study habit and academic achievement.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1994 conducted a study to find out the relationship between study habits and academic achievement. Findings of the study revealed a positive correlation between study habit and academic achievements of elementary and secondary school students. Onwuegbuzie (2001) also conducted a series of studies to find out relationship between study habits and academic success and reported positive relationship between study habits and academic success. The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of guidance services on students study attitudes, study habits and academic achievement.

## **Methods and Procedures**

The following method and procedures were adopted to conduct the study:

### *Sample*

Sample of the study was drawn from the 9<sup>th</sup> graders of Govt. High School Karim Block, Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore. Borg and Gall (1983) have suggested that in causal comparative and experimental research, it is desirable to have a minimum of 15 cases in each group to be compared. A group of 25 students was considered manageable for guidance services. Hence research required 50 students, 25 for experimental group and 25 for control group. There were four sections of 9<sup>th</sup> class in this school. One section out of these four was selected randomly for choosing the sample. The rationale for selecting one full section was that researcher wanted to compare achievement of the experimental and control groups. If the students were drawn from all the sections taught by different teachers, teacher effect would be a confounding variable. To control this effect experimental and control groups were selected from one section. Fifty students were selected randomly using random table, from all the 90

students of 9<sup>th</sup> B. These fifty students were assigned randomly to the experimental and the control groups.

Following instruments were used:

*Achievement Test:* To measure the achievement of students in the subjects of Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology and English Text and Grammar Comprehension tests were developed. Items were constructed based on the curriculum for 9<sup>th</sup> class being implemented in the secondary schools. Necessary procedure preparation of specification table, item construction, test validation and item analysis were adopted. Two types of analysis were performed: reliability of test forms and item analysis. Item analysis consists of item difficulty, item discrimination, and effectiveness of the distracters. Item analysis was performed on all items of each test. Reliability of each test was calculated using Kuder Richardson Formula 20 selected for its parsimony and simplicity. All the tests were reliable much beyond the acceptance level.

*Study Habits and Study Attitude Scale:* Study habits and study attitude scales developed by the National Institute of Psychology (NIP), Islamabad was adopted as pre-test and post-test for both groups.

*Problem Checklist:* Problem checklist developed by National Institute of Psychology (NIP) was used in this study for identification of following problems:

- i) Educational problems,
- ii) Problems related with heads and teachers,
- iii) Problems related with school,
- iv) Personal and social problems,
- v) Problems related with parents, family and relatives.

1. *Cumulative Record Card:* Cumulative record card prepared by the Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore was used. Cumulative record gives the family background, a brief account of academic record, and detailed information of personality features of the students.

### *Research Design*

To study the effect of guidance services on students study attitude and study habits pre-test post-test control group design was used. To study the effect of guidance services on academic achievement of the students in the subjects of Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and English. Post-test only control group design was used.

#### *Treatment Schedule*

- Guidance services were provided to the experimental group daily for one session of 40 minutes.
- Ninety sessions of group guidance were conducted during the study. Each session comprised of forty minutes.

- Counseling sessions of 10 – 30 minutes for individuals were arranged, during these sessions, students with more problems, were paid more attention. Total number of these sessions were 220.
- Fifty meetings with duration of 10 – 30 minutes were arranged with the parents of the experimental group.

## Results

There were three variables in the present study i.e. study attitudes, study habits and academic achievements in the subjects of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, English Text and Grammar. These variables were measured on three different types of instruments i.e. study attitude scale, study habit scale and achievement test in these subjects. Pre-test and post-test data for two variables, study attitude and study habits were available which enabled the researcher to compute the mean gain scores of both the groups on both variables. Scores on post achievement test in the five subjects were used to compare the achievement of both the groups. Independent sample t-test was run to find the significance of difference between mean achievement scores of both the experimental and the control groups.

Table 1  
Analysis of scores on study attitudes and study habits

Scale of Variable	Mean Gain Score		S.D.		t-value	df.	Sig.
	Exp n=25	Control n=25	Exp.	Control			
Study Attitude	8.88	3.87	6.83	4.45	3.023	47	.004
	7.56	1.04	8.57	8.74	2.63	47	.011
Study Habits							

$P \leq .05$

Results of table 1 reveals that there is significant difference between the mean gain scores of the experimental and control group on study attitudes and study habit skill. It is concluded that guidance services have significant effect on study habit and study attitude.

Table 2  
Difference between the score of experimental and control group

Variable Academic Achievement in the subject of	Mean Gain Score		S.D.		t- value	df.	Sig.
	Exp n=25	Control n=25	Exp	Control			
Math	20.24	16.00	6.05	4.42	2.80	47	.008*
Biology	33.52	28.70	4.19	5.99	3.26	47	.002*
Chemistry	28.20	23.33	6.04	7.83	2.44	47	.018*
English Text	37.68	34.29	2.98	7.10	2.16	47	.033*
English Grammar & Comprehension	25.56	25.16	3.42	4.02	.36	47	.714**
All the 5 subjects	176.28	153.66	20.82	25.47	3.40	47	.001

\* Significant at  $P \leq .05$

\*\* Not significant at  $P \leq .05$

It is evident from table 2 that the treatment has significant effect on the student academic achievement in the subjects of Math, Biology, Chemistry, English test and Overall achievement but it is further evident from the table that there is no significant effect on the achievement in English grammar and composition.

## Discussion

The researcher found that students at secondary level face many problems which hinder the development of positive study attitudes and study habits. The experiment revealed that guidance services have significant positive effect on student's study attitudes and study habits. Improvement in study attitudes and study habits resulted in improvement of students' academic achievement. Significantly better performance of experimental group in the subjects of Physics, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry and English text is an evidence that study attitude and study habits do affect students' achievement. The students of experimental group did not show significantly better performance in English grammar comprehension component.

The following may be the reasons of non-significant effect of guidance services on English grammar comprehension component of English.

1. During the treatment period, students were taught mostly the textbook in the class at school. Hence students, also, emphasized the text comprehension component of English. Therefore, significant effect of the text comprehension was noticed whereas grammar component was neither emphasized by the class teachers nor by the students which caused insignificant difference in grammar comprehension.
2. Improvement in the comprehension in grammar component of any 2<sup>nd</sup> language is a long-term phenomenon. The treatment period was not too long to improve the knowledge of the students in grammar.
3. The main purpose of the treatment was to improve the study habits and study attitudes of the students which resulted in the improvement of students' achievement, but its effect was not significant on comprehension of English grammar which indicates that improvement in the grammar of English as 2<sup>nd</sup> language does not depend only on students' study habits and study attitude.

Learning a language is different in many ways from other subjects because of its social and communicative nature. According to Wenden & Rubin (1987) "learning a language involves the communicating with other people and therefore requires not only suitable cognitive skills but also certain social and communicative skills." Moreover there may also be other factors such as classroom environment, teaching methodology, L<sub>1</sub> (mother tongue), interference etc. Wilkins (1972) suggests that "the errors and difficulties that occur in our learning and use of a foreign language are caused by the interference of mother-tongue (p.197). Littlewood, (1984) invites our attention to another fact regarding this problem that "those elements that are similar to the native language will be simple for the learner, and those elements that are different will be difficult" (p.18). Good & Brophy (1986) find that "learning is greatly influenced by the environment in which it occurs." William & Burden (1997) say Language classrooms are particularly need to be places where learners are encouraged to use the new language to communicate, to try out new ways of expressing meanings, to negotiate, to make mistakes without fear, and to learn from successes and failures. Emotionally, a suitable environment for language learning should be one that enhances the trust needed to communicate and which enhances confidence and self-esteem.

Some other important factors which influence the language learning are discussed by William & Burden (1997). They emphasize that learners bring to the task of learning different characteristics such as age, gender, personality, motivation, self-concept, life experience and cultural background, all of which influence the way in which they go about the task of learning. According to Fontana (1995) just as the ability to learn is influenced by age variables, so it is influenced by gender. As we have seen, girls are generally more verbal than boys at school age, and have fewer



reading, speech, and general backwardness problems while boys are more advanced in number skills. Similarly various teaching methods will cause variation in language learning as each method is based on a certain philosophy of education and meets certain goals and objectives of language teaching. For example, if our objective is scholastic understanding of language, GT (Grammar Translation) method is suitable; if communicative competence is emphasized, communicative method will be suitable and so on (Cook, 2001). The findings of present study as well as other studies conducted in this area reveal that guidance services are effective for the improvement of school instruction. It is therefore, recommended that center for guidance services or guidance clinic may be established in each schools.

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