



Academic Perseverance as a non-cognitive skill: Role of classroom

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Abstract: Non-Cognitive Skills are the patterns of thoughts, feelings, personality characteristics of the individuals that may continue to develop throughout their life and which are found valuable in workplace, school and society. It involves skills like persistence, meticulousness, self-discipline, faith, concentration, self-esteem, self-efficacy, etc., which are as important as or even more than the cognitive factors such as intelligence and academic abilities. But several research studies have concluded that along with cognitive factors, non-cognitive skills also matter in influencing student achievement and overall well-being of the student. Academic Perseverance as a non-cognitive variable holds an important role to achieve academic goals by directing academic behaviour. Academic Perseverance is a concept that, in its most basic form, addresses student effort and the resulting quality of academic behaviour. An academically perseverant student would behave in an engaged, focused, and persistent manner in pursuit of academic goals, in spite of obstacles, failures, adversities and distractions.

In this paper, the importance of Academic Perseverance as a non-cognitive skill in education will be reviewed based on available related literature and research findings. This paper is purely based on secondary data.

Keywords: Non cognitive Skills, Academic Perseverance, Role of Classroom.

I. INTRODUCTION:

In the new millennium, the world of education has witnessed tremendous changes in case of science and technology, globalization, privatization, industrialization, etc. There have been always huge leaps in energy storage, artificial intelligence, etc.,. But at the same time life has become more challenging which is also true in the academic context. Today's educators and students carry so much on their shoulders because today is an era of competition. The competitive spirit is visible in almost every aspect of life. Hence, to meet the challenges of today's competitive world, the students should make assiduous efforts to achieve success in academics. To prove one's worth in the job market and to enhance one's potential for being selected, it is important that the students achieve success in academics. This academic success is an index of their sound knowledge of their disciplines which further facilitates the way for future success. In earlier times, academic success was predicted depending upon the cognitive factors such as intelligence. But numerous instances can be found where people with high IQ have failed to achieve success in life. "Numerous instances can be cited of people with high IQs who fail to achieve success in life because they lacked self-discipline and people with low IQs who succeeded by virtue of persistence, reliability and self-discipline." (Heckman & Rubinstein, 2001). So not only the cognitive factors are essential factors for academic success. There is something more than these cognitive factors which are known as non-cognitive skills such as perseverance, self-efficacy, resilience, meticulousness, self-control, persistence, etc.,. Non cognitive skills are defined as the "patterns of thought, feelings, and behaviors" (Borghans et al., 2008) that are socially determined and can be developed throughout the lifetime to produce value. Academic Perseverance is one such non-cognitive skill which refers to a student's tendency to complete school assignments in timely and in a thorough manner, to the best of one's ability despite obstacles, adversities, etc.,. To persevere academically, a student requires to stay focused on his goals despite obstacles and forgo distractions prioritizing higher pursuits over lesser pleasures.

Non -Cognitive Skills:

When identifying the personal qualities that require to functioning well in the 21st century, the role of non cognitive factors and skills are often highlighted in the discourse. The term non-cognitive skills has become increasingly prevalent within education over the past few years. The term non cognitive skill is used to distinguish skills other than those measured by cognitive tests such as literacy and numeracy. Non-cognitive skills includes things like academic behaviour , perseverance, mindset, learning strategies and social skills. In a wide range of studies, it has been found that the non-cognitive factors have an impact on the academic performance of students.

Academic Perseverance:

Without perseverance in a field, the tendency to remain stick with the task, it is not so easy for a learner to make progress in a particular field. Academic Perseverance requires not only an initial surge of momentum in a focused direction but also the ability to maintain that momentum regardless of what gets in the way. Academically perseverant student would continue working hard for good performance in a challenging class even after he/she fails in several tests. They will try to find out new ways to understand difficult contents instead of giving up and perseverant students also would forgo distractions prioritizing higher pursuits over lesser pleasures. So, academic perseverance is a desirable quality of academic behaviour that seems essential for both short-term and long-term educational achievement and degree attainment. By academic perseverance it is generally meant the idea of persistent effort in school. Academic Perseverance addresses student's effort and resulting quality of academic behaviour. But the psychological literature identifies various kinds of persistence such as grit, self-control, etc.,. Grit refers to the degree to which students stay focused instead of obstacles. On the other hand self-control refers to whether students forgo short term temptations to prioritize higher pursuits (related to delayed gratification, self-discipline).

Academic perseverance and Academic performance:

In our life, we notice that some persons sets goals and achieve them despite of setbacks and adversities but on the other hand some can not pursue and just give up. There may be various causes behind this but one of the probable causes may be lack of perseverance.

A number of variables are associated with academic perseverance. Intellectual ability is widely considered to predict academic achievement. But intellectual ability is not a guarantee for academic success.

Duckworth and others (2007) studied grit and found that students with higher grit had higher GPA in college. They defined grit as "perseverance and passion for long term goals". Stayhorn, T. L. conducted a research on the black males studying in a predominantly White institution and showed that grittier black males had higher grades than the less gritty black males.

Duckworth and others mentioned that for self-discipline and self control are predictive of better classroom behaviour which also correlates with improved academic performance. They developed a scale for measuring grit. It included items like "Setbacks don't discourage me", "Not ideas and projects sometimes distract me from previous ones."

Another series of study that is often cited to highlight the importance of self control for academic achievement is the 'marshmallow experiment' conducted by Walter Mischel and his associates. In this experiment, children of Stanford university preschool were left alone in a room with one marshmallow being told that they could have two if they waited for the next one till the experimenter returned. Follow up studies revealed that those who could wait gained better grades than the others.

In 2017, KULTO, O and his associates conducted a study on "Identifying the relationship between perseverance, openness to problem solving and Academic Success in PISA 2012" and concluded that achievement can be increased by enhancing perseverance for the lower quartile of score distribution.

Academic perseverance is necessary for its own sake. It can be enhanced throughout the life. It is seen that perseverance is related to context. While someone shows perseverance in one field he may not be perseverant in another.

Role of classroom:

Classroom can play a vital role in increasing student's perseverance. Classroom can support positive academic mindsets and help students to build effective learning strategies and then can contribute notably to increasing student's perseverance in completing assignments and hence improving their academic performance. Research literature suggests that mindsets are the product of interaction between students and classroom contexts. Classroom can influence academic perseverance of students through direct teaching or influencing perseverance through other mechanisms changing the contexts in which students learn. A number of research studies have shown that social context plays a significant role in shaping student's sense of their own capabilities. The experience of membership in important social groups shapes student's sense of their own capabilities, potentialities. If students feel part of a learning community that value academic work, they are much more likely to be oriented and act accordingly. Both psychological and sociological researches emphasize the importance of classroom in shaping an individual's identity and self-efficacy. Various aspects of classroom like support materials for learning, the level of academic challenge and teacher's expectations from students, opportunities for metacognition and self-regulatory activities can influence student's perseverance. A study by National Research Council concludes that positive engagement and self-efficacy of student in any given subject is dependent upon creating a set of circumstances in which students take pleasure in learning and come to believe that the information and skill they are being asked to learn are important and meaningful for them and worth their effort. So classroom can play a vital role in influencing student's perseverance. That's why teachers should be very careful in dealing with the students so that they can pursue long term goals. Perseverance is not only a skill only for academic achievement but needed for the entire life. The teachers should try to arrange a situation where the students feel belongingness and feel an urge to fulfil their goals despite of obstacles and find out new ways to achieve meaningful goals.

II. CONCLUSION:

With the changing circumstances life has become more and more challenging. In order to meet those

situations not only the cognitive skills are essential, we need to emphasize the non-cognitive skills also. Academic perseverance is one of the major variables influencing academic performance. Hence adequate measures should be taken to enhance this variable. Because this can be acquired. Increasing academic perseverance is appealing as a goal for both educational policy and classroom practice. It supports cognitive factors. In the book *Mindset*, Dweck, C. S., mentions two types of mindsets—fixed mindset and growth mindset. Growth mindset is based on the belief that one's basic qualities are things one can cultivate through your efforts. So classroom should try to develop growth mindset of the students and increase academic perseverance. Though non-cognitive skills are very essential but very less studies have been conducted to explore these skills. Hence collaborative efforts should be taken to enhance these skills because setbacks, depression, etc. have been a constant reality of today's world.

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