Self-Handicapping Strategies among Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract

Adolescence is the time when children undergo a crisis of identity. They are eager to interact with new experiences, to find new relationships, to examine the inner strengths and to explore inner ability. Recently attention has been recognized on the strategies children use to school to portray themselves as able to others by escaping from responsibilities in the way of self handicapping. Also it is found that use of social media made the younger ones to irresponsible fellows. Self-handicapping strategies has been examined as a self-protective strategy, used by adults and young males and females, in different situations assessed as threatening for the positive self-esteem. The purpose of this study is to explore the extent of self-handicapping strategies among the adolescent. The results suggest that male adolescents show more self-handicapping strategies than that of females.

Introduction

The process of education helps in the comprehensive development of learners. It enables them to develop needed adequacies, competencies and skills to deal triumphantly with real life situations. Education focuses more on contrived phenomenon where in the environmental settings; psychological constructs interact with each other in appropriate ways so as to achieve desirable changes in the status of individuals. With most of the learning that happens through classroom transactions, it is influenced by various factors that encourage or hinter the effectiveness of learning in students. It becomes the authority of teachers to understand the interaction effect of these factors on learning and adapt suitable teaching strategies for classroom transactions.

For nearly two decades, Berglas and Jones and their colleagues have theorized that people actively arrange the circumstances of their behavior so that if poor performance should occur, those circumstances will be seen as the cause rather than a lack of ability or worth (e.g., Berglas , 1985; Higgins, Snyder, &Berglas, 1990; Jones &Berglas, 1978). That is people use certain strategies to be seen as the victims of circumstances rather than as unable. Berglas and Jones called those strategies "Self –handicapping" because they have the potential to lead to decrement in performance.

Recently attention has been recognized on the strategies children use to school to portray themselves as able to others. Self-

handicapping strategies have been manifold described and examined including procrastination, alcohol and drug use, test anxiety, moodiness, reported pain and physical symptoms, shyness, excuses, taking on too many projects , fatigue, over involvement with friends or activities and lack of practice of effort (Higginsn et al,1990). There evidence that handicapping set out as both a means of protecting one's own self esteem as well as a presentation strategy aimed at manipulating other's perceptions. Unfortunately, despite the fact that handicappers are often successful at diverting the attention of others away from their lack of ability, their handicapping often leads others to develop unfavorable perceptions of their non-ability, work and personal characteristics (Luginbuhl and Palmer, 1991; Rhodewalt et al., 1995; Smith and Strube, 1991).

The behavioral self-handicapping strategies have been considered as a self-protective strategy, used by all, especially adolescents in different occasions assessed as threatening the positive self-esteem. Self-handicapping differs from simply making external attributions for failure. The difference lies in the fact that self – handicapping is a pro-active strategy before an endeavor is performed.

Self-handicapping has been identified of two types- Behavioral and Self-reported.

Behavioral self-handicapping

Behavioral self-handicapping are performances that can effectively weaken the result of a task (Hart et al., 1991; Leary&Shepperd, 1986,). In case of behavioral self- handicapping people design handicap that enhance non-ability attributions in case of failure. Although behavioral self-handicapping more likely to have essentially self-protective function. So far they may minimize chances of success, but they make the process of making attributions about performance obscure not just for the viewer but also for the actor. It refers to circumstances in which the self-handicapper actively creates impediments that would be expected to reduce the probability of performing well on a task but that impart him with a plausible excuse for the failure. Example- consuming drugs and alcohol before a performance reduced effort and practice and preferring to work in a distracting environment.

Self-reported self-handicapping

Self reported self handicapping are claims that a condition exists that are impending to performance that may or may not be true as they cannot be observed. They have a less costly effect on performance (Leary et al.). Example: psychological and health problem, bad mood and traumatic event. Until adolescence, learners do not recognize the perception of others. The phenomenon egocentric ideation that takes place in this stage makes adolescents feels that there are being observed by others around them. These situations have more potential in posing a threat to self-esteem of students. Under these circumstances, standards employ themselves in self-handicapping to protect their self-esteem.

Need of the Study

Schools and classroom provide excellent real world contexts for examining self-handicapping behavior as in such settings,

students are continually confronted with tasks and situations in which information about their ability and intelligence is a public display. Academic achievement reflects in a value added characteristic intelligence. Students, especially during adolescent age worry about them appearing unintelligent if they poorly perform on a specific task assigned to them. Schools provide ample opportunities for examining both self-handicapping dispositions of students and the possible contextual influences on self-handicapping behavior.

Objective

To study the extent of Self-handicapping strategies among higher secondary students based on Gender

Percentage Analysis

The Results are given in Table-1

Hypothesis

➢   .Higher Secondary students are self-handicapped generations.

Methodology

Survey technique is used to collect the data.

Sample

The study is carried out in a representative sample of 200 students from Kerala state using stratified random sampling method.

Tool

Questionnaire prepared by the investigator is used to collect the data. It include 20 items.

Statistical Technique

Analysis's and Discussion.

Percentage of Self-handicapping strategies among adolescent based on Gender.

SL.NO.	Item	Percentage of SH strategies-boys	Percentage of SH strategies-Girls
1	When I do wrong I blame circumstances	66	38
2	I tend to put things off until the last minute	72	45
3	I over prepare for exam	32	67
4	I always try my best no matter what	30	66
5	Before I take a course I have the background	38	64
6	I get anxious before an exam	46	53
7	I am easily distracted when I try to read	76	36
8	I do not get involved with competitive activities	68	22
9	I would do a lot better if I tried harder	51	42

10	I prefer small pleasures in the present , not the future	60	40
11	I hate to be in any condition but at my best	32	40
12	Someday I might get it all together	56	41
13	Sometimes I like being ill to decrease pressure	33	46
14	I rationalize when I don't live up to expectations	68	46
15	I have more than my share of bad luck	54	52
16	I don't take drugs that reduce my ability to think	52	99
17	I over indulge in food and take substances too often	65	01
18	I get enough sleep before exams.	92	12
19	When I feel anxious I do better	42	44
20	When I feel depressed easy tasks are hard	62	58

Findings

In this technological era, drastic changes occur in the field of education especially in academic environment. Pupils' attitude, thinking style, mode of interaction, inter-intra personal behavior and outlook towards life are being subject to frequent changes. Component wise analysis of academic self-handicapping strategies on the basis of the table

• The habit of blaming of circumstances is higher among boys than that of girls.

• Adolescent girls show lesser tendency to procrastinate.

• Anxiety and over preparation for examination strategies are high among adolescent girls.

• Adolescent boys are found to be easily distracted while reading.

• Boys have low competitive mentality compared to girls.

• Adolescent boys prefer temporary pleasure while girls engaged in planning for future activities.

• Blaming bad luck for failures is more or less same with both boys and girls.

• Boys sleep enough before exams.

• Boys tend to over indulge in food and substances more often.

• Boys handle tasks more easily than girls while in bad moods.

Conclusion

As the study proved that, Self-Handicapping was negatively related with performance. In addition, girls reported, engaging less in handicapping than boys. More studies are needed to find the association of self-handicapping strategies in relation to other variables.

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