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A Study of Academic Achievement in Relation to Mental Ability And Socio-Economic Status of Secondary School Students

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Abstract

It is a common knowledge that 'education' has a significant role to play in the development of an individual. The basic purpose of education is to draw the best out of the student in terms of his physical, mental and spiritual development. Until recently, remarkable importance had been given to the education sector by the government in India. This is attributed to weak inputs of the educational process, such as equipment, teacher, aids, curricula and laboratories etc. (Educational Denoters, 2004). In addition this is attributed to waste of the curricula structural composition, the prescriptive academic material, the absence of scientific application and the Audio-visual aids that lead to the supremacy of the theoretical part over the applied one. Consequently, the student lags behind in this modern age that is described as the age of information revolution, communications, and technical progress. Hence, in this present theoretical research paper high lights on Concept of General mental ability, ways to develop general mental ability among school children, Definition of Socio-Economic Status, measurement of SES and various components, School outcomes and personal SES, The Importance of Socioeconomic Position and conclusion.

Key Words: General mental ability, Mediation, Active learning and Increase Concentration etc

Introduction

Education is a powerful instrument used by the society to shape the future and mould the next generation. Of all the stages of education, namely: kindergarten, primary and secondary, secondary education plays an important and crucial role in the meaningful development of a child. Secondary education is a period of education planned especially for young people of ages approximately from 15 to 18, in which the emphasis is on the basic tools of learning, expression, and understanding to the use and extension of the tools in exploring areas of thought and thinking, and in exploring and acquiring information, concepts, intellectual skills, and attitudes.

It is one which is all the more important because it lays the foundation of the individual's future education or vocational choices, which determines the future occupational, social or economic positions in the society. Without an efficient and progressive system of secondary education, rich and forward looking university education is impossible.

Concept of Intelligence (Mental Ability)

Some distinctions in terminology are warranted at this point. In educational and psychological literature, the terms "intelligence" and "mental ability" are often used in an interchangeable manner.

Snyderman & Rothman (1988) the concept of intelligence is found in the writings of Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, and it predates the birth of Jesus Christ (Walsh & Betz, 1985). The term intelligence is vague and ambiguous in its meaning. Psychologists have been interpreting the term in different ways, and are in disagreement with each other on the meaning of the term, 'intelligence'. According to Cyril Burt, the word "intelligence," originally comes from Latin. It was revived by Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton in the mid nineteenth century as a scientific term, which means "innate, general cognitive capacity"

However, it must be noted that several definitions have been suggested by psychologists but no two psychologists agree on a single definition of the term (Chauhan, 1995).

In the early days of philosophical enquiry, the term intelligence was mostly considered from the narrower point of view of “abstract intelligence”. The early studies of ‘intelligence’ by psychologists in this century were also concerned with operations of abstract intelligence, or performances of the ‘higher mental processes.

Stoddard’s (1943) definition states that “intelligence is the ability to undertake activities that are characterized by (1) difficulty, (2) complexity, (3) abstractness, (4) economy, (5) addictiveness to a good situation, (6) social value, and (7) the emergence of originals, and to maintain such activities under conditions that demand a concentration of energy and a resistance to emotional forces”.

Ways to develop General mental abilities among School children

No children are born equal. While some kids are born with natural knack for numbers and problems, others are naturally athletic and outgoing. A lot of it has to do with our genes, however, the brain is a constantly developing organ that can understand new things from a very young age. The good news is, you can always improve upon the intellectual abilities of young children’s.

According to a study conducted by the Harvard University Preschool Project, the importance of personal experiences and how do they contribute to the mental development of children aged between ages 1.5 to 8 years is monumental. The good or bad experiences during these initial years were found to shape up their intellect for years to come.

Both parents play a crucial role in a child’s upbringing. Parents decide what kind of exposure their young ones should receive, what kind of experiences they should get and the activities that they should indulge in. These make a world of a difference.

Every child’s cognitive ability is different, but you can always improve upon their mental capabilities in their fundamental years. Executive functions, better known as brain functions, involve the basic capabilities of planning, time management and memory-oriented details. By working to enhance these executive functions, you will be influencing their perceived excellence, not only at this stage, but will be setting the tone for their future successes.

According to science, this is easily doable. Mental training activities will accelerate your child’s learning and intellectual capabilities in a fun-filled way. Here are a few ways to ‘rewire’ and unlock your child’s mental potential.

Increase Concentration: Memory and concentration level can be improved by indulging in a few simple activities. For little kids, you can use their toys to train them to keep their attention. Have them count queued up toys and then gradually remove some of them. Ask them which ones have been removed one by one. Help them name the objects present in the house and quiz them about these objects to strengthen their retrievable memories.

Enough Sleep: sleep play a vital role in recharging the brain functions. Some research supports that sleeping in the afternoon for almost an hour can radically boost cognitive learning capabilities. While resting, the brain is not receiving any new information, so it resorts to ‘saving’ the information it was exposed to throughout the day. Children require 10 to 12 hours sleep whereas as teenagers might need 8 to 10 hrs of sleep.

Teaching self –discipline: Children should be taught self-discipline as it paves the way for a potentially bright future. Teach them to be mindful of what their priorities are and how they should go about fulfilling them. Time management is an art that should be learned as early as possible.

According to popular belief, self-discipline is far more important than IQ alone. Some research also backs this up; it shows that the most prominent factor in individual students’ success was will power or grit.

Reading Together: Make sure that you don't only read to your kids, but also read with them. Reading with your child will instill the habit of reading in your child. Reading and discussing bedtime stories will help in awaken your child's imagination and creativity. Reading will also arouse your child's curiosity and capability of imagining things according to their perception. This also acts as an effective basic exercise for the brain.

Encourage Exercise: Exercising actually helps increase learning capacity. According to one study, after exercise the brain picks up vocabulary words 20% quicker. Exercising consistently also increases the blood flow up to 30% to the part of the brain that deals with learning and memory.

Taking Music Lessons: Young children who are enrolled in musical lessons depict a relatively elevated level of brain development as compared to those who aren't enrolled in music lessons.

Mediation: It is never too early to start with meditation techniques to calm and soothe the mind. Teach kids some deep breathing techniques to help improve memory and control emotions. Ask them to imagine that their breathing is like an elevator. By breathing in deeply, the elevator goes up; when breathing out, the elevator goes down.

Play with your children: Play time is the best gift you can give your children. Take out time from your busy schedule to indulge in indoor and outdoor activities with your children. Going for picnics at the beach or at the park will shape your kid's personal experiences. This way the child will be able to learn about his/her surroundings and gain confidence by interacting with the environment. Kids should be encouraged to mingle with other children, so that they learn how to befriend, share with, and respect one another.

Active learning: Rely more on active learning process rather than opting for passive learning activities. Active learning is a method that engages and challenges children's capacity for thinking and learning using real-life and imaginary situations. It includes spontaneous activities, pre-planned and purposeful activities, investigating and exploring around the house or classroom. Learning is a continuous process. Indulge your child in learning activities which not only engage the mind but the body as well.

Definition of Socio-Economic Status

The definitions of SES emphasize that, as a construct, (1) it is conditional, (2) it is imposed on people, (3) it is used for comparisons, (4) it is based on economics, opportunity, and means of influence.

Santrock (2004) defines it as "the grouping of people with similar occupational, educational, and economic characteristics"

Woolfolk (2007) calls SES "the relative standing in society based on income, power, background and prestige".

Santrock (2004) adds that an important qualification is "the ability to control resources and participate in society's rewards".

Woolfolk (2007) also notes that every researcher will define it differently based on the nature of the study. In most discussions, there are three levels of SES: low, moderate, and high. Because most problems associated with low SES are related to poverty, sometimes poverty level is used as a similar concept to low SES. Race may also be considered a factor because Blacks and Latinos are disproportionately represented in the low SES.

Measurement of SES and various components.

The factors that are usually considered in establishing SES are income, occupation, education, neighborhood, and political power. For each of these five factors, the consideration of how fixed each one is also contributes to SES. For example, if a family is considered low income because one of the

parents is in school to eventually get a better job, then the family is not really in the same SES as their neighbors who have little hope of a better job.

The SES of their family usually determines individuals' SES. The SES of the family is calculated based on the measure of the five factors noted above. How well can the family members meet their financial responsibilities? What prestige is associated with the occupation of the head of the household? What level of education have the parents achieved? What is the safety and upkeep of the neighborhood in which the family lives? What hope do the family members reasonably have to influence the government and community policies that affect their lives? A school's SES is determined by the neighborhood in which it is located and by the SES of the families, whose children attend the school.

School outcomes and personal SES.

The negative effects of low SES can interfere with a child's cognitive development. Among families of low SES, there are more occurrences of lead poisoning, fetal alcohol syndrome, and premature birth. Lead poisoning, caused by the child ingesting bits of the lead paint found in old buildings, produces neurological disorders. Children born to women who drink alcohol during pregnancy develop fetal alcohol syndrome, a condition that includes mental retardation. The child from a premature birth experiences a diminished brain development. All of these problems lead to language delays, attention problems, and learning disabilities.

Observed family differences based on SES include those constituting parenting styles. Comparing high SES parents to low SES parents, the high SES parents tend to be less directive and more conversational in their communication with their children. Low SES parents are more likely than the high SES parents to expect obedience without question from their children. Low SES parents encourage their children to conform to society's expectations, while the high SES parents encourage creativity and exploration. These differences foster self-confidence in the high SES students and an uncertainty about life in the low SES students.

Young people in the low SES neighborhood report as many pleasant experiences as the young people in high SES neighborhoods. However, children growing up in a low SES neighborhood are more likely to experience distressing events than their counterparts in the higher SES neighborhoods are. These include physical punishment in the home, domestic violence in their home building, and serious crime in the neighborhood. Such demoralizing experiences lead to higher rates of depression, low self-esteem, and juvenile delinquency among children from the low SES neighborhoods.

Some children are resilient and able to develop normally under difficult conditions. However, for most children long-term problems are associated with the amount of time living in poverty.

The Importance of Socioeconomic Position

Educators, researchers and policy makers are concerned about the degree to which students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are systematically disadvantaged in regard to performance at school, school completion, and participation in post-secondary education and training. Such disadvantage is simply 'not fair' in a modern democratic society such as India. When a relationship between social background and educational achievement is present, then it follows that students from disadvantaged backgrounds face disadvantages at school and later in adult life. Furthermore, it follows that there will be a less efficient matching of ability with occupational destinations, leading to wastage of human resources and arguably economic inefficiencies. Most educational reforms of the last half-century have attempted to make the system fairer so that student performance at school is not related to the socioeconomic background and other ascribed characteristics of the student. If the relationship between socioeconomic background and student performance differs between Australian

education contexts, then it is important to examine the educational policies and institutional arrangements of jurisdictions in which this relationship is substantially weaker.

In this context, the lack of a common measure of socioeconomic position for the reporting of educational outcomes is problematic. Most importantly, it undermines our ability to evaluate the influence of socioeconomic position on educational outcomes, across and within educational jurisdictions, and over time. Such information is necessary in order to assess whether education outcomes are becoming more unequal (socioeconomically speaking) or if the present policy mix is, in fact, reducing the impact of students' socioeconomic background. With the present mix of measures used by different states and systems, we cannot ascertain the overall strength of the relationship between socioeconomic background and educational outcomes, much less any between system and over-time differences. Although the inability to make between system and over-time comparisons is important, the lack of a common measure also has other implications. Differences in educational performance between social groups (for example between non-English-speaking background students, Aboriginal students and other students) may, at least in part, be due to socioeconomic position. Without a common measure of socioeconomic background, it is impossible to make valid conclusions about the independent effects of ethnic background, home language or culture on performance between systems or over time. Similarly, the influence of locality needs to be distinguished from socioeconomic influences in the assessment of differences in educational outcomes between urban and rural students. The Indian situation can be contrasted with other countries, such as the United States, where the relationship between socioeconomic background and schooling outcomes is part of national reporting.

Conclusion:

Mental ability, and Socio-economic status of the students important which turn their futures of life i.e. In their Academic performance, so it is necessary of them. Because of the present study, of each kind of student can be known. In addition, with help of it adjustment-producing reason can be solved. This study is useful to give guidance of the college student. To know and to remove the problem of individual and social adjustment. And Emotional problems of the Student find out by teacher and principal, friends and family by various researches. Parent and teachers focus always on academic performance through nurturing mental ability, socio-economic. They give tiniest importance to their academic performance.

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