

IDENTIFYING FACTORS FOR BEING SLOW LEARNER IN PRIMARY CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to identify the factors for being slow learner in primary classes. Variables in this research were the factors related to the students' personality and environment outside the school such as parents' support, guidance outside the school and motivation to start work. Population involved in research was 418 students of primary classes from private school. Observational technique was used to collect the data twice with the help of class teachers. Analyzing of data help to identify the factors which can be eliminate or improve which affect students' academic achievements. This research is expected to support the idea for further research to explore more factors for being slow learner and techniques which help to improve performance of primary classes' slow learner.

KEYWORDS: *Slow learners, Attendance, Wrong guidance, Language, Academic achievements.*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of transferring knowledge, skill and abilities from one person to another. It also help human to progress and prosperity for standard living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). Any class contains not only the students with high learning skills, in any class students are present too which always struggle in learning. They always take support of other skilled students in presenting any work or completing their own work. These types of students never come up with any different ideas from class or creative work. Some time they think different but do not have courage to present it independently, they feel shy or have fear to being rejected. Such type of students are consider as slow learners. (Daniel Willingham, 2011).

All students are consider as the adult of society in future which run the functions of the society everyone have to perform some specific job but if we look for slow learners, will be they are able to perform any quality work in future? Definitely they will struggle in their life. Carroll, (2004) "Slow learners are students with below average cognitive abilities and who struggle to cope with the traditional academic demands of the regular classroom". This is the responsibility for their parents, guardians and teachers to help them in order to overcome on all type of weaknesses.

Slow learners' needs external stimulation and motivation to do simple work which are expected from their age group. It is not necessary that the slow learners have low cognitive level or have less intellectual abilities. There are so many different factors which affect the students' intellectual abilities. If a family or teachers can identify the factors which affect the students' progress can help the students to improve their skills. Teacher must analyze the spatial abilities of the slow learner in order to improve learning achievements.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This study focused on "Identifying the factors for being Slow Learner". It is the very important responsibility of teachers to make learning of all students up to the same level. Teacher must plan the lesson which can accommodate all the students including slow learners, but he/she can do it if teacher knows all the factors which are hinders in students' academic progress. Teacher must identify the factors which are the reasons of being slow learner. Learners which have less support from home and teachers faces higher anxiety and never shows good academic performance. For better learning it is necessary that family support the learner along with the teacher assistance. (Leong, & Ahmadi, 2017).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: To identify the factors for being slow learner it is very necessary for teacher to collect the data on the basis of following questions:

1. Does the student complete his/her work on time?
2. Does the student has attendance less than 80%?
3. Does the student needs help while doing any task?

4. Does the student can understand language in which instructions are given?
5. Does the student has support at home to complete homework?
6. Does the student has correct guidance at home?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. There are no student related factors which cause of being slow learner during age of 7-11.
2. There is no significant effect of student related factors on student academic performance in primary classes.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Mostly studies explained the following factors which affect students' performance: unskilled teachers, lack of reading habit, lack teaching material in school and uncomfortable learning environment but all these factors depend upon school and teacher. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors which are related with student and student' environment outside the school. In the process of providing quality education to students, must focus on school, and students related factors because they are the very important provision of robust education to the children (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Some students have strong intellectual abilities but their environment or guidance at home make them confused and decrease their cognitive level.

JUSTIFICATION OF STUDY

This study helps the researcher to get the idea that factors outside the school also affect the students' learning process in the school. Student which has strong support of family emotionally and financially is more confident and represents ideas boldly. Students with weak support and wrong guidance always suffer in all type of competitions. Students from poor families also faces health issues which make them to score lower grades but this factor is not considered as an important issue. Absence from school during activity time also affect the student's motor skills and student never learn to be think critically. Irregularity affect the progress because student skip what teacher explained about topics, so student do not understand the sequence and relation of content.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This study is focus on to identifying factors to being slow learner of age group of 7 -11 years. This is the age when student start to learn independently and has more social interaction. During this age most of the confidence build and student become familiar with own abilities. This study is done by observing students of class I –V of well-organized private school of Karachi. Duration of observation is of nearly 6 months. Observation was done according to the specific criteria in the form of check list. Check list was approved by one of successful educationist. Observation of same population was done twice (first round was done after Midterm examinations and second was done after final term examinations) in order to analyze the factors.

DELIMITATION OF STYDY

This study does not cover the factors which are related to school management for example teachers' skill, teaching method, teaching material and school environment. Study does not look for specific gender and choice of subject which slow learners liked. Basically slow learners usually like different subjects but they struggle to cope up with all subjects. It is very rare that a slow learner score better grade in any specific subject which the student like, due to this reason subject choice is not considered in this study. Students below 80% attendance due any UN common situation is also not considered in this study however irregular students were observed in the study.

BASIC ASSUMPTION OF STUDY

It is expected from this study that it would help the researcher to identify the factors for being slow learner which are related with students personal issues and situations created due to the environmental affect. Slow learners perform activities other the academic activities in a good manner so it is very hard to find slow learner among other students. Slow learner easily hide their weakness from teacher's eye by taking support of their peer. This study would give idea to teachers to not only identify slow learner but also provide support to them for improving their academic achievements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slow learners are not considered as mentally retarded children, they are the students which need extra care and attention in class. (MacMillan, Gresham, Bocian, & Lambros, 1998). Teacher can make them an average students by teaching through special instructional techniques.

There are different factors which are the reasons of being slow learners. If students with average cognitive level face different problems with respect to their environment, emotions and personal factors are become slow learner. These students usually sit at the backbenches to hide their selves from the teacher's eye. The best brains of the nation may be found on the last benches of the classroom by improve learning of slow learner we can increase literacy rate of nation, May be some of them become country developer in future. For it teachers must provide them remedial classes according to their need. Similarly its parent's responsibility as well to provide support and help to their children at home if they are slow learner. (Gouwens, 2002). Slow learner faces problem to understand the symbols, numbers and languages as well. (Bodang & Lengkat, 2021).

FACTORS AFFECT LEARNING

For betterment of slow learner's education it is very important to identify the factors which affect their progress. Some basic problems are as follow.

PERSONAL FACTORS

HEALTH

Health is one of the factor which is hinders in the progress of students' academic performance. Some students are suffering in disease by birth which is incurable or may be due to family financial situation student does not get the proper treatment. Students from poor families do not get the healthy food which lead them to deficiency of important nutrients, Due to which such students become inactive in class. If any student living in such condition would never pay proper attention towards studies and become slow learner. It is necessary that all students get same type of health monitoring to remove this factor.

LANGUAGE BARRIER

Sometime slow learners do not understand the instructions given by teacher, they need personal time of teacher to understand the instructions, and some researches showed that instructions in second language are more difficult to understand by slow learners. When teacher explain sequence of tasks or instructions to do any activity in second or third language, slow learners take time to understand or they take help of any peer to understand. They never ask teacher to explain again and sit quietly (Wanabuliandari, Ardianti, Gunarhadi, & Rejekiningsih, 2021) its teacher's responsibility to make sure that slow learner understand the instructions while starting the lesson and explanation. If students did not understand it then teacher must explain in a manner by which slow learner understand the learning process.

CONFIDENCE ON SELF

Above average students always start working independently, they do not need support to start their work. But slow learners do not have confidence to start their work. They are always confuse about their own work. Slow learner need assistance from their teacher to guide them for the starting step of work for example How to start writing? Which method is suitable to solve math problem? Etc. Means they can do the work but have feared that weather they are right or wrong to choose the way to start working. Slow learners waited for help and always complete their work after the deadline.

PUNCTUALITY

It is very important for student to attend the complete session of academic year in order to gain knowledge of grade level. If student missed this session more than 25% then the student definitely missed a part of content which will have the connection with the future knowledge. Due to this when teacher explain any new topic such students are confuse or may not understand that topic in depth. Gradually this condition leads them to become slow learner. It is not necessary that student get absent due to illness, some time they are habitual. To hide their weakness slow learners make excuses to do not attend the school in front of families, complain about illness, at that point families do not take it seriously and allow to take off from school.

ENVIROMENTAL FACTOR

PARENTAL SUPPORT

BUSY PARENTS: Students spend maximally 1 hour of the day with any subject teacher during which they get new knowledge or reinforcement of learn topic but the home work which they supposed to do at home is a big task for them. At home they do not get teacher's support, so they ask help from parents. Slow learners needed more help than average student but if parents do not provide sufficient help and guidance due their busy routine they are unable to complete home task. Lack of reinforce of content is hinders in developing the strong concepts. Such students always struggle to complete their home task.

LACK OF COLLABORATION

Students' learning is not only done with the help of teachers, it is the process in which parents take part as well with teachers. For this parents must know their children progress time to time. Schools arrange parents teacher meeting to discuss students' progress and to set the special instructional techniques for slow learners with parents. Those parents who attend the meetings can help their children to become successful in achieving standard education but those who do not give importance to such type of meeting would never help to their children to get ride from their problems and weaknesses.

WRONG GUIDANCE

AT HOME Children of educated parents do not face problem in having support and help at home because their environment is supportive from their childhood but uneducated parents cannot provide help in learning to their children. Parents who got education under matric level try to support their children but sometime they guide them wrong.

TUTORIAL Parents who do not have time and those who are illiterate send their children to tuitions without knowing that whether the tuition teacher is capable or not. All tuition teachers cannot teach all type of education boards patterns which also cause of wrong guidance. Wrong guidance make the student confused He/she learning different method at school and tuition teacher forcefully ask them to use their method. Such type of students never score better in assessments and gradually become slow learner. (Ruhela, 2014).

SUPPORT FOR SLOW LEARNERS TO MAKE THEM AVERAGE STUDENTS

Providing support to slow learn means to help them in improving their learning abilities. After taking some important measures they can perform up to their best level. It is very important that who is going to provide help to them and how?

There are three main sources by which they can get help to become average student.

TEACHERS SUPPORT

MOTIVATION Teacher must boost their confidence level by appreciating them on their little effort to do anything. Teacher does not compare slow learners' work with other above average students because each child has his own capability to do things. Always appreciate them by judging their work according to their maximum potential.

FEEDBACK Never give feedback with harsh wording. Always first start with some positive point then point out their weakness and at the end suggest them the solution. It helps to build strong bonding with slow learners. They will trust on teacher and share their problems with teacher and when they solve own problems they start believing on their self.

REMEDIAL CLASS Teacher must observed the weak point of students and prepare customize lesson plan for them. Teach them with the help of special instructions. Arrange remedial classes of language and writing skills for slow learners to improve their academic achievements.

2) PARENTS' SUPPORT

HEALTHY ENVIROMENT- Student under stress can never concentrate on study and never be creative. Parents must provide peaceful environment and at home while student doing their homework. They must help them when they have problem in doing their work but guide them according to the method which are following in the school.

ATTENDANCE Primary student depend upon parents that they will prepare all the school stuff and drop to school on time but if parents do not care about student regularity than student missed a lot of work. This habit develop fear in students that may get punishment to do not submitting their work on time. So parents must be careful about student punctuality and send them school with proper school stuff.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Slow learners have low IQ level they perform good in other activities such arts and sport rather than their academic activities, because of this it is hard to identify the slow learner among average students in class. Teacher can identify them through regular observation and by taking assessment. There are three different methods which help the teacher to identify factors for being slow learners.

1. Case study
2. Observation method
3. Achievement test

In this study observation method was used to identify the factors for being slow learner. It is an action research in which researcher involve by self along with subject teachers of class I -V. Parent teachers meetings were conducted by researcher.

Observation was done for students of Class I- V of private school which includes students of age group of 7-11 in total they were 418. Students of this age group are more dependent on teacher and parents rather than the students of middle school. During this age they start interacting with others and learning new skills. These years are more precious than others because during this time period their confidence builds, they explore their strength and learn different behaviors. If student passing through any difficult condition during this time period it affects his/her academic achievements and students become slow learner.

Observation sheet was used as the research instrument. Sheet was check by one successful educationist. It includes total strength and factors which could be the reason for being slow learner. Factors which are related to students

1. When student need motivation to start class work as well as homework. This is the reason when student does not choose right way to start work.
2. One of the important factor is attendance below 75%.
3. English Language is commonly used in Pakistani school as second language but English for the students which belongs to Northern areas and interior parts of provinces is considered as third language. Their mother tongue are different and Urdu is their second language.
4. Healthy student can focus better to academic activities than ill or weak student.

5. Students of primary classes need help from parents along with teacher, so parental support is one of significant factor.

6. Learning must be same in school and at home in order to build sustainable knowledge. Wrong guidance is one of the important factor.

Data was collected twice first round was done after Midterm examination to observe the current situation. Before examination parent teacher meeting was conducted but this time no reminder was sent to parents for parents teacher meeting who did not attend it. Similarly teachers were using same teaching techniques for all students of same class. They provide knowledge to all students in same time frame without giving extra time to students who did not score good grades in class assessments.

After this some important measures were taken such as parents’ teacher meeting was conducted to eliminate the environmental and personal factors. Reminders were sent repeatedly to those parents who did not attend it. Session for parents was arranged who provided wrong guidance to their children and also ask them to guide tuition teachers what they know about the school strategies. Teachers introduced new teaching techniques to improve the confidence level of slow learners so they can start their work independently. Elimination of language barrier is one of the difficult process, remedial classes of English were arranged for slow learners. After all this effort Second round was done after Final term examination.

This chapter includes all the detail of collected data. In each class teachers identify the slow learners on the basis of set criteria. Some slow learners fall in more than 2 categories. For example Students who need motivation to start class work also need motivation to start homework. Students who have language barrier also fall in no parental support category.

Table 1

IDENTIFYING FACTORS FOR BEING SLOW LEARNER IN PRIMARY CLASSES									
SUMMARY OF FACTORS AFTER MID TERM EXAMINATION									
CLASS	Total Strength	Slow Learner	Needs Motivation To Start C.W	Needs Motivation To Start H.W	Attendance Below 75%	English As 3rd Language	Health Issue	No Parental Support	Wrong Guidance At Home
I	90	21	10	10	5	3	2	7	6
II	82	11	11	11	4	7	2	9	4
III	86	30	30	30	5	10	4	12	9
IV	88	20	20	20	8	13	2	8	4
V	72	21	21	21	7	15	2	5	2
Total	418	103	92	92	29	48	12	41	25

From data it is clear that rate of no parental support is high in class III, till class II students are more dependent on home teachers and parents are used to for it but in class III students learn from subject teacher who spend maximally 1 hour with students. At this point few parents did not realize that their child need more attention than before. In Class IV-V the rate of language barrier is more than other classes because in lower classes teachers used more simple language but in Class IV-V standard of language is little higher. Due to this students suffer more in these classes for which English is third language.

Graphical representation of the observed data

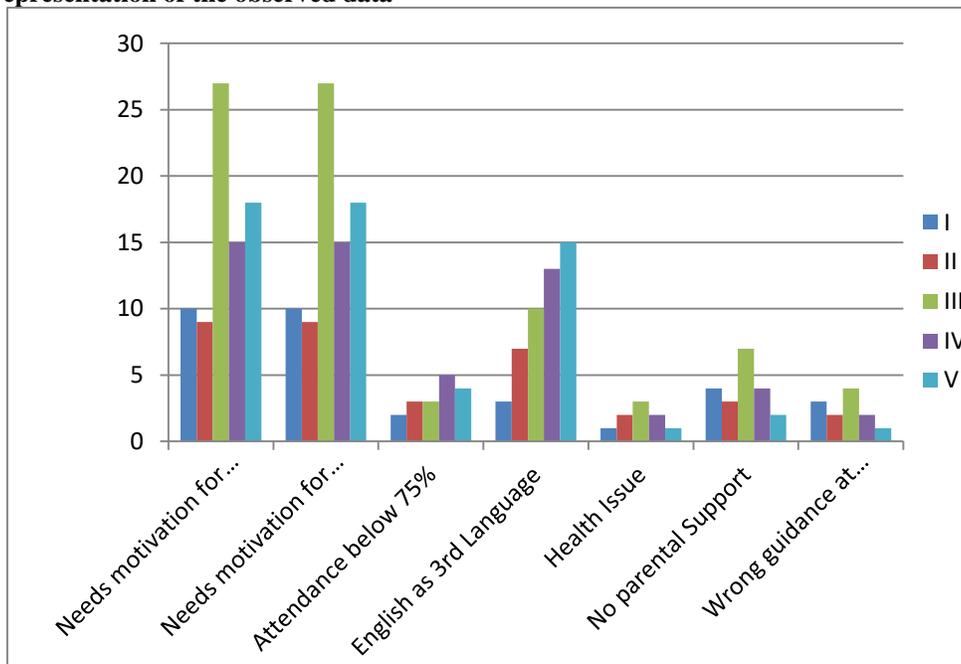


Figure 1

Teachers made improvement in slow learners with the collaboration of parents. Some parents started to support their children and make sure that their children get right guidance at home to complete their homework. This action boosted students’ confidence and few of them showed remarkable improvement in doing activities and daily routine academic work. Data of second round is given below.

Table 2

IDENTIFYING FACTORS FOR BEING SLOW LEARNER IN PRIMARY CLASSES									
SUMMARY OF FACTORS AFTER FINAL TERM EXAMINATION									
Class	Total Strength	Slow Learner	Needs Motivation To Start C.W	Needs Motivation To Start H.W	Attendance Below 75%	English As 3 rd Language	Health Issue	No Parental Support	Wrong Guidance At Home
I	90	10	8	8	2	3	1	4	3
II	82	9	8	8	3	7	2	3	2
III	86	19	11	11	3	6	3	7	4
IV	88	11	9	9	5	5	2	4	2
V	72	7	5	5	4	4	1	2	1
Total	418	56	41	41	17	25	9	20	12

Data shows that attendance rate below 75% improve in Class I-II because these students can’t resist to parents when they forced to go school however students of Class IV-V convince parents to take off from school.

Graphical presentation of given data

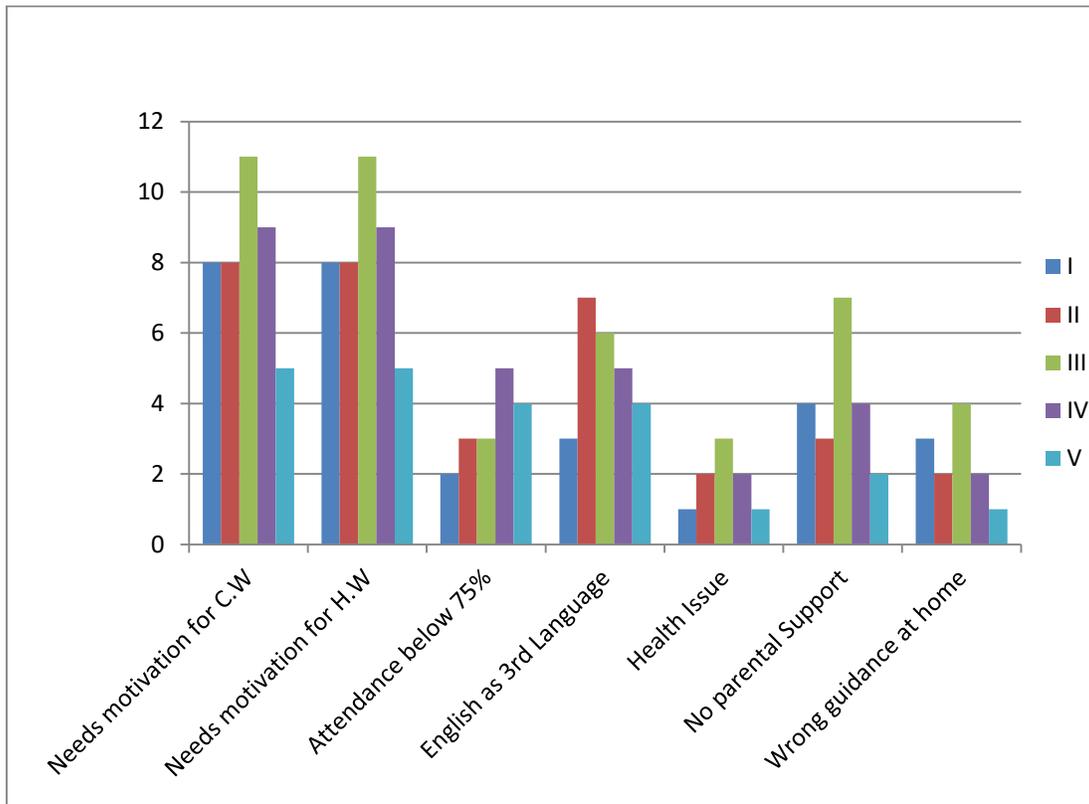


Figure 2

Remedial classes of English are more successful in Class IV-V because students are more sensible than lower classes they understand its importance and focused more which decrease the rate of language barrier in these classes.

FINDINGS

Academic achievements of students depend upon several factors which are connected with students’ personality and environment. Students who do not get proper and enough support from parents always struggle to express their ideas and depend upon others to do any work. Such students always need motivation to start their own work. Lack of confidence is the biggest factor for being slow learner. Those who are confident but do not know the language of teacher’s instructions and explanation cannot understand the content and unable to attempt the assessments in proper way. Due to this they never score better grades and become slow learner.

If student get absent during academic session more than 25% means loss of knowledge. All classes are interlink with each other in other words content of any class is the progression of previous class content if student is habitual to get absent never understand the basic of new content and gradually stand in the que of slow learner.

We do not have doubt to say that health is wealth. A healthy student can perform better than the ill or weak student. Health is one of the significant factor for being slow learner. Those who suffer in by birth disease which is incurable always struggle in assessments. But those who become temporarily ill can cope up with the class level.

One of important finding is wrong guidance at home. In some cases Parents and tuition teachers guided wrong methods to complete their work and force them to follow that wrong way which make students confuse. Due to which students use different and wrong way in class assessment as well, this make them to lose marks and at the end they become slow learner.

CONCLUSION

Slow learners are considered as the children with different mindset, they are unlikely as mentally retarded children and as average children as well. Teachers and parents must collaborate to identify the factors which affect the students’ academic achievements and cause to make them slow learner. Factors are not only depending upon the school environment, they also linked with the health, language, parental support and guidance from other persons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is parent's responsibility to take follow up of their child's academic progress in order to build the strong personality. Parents must attend parents' teacher meeting and discuss their child weakness and set special strategies with teachers to overcome these weaknesses.
- Remedial classes must be arrange in schools for those students who have language problem.
- Parents must focus on children's health, provide them healthy food to fulfill their body needs. In case of illness consult with child specialist for better treatment. Healthy child can learn better.
- Parents must make sure that their child attends the school's complete academic session. Do not trust on children fake excuses which they make to avoid school. Students with more than 75% attendance can excel in academic assessment.
- First Parents and tuition teachers should understand the school's strategies and learning method before guiding the students to complete homework rather than to guide them wrong way of working.
- If parents are illiterate than they must ask school teachers to explain the strategies to tuition teachers. Keep tuition teachers in a loop.

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