

A STUDY ON CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND THEIR CURIOSITY

Dona Rai

Assistant Professor, Loyola College of Education, Namchi, South Sikkim

ABSTRACT

Curiosity is about being aware and open, checking things out, experimenting, and interacting with in one's surroundings. It is a tendency to wonder, to inquire, to investigate and to seek information about anything that is new or unknown. It is an essential part of human consciousness as it contributes to learning, problem solving and creative thinking. In other words a satisfied curiosity can be called as an emotionally healthy curiosity. There is a connection in the brain between curiosity, memory and learning. Thus, it can also be said that emotionally healthy child will have better retention and learning habits. When the child enters the school (s)he/she becomes more eager to learn, this is the age of socializing. At this age the child starts making friends and trusting people outside his/her family. It is very important to nurture their curiosity at this age (at primary school) because this is where the base is formed.

For the present study 144 children studying in different private schools in Namchi town were selected from the total population of 223. To assess children's curiosity, Children's Curiosity Scale (English version) developed by Dr. Rajiv Kumar (2009) was used and for academic achievement of the students, the annual result of the previous class was analysed. No significant correlation was found between children's academic achievement and their curiosity.

KEYWORDS: *Curiosity, Academic Achievement*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

The integral part of health and physical education in the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009) are medical care, hygienic school environment, school lunch, health and physical education, and emotional health. Healthy children create a healthy future of the society. This is the duty of every teacher to help them to achieve their emotional and other physical needs. One of the mode of satisfying emotional needs is satisfying Curiosity of the children. The philosopher Cicero has defined curiosity as a love of knowledge without the lure of profit (1914), in other words, an intrinsic passion to know. Aristotle (1947) has claimed that the desire to know is among the deepest human urges. It is the drive that brings learners to knowledge.

Curiosity grows from the safe and familiar environment. As the child grows his/her contacts grows too. To familiarize the unknown and new the child becomes curious and aware. In other words curiosity is about being aware and open, checking things out, experimenting, and interacting within one's surroundings. It is curiosity that makes learning more effective and enjoyable. It is a tendency to wonder, to inquire, to investigate and to seek information about anything that is new or unknown. It is an essential part of human consciousness as it contributes to learning, problem solving and

creative thinking. As curious students not only ask questions, but also actively seek out the answers. There is a connection in the brain between curiosity, memory and learning.

Throughout the years, researchers have conducted several factor analyses to gain a better understanding of curiosity. They have used curiosity inventories, curiosity rating scales, and behavioural observations to explore curiosity in adults and children.

Importance of Curiosity

Curiosity enhances learning process by making mind active and observant. Just like human body that needs a continuous exercise to be fit and healthy, the mind does need to be active to be ready to learn new things. A curious mind is always active as it keeps looking for new knowledge. Active minds thus learn effectively and can have efficient retention power. A curious mind expects and anticipates new ideas, and it opens up the new worlds of possibilities. It also brings excitement into life. All old and new inventions and discoveries could only be possible because the inventors were curious enough. They wanted to quench their thirst for knowledge and kept on exercising their mind by continuous inquiry and investigation.

NEED AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

A child is born curious because this is a human nature and they are always eager to learn. One needs to nurture this trait of the child. As the child grows their curiosity grows as well and it has to be satisfied and taken care of. When the child enters into school (s)he becomes more eager to learn, this is the age of socializing. At this age the child starts making friends and trusting people outside his/her family. The boundary of the child broadens. It is very important to quench their eagerness or curiosity at this age (at primary school) because this is where the base is formed. Here, school teachers can play a crucial role to understand children's curiosity and act accordingly. According to Crow (1961), satisfying of children's curiosity about the unknown can be a strong motivation force in learning that challenges a teacher's imagination and ingenuity.

Thus, this study attempts to assess the curiosity level and academic achievement of children studying at primary level. Furthermore, it will also try to give some suggestions on the teachers' role to enhance curiosity of children.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS USED

- **Curiosity:** It's the pursuit and recognition of new information and experiences. Most people think about curiosity when something interesting, bizarre, or challenging pops into their field of vision – then they'll be intrigued.
- **Academic Achievement:** It refers to the children's annual result of previous class.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate the academic achievement of students of class V and VI.
- To evaluate the relationship of academic achievement and curiosity of students of class V and VI.
- To imply some possible roles that teachers and parents can play for the enhancement of children's curiosity.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant correlation between academic achievement and curiosity of students of class V and VI.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study is delimited to the students studying in class V and VI (2017-18) in five different private schools in Namchi town of South district of Sikkim. These schools are Mount Carmel Academy, Seven Hills School, Tendong Educational Institute, Namchi Public School and JMK Memorial School.

LIMITATION

The present study has a limitation on the ground that the data were collected through self-report measures. There is a possibility of the problems of socially desirable and faking responses. In spite of such limitations, self-report measures are widely used all over the world for collecting data because this is one of the important ways of collecting data in social sciences.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The total number of students studying in class V and VI in different private schools in Namchi town constitutes the total population of the study, which is 223, from which the sample of 144 students were drawn out by applying random sampling method.

TOOLS USED

For the present study following tools were used to collect data and methods were adopted to analyse the data:

- Children's Curiosity Scale (English version) developed by Dr. Rajiv Kumar (2009).
- For academic achievement of students, the annual result of previous class of students was analysed.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive method of research was applied to conduct the present study. A descriptive study describes and interprets what is. It is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, the effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions.

Descriptive research deals with the relationships between variables, the testing of hypotheses, and the development of generalizations, principles, or theories that have universal validity. Descriptive research is sometimes divided into correlations, research, causal-comparative research, and other descriptive research that is neither co-relational nor designed to find causation but describes existing conditions.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The mean score was used for each variable to determine its status under the sample. The values of standard deviation were used to measure the dispersion of scores in the distribution.

The following Table Shows Academic Achievement of Children of Class IV and V Session 2016-17

Table 1: Academic Achievement

C. I.	F	Statistics	Limit of Scores	No.	%	Interpretation
90 – 99	21	N = 144 M = 68.81 SD = 18.02	61% & above	93	65	High Achievers
80 – 89	29		41% to 60%	41	28	Average Achievers
70 – 79	20		40% & below	10	7	Low Achievers
60 – 69	26					
50 – 59	28					
40 – 49	12		I = 10	N = 144	144	100
30 – 39	5					
20 – 29	2					
10 – 19	1					

The Above Table Shows

- A good number (65%) of children studying in IV and V are categorized as high achievers.
- Average achievers were found to be less in number (28%).
- Only 7% of children were low achievers who were studying in class IV and V.

The following table shows coefficient correlation between academic achievement and curiosity

Table 2: Relationship between Academic Achievement and Curiosity of Children

Variable Involved	Sample Size (N)	Computed Value of r	Table Value of r	DF	Significant of Level
Academic Achievement X Curiosity	144	-.156	.182	142	NS

From the above table it is revealed that the null hypothesis is accepted. This shows that there is no significant correlation between academic achievement and curiosity of students of class V and VI.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**The Major Findings of the Study are**

- A good number (65%) of school children are high achievers which is followed by 28% of average achievers. Low achievers were found to be very less (7%).
- No significant correlation was found between school children's academic achievement and curiosity.

DISCUSSIONS

Some of the research done in the past that is closely related to the study undertaken have been discussed ahead. Archana Sharma, Nisha Chacko and Ira Singhal (2007) undertook a study to assess the function of curiosity on academic achievement in late childhood. They affirmed that there is a significant association between academic achievement and curiosity of children. Neel and Sylvia (1990) in their study found a relationship between curiosity and academic achievement among black and white junior high school science pupils in Cape Town. The study undertaken is in disagreement with the studies mentioned above.

SUGGESTIONS

Taking care of children's every query may be challenging for adults, but it is necessary to understand that for a child, everything around him/her is new, and hence exciting. This latent inquisitiveness of children leaves them awestruck at almost everything they look at. Children are naturally curious from early infancy. Teacher and parents can take responsibilities to develop and nurture curiosity in children. The following paragraphs explain different roles that can be played by both parents and teachers in this pursuit.

- Games and other physical activities are perhaps the best way to inculcate curiosity among children. They are basically inquisitive about their toys and belongings. Hence, parents must develop interesting play activities that will help their child to quench his/her curiosity. Science toys can be a good tool to develop curiosity in the infant brain.
- Parents should encourage children to explore their natural surroundings. This external exploration paves the way for introspection which in turn inspires curiosity.
- Children should be encouraged to ask questions. As we all know, having answers to questions is the first step towards satiating the basic thirst for knowledge. For this teachers can create safe, secure and supportive classroom where the student feels confident to clear his doubts
- Parents must teach children to be good observers. Keen observation is the perfect complement for a curious mind. Parents should also help to improve their child's attention span.
- Teachers can promote critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, collaborative learning and team working skills among children.

CONCLUSIONS

Academic and non-academic achievement of children at primary level is very important. At this stage they learn various social skills. They also learn to react to any new situation which differs from one child to another. Every new situation to them is a chance to explore and thus the skill of inquiry develops. This skill of inquiry needs due consideration as it may influence their academic achievement. As children investigate, the experiences simultaneously fuel emotional, social, intellectual, physical, and ethical development.

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