



The effect of school culture in developing helping attitude among students

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Abstract

The proposed research paper aims to investigate the effect of school culture (Vedic & Non-Vedic School Culture) on the level of helping attitude of school students. To carry out the study, 200 new entrants of Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools were randomly selected and sampled (100 students from each school) from the state of Uttar Pradesh with 50 girls and 50 boys in both the groups. 100 students who took admission in the month of July in Vedic Schools were included into experimental group and similarly 100 new entrants were selected from the Non-Vedic Schools and they were categorized in control group. Experimental group were exposed to Yoga, Havan and Ved-Path daily as a part of school curriculum for six months whereas no such exposure was provided to control group. Helping Attitude Scale (HAS) developed by Nickell, G.(1998) was administered to carry the research, it is a 20 items scale with reliability and validity .83 & .90. The statistical analysis was carried on IBM SPSS version 24 using independent 't' test & paired 't' test. After the intervention, Results showed the significant difference in helping attitude of new entrants in Vedic Schools due to school culture. The findings of the study have shown that after intervention there was an enhancement in the helping attitude among Vedic entrants while no specific changes were measured in helping attitude among Non-Vedic entrants after the intervention.

Keywords: Helping Attitude, School Culture, Vedic & Non-Vedic School Culture.

Introduction

The issues of depression, stress, anxiety and aggression are getting regular in adults as well as in adolescents. It was evaluated by Adolescent Depression Awareness Program (2010) that nearly 5% young people begin experiencing stress and depression from a tender age. This directly point out at the loopholes in lifestyle of children and their school culture which fails to preach self-control and restrain. The present day schools are unable to impart the fundamental life skills i.e. to be happy, optimistic, hopeful, resilient, mental wellbeing, self-efficacy, helping, empathy and so on. These days, the significant reason of stress among students is anxiety or academic stress (Bartwal and Raj, 2013).

Adolescence is that period of a young person's life when he runs over major physical, mental and emotional changes. Amid this stage, a transition happens from youth to adulthood. They confront various challenges identified with psychological

wellness, mental health disorders, development, and adjustment issues at school. An immature invests greater part of his energy in schools since adolescence; in this way his propensities, states of mind, and conduct design are represented by the qualities that he has gained from the culture of his school. Right around fifteen years of a youth's beginning life is spent in school with their companions. A child gets affected more by his companions and educators instead of his family. It is striking that companions or peer groups may influence the identity of an individual decidedly as well as negatively. Along these lines, it won't be wrong to state that the identity of an individual is molded amid the school years.

The school culture may either create an individual who is exceedingly 'conceited, adamant, aggravating, emotionally immature and unsatisfied with life and loved ones' or it might shape a person who is positively equipped. School culture is the set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the 'Persona' of the school (Peterson, 1998). Life Skills helps to handle situations in a better way. But right approach towards education is very important because it prepares an individual for the life-long challenges. A child full of negativity will most likely be at risk for developing behavioral problems or anxiety and depressive disorders (Silk & Movacs, 2005).

Positive education promotes well-being among students (Kristjansson, 2012). Positive skills are obtained only in a positive environment, if a school provides such an environment that promotes the feelings of togetherness, helping (over self-centered attitude), hope, self-efficacy (for the welfare of society), empathy (that makes a person see the world as one place) then the students will come out with the qualities of a superior being which will help him to face future adversities with ease and positive outlook. Positive school culture helps in developing positive characteristics in the students.

The age of onset of emotional problems is decreasing day by day among children in the recent past in India (Peterson, 2006). The issues of behavior and psychological wellbeing are increasing (Gaur et al, 2013). The hectic life is becoming a reason for emotional crisis among youth (Mills, 2016). If negative attributes like stress, depression, anxiety, laziness, aggression, betrayal etc keeps on accumulating then the future consequences will be very serious; it will affect the school performance, social and emotional life. (Napotilana, 2013).

The Vedic Education liberates and generates 'self-realization' within an individual since it emphasizes more on moral education. Moral education will help in creating a more reasonable and responsible individual as it facilitates positive learning that generates positive values (i.e. self motivation, life satisfaction, positive outlook) [Aggarwal,2004].The Vedic School Culture focuses on overall development of a student by instilling values, character and spiritual intelligence from an early life. "Gurukul Education System helps in creating a more balanced personality while compared to modern pattern of education" (Rangan, 2009). Positive education ignites positive wellbeing among Students (Kristjansson, 2012), resilience, positive emotion and positive characteristics among youth.

The curriculum prescribed in Vedic Schools is equipped with practicing yoga, performing Havan and reciting Ved-Paath that helps the students to stay fit, positive

and focused. These three activities forms the basis of Vedic School Culture and each one of them uniquely helps in instilling some positive attributes within the students.

An individual experiences the positive emotions due to the act of receiving help. Helping also inspires people to be more helpful and kind-hearted towards others. Therefore, the act of helping continues to influence unending chains of people, it motivates people to become helpful (Algoe et al, 2009). Helping behavior is the willingness or the degree of concern for the welfare of others. It has long-lasting effect on the personality of an individual since helping others lead to happiness. There are innumerable scholarly views on the benefits of helping. In context of helping, Saint Francis of Assisi has said that “For it is in giving that we receive”. It explains the benefits of helping, helping not only makes the receiver happy but also makes the doer happier and healthier because it connects people and makes them feel related (Post, 2005).

The greater purpose and benefit attained from helping others can be seen in the words of Goldie Hawn “Giving back is as good for you as it is for those you are helping, because giving gives you purpose- driven life, you’re a happier person”. The act of helping others benefits the giver as well as the receiver. The function behind helping others may relatively be selfish or unselfish (Baron & Byrne, 1999). For centuries, the helping attitude was assumed to be motivated by egoism (i.e. helping was pursued to fulfill selfish motive or for personal benefit). With the advancement and expansion of knowledge in the field of positive psychology resulted in developing a different perspective. The researches carried out in few past years shows that positive emotions and positive behavioral traits like empathy, hope, helping attitude, optimism, pro-social behavior positively affects the well-being of an individual (Baron & Byrne, 1999). The feeling of empathy gives rise to the feeling of helping others when an individual witness the other people in distress and troubles (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

The helping attitude helps in creating a happier community (Fowler & Christakis, 2010). Human beings are social animals, they take birth, grow, live and gradually die but during this process they went through various emotions, build relationships and form communities which differentiate their life from animals and gives greater meaning to their existence. Leo Tolstoy has rightly said that “The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity”. Therefore, helping is a powerful pathway to achieve happiness by developing an emotional bond with others and to achieve personal growth (Brown et al, 2010). It is also positively linked with psychological well-being (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007).

According to the findings of various researches, helping behavior has shown positive results in diminishing stress, anxiety and depression among people. It has a strong association with improved mental health by reducing negative traits by turning the individual hopeful. The act of helping others make the person feel better about one, improves his level of self-esteem, reduces the anti-social traits or behavior problems and also results in improved academic achievement (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007) as it helps in giving sense of purpose in life.

Objective

To study the impact of school culture (Vedic & Non- Vedic) on the helping attitude of school students.

To study the impact of school culture (Vedic & Non- Vedic) on the helping attitude between girls & boys.

Hypothesis

- (H1) There would be no significant difference in helping attitude of those students who study in Vedic Culture Schools & Non-Vedic Culture Schools at the entry level.
- (H2) There would be no significant difference in helping attitude between girls & boys at the entry level.
- (H3) Vedic school culture significantly enhances helping attitude among school students after intervention.
- (H4) There would be no significant difference in helping attitude between girls & boys after intervention.

Sample

Total 200 students from Vedic culture (experimental group) & Non-Vedic culture (control group) Schools of west Uttar Pradesh were sampled in order to study role of school culture in enhancing helping attitude of the students. The students between the age ranges of 12-18years, studying in grades 6-12th were sampled. Equal number of girls and boys were included in this study.

Group	Gender	Class	Age
Experimental Group (Vedic schools)	50 Girls	VI-XII	12-18yrs
	50 Boys	VI-XII	12-18yrs
Control Group (Non-Vedic Schools)	50 Girls	VI-XII	12-18yrs
	50 Boys	VI-XII	12-18yrs

Tool

The Helping Attitude Scale (HAS) developed by Nickell, G. (1998). It is 20 items scale. A 20-item measure of respondents' beliefs, feelings, and behaviors associated with helping. Each item is answered on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items 1, 5, 8, 11, 18, 19 are reverse scored. The scores for each item are summed up to form an overall score, ranging from 20 to 100. According to the author, a 60 is a neutral Score. It was translated into English to Hindi. The reliability & validity is .83 & .90.

Research Design

The present research is a combination of Pre Test- Intervene- Post Test (single group design) and Experimental-Control group design. The Experimental Group (students who study in Vedic School culture) perform Havan, recite Ved-Paath and practice Yoga daily as a part of their routine curriculum. The Control group (students of Non-Vedic culture School) were not exposed to the Vedic culture Non-Vedic School students only participated in assessments at time of collecting the pre and post data. The school culture (Vedic& Non-Vedic culture) was considered as Independent Variable (IV) and Helping Attitude is the dependent variable of the study.

Procedure

This study was conducted in three phases. Data was collected in a group of 10-12 students at one time.

Phase- I

The permission from school principals and informed consent from the respondents of different Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools of west Uttar Pradesh

was sought. The 200 new entrants of both the school cultures (100 students each of Vedic & Non-Vedic schools) were assessed for helping attitude at the beginning of schools when they took admission. It was ascertained that students enrolled in Vedic Schools were not exposed to Vedic culture i.e. they never studied in Vedic Schools before and they did not practice Vedic rituals at home (they were never exposed to Vedic culture).

Phase- II

The new entrants of Vedic culture schools (50 boys & 50 girls) were exposed to Vedic school culture as part of intervention for six months. Once they were admitted in a Vedic school they compulsorily and customarily followed Vedic rituals, values and curriculum as part of routine (i.e. they practiced yoga, Havan & Ved-path as an integral part of their school culture along with values and practices taught).

Phase- III

The new entrants (i.e. 200 students) who were tested for helping attitude at the beginning of the session (base line pretesting) were again tested after 6 months of exposure to their different cultures (Vedic and Non Vedic school culture) for assessing their helping attitude(i.e. Post-Test).

The impact of school culture was assessed after 6 months (longitudinal study of Pretest- intervention- posttest study) Vedic Culture and control group of those students who were not exposed to Vedic culture.

Statistical Analysis

The hypothesis was tested against the independent t test and Paired't'-Test at .05 level of significance with IBM SPSS 24 Version software.

Results Table & Interpretation:

Table: 1: Baseline mean comparison of Helping Attitude of Experimental & Control group of school students

Area	Experimental Group Mean (SD)	Control Group Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Helping Attitude	68.23 (1.964)	68.33 (1.897)	.377	.715 –NS

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group)

In Table 1, the different facets of helping attitude are analyzed in new students of Experimental group and Control group. The mean comparison of helping attitude (as shown in Table1) reveals that there is no significant difference (t=.377, p=.715) between experimental and control group at the entry level. Both schools have similar level of helping attitude. Hence, it indicates that the sample is homogenous.

Table: 2: Baseline mean comparison of gender based on Helping Attitude of Experimental & Control group.

Group	Girls Mean (SD)	Boys Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Experimental Group	68.32 (2.065)	68.14 (1.874)	.457	.649 –NS
Control Group	68.38 (1.872)	68.28 (1.938)	.262	.794 –NS

N=200 (100= experimental group {50 girls & 50 boys}, 100= control group {50 girls & 50 boys})

Table 2 reports the baseline comparison of mean, SD, 't' and p value of helping attitude in experimental group(t=.457,p= .649) and control group (t= .262,

p=.794). The results show that there is no significant difference in helping attitude of girls & boys of experimental and control group at the entry level. Hence, it indicates that girls and boys of experimental and control group are similar level on helping attitude.

Post-test Results

Table: 3: Mean comparison of helping attitude of Experimental & Control group of school students (After Intervention).

Area	Experimental Group Mean (SD)	Control Group Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Helping Attitude	79.63 (1.631)	68.37 (1.894)	45.045	.000*

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group)

In Table 3, the difference in helping attitude between the new entrants of Experimental group and Control group is analyzed. The mean comparison of helping attitude (as shown in Table 3) reveals that there is significant difference (t= 45.045, p=.000) between experimental and control group after intervention. The results show that there is a significant difference in helping attitude of experimental and control group after intervention. There is an improvement in helping attitude. Hence, it indicates that Vedic school culture plays a significant role in developing helping attitude.

Table: 4: Mean comparison of gender based on helping attitude of Experimental & Control group of school students (After Intervention).

Group	Girls Mean (SD)	Boys Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Experimental Group	79.16 (1.654)	79.66 (1.624)	.183	.855 –NS
Control Group	68.28 (1.949)	68.46 (1.854)	.473	.637 –NS

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group) {50 girls & 50 boys each}

Table 4 reports the posttest comparison of mean, SD, 't' and p value of helping attitude in experimental group(t= .183,p= .855) and control group (t= .473, p=.637). The results show that there is no significant difference in helping attitude of girls & boys of experimental and control group after intervention. Hence, it indicates that girls and boys of experimental and control group similar level on helping attitude.

Pretest-Posttest Results

Table: 5: Pretest-Posttest Mean comparison of gender based on Helping Attitude of Experimental & Control group of school students.

Group	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	't' value	p value
Experimental Group	68.23 (1.964)	79.63 (1.631)	47.018	.000*
Control Group	68.33 (1.897)	68.37 (1.894)	.160	.873 –NS

N=200 (100= experimental group, 100= control group)

In Table 5, the differences of helping attitude are analyzed in new students of Experimental group and Control group. The mean comparison of helping attitude (as shown in Table 5) reveals that there is significant difference (t=47.018, p=.000) in the students of experimental group after intervention. . The mean comparison of helping attitude (as shown in Table 5) reveals that there is no significant difference (t=.160,

p=.873) in the new entrants of control group. The results show that there is a significant difference in helping attitude of experimental group after intervention. There is an improvement in helping attitude. Hence, it indicates that Vedic school culture plays a significant role in developing helping attitude.

Discussion and Conclusion:

There was no significant difference in the helping attitude of new-entrants of Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools at the entry level (i.e. during pre-test phase) [refer Table 1]. The students scored ($t=.377$, $p=.715$) on helping attitude. The possible reasons to obtain such similarity in helping attitude among the new entrants of Vedic and Non-Vedic culture schools are the same surroundings, same school culture and upbringing. These students, who took fresh admission, were previously studying in same pattern of schools where they learnt same values, beliefs and ethics which developed alike personality attributes. If students study in same culture based schools then it's hard to find differences in their personality attributes, values, beliefs and achievements (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). These similarities have also been found equally in girls and boys irrespective of their gender either at entry level or after exposure.

The post-test results have shown a significant difference in the level of helping attitude ($t=45.045$, $p=.000$) [refer Table 3] between the new-entrants of Vedic & Non-Vedic culture schools. The hypothesis was supported which reveals that Vedic school culture significantly enhances helping attitude among students of Vedic culture schools after intervention. If there are differences in the behavioral or personality attributes of students, it's because of the differences in their cultural background or cultural upbringing (Maslowski, 2006). The school goes about as a developing environment for students; it instills deep rooted values and positive behavioral characteristics. School Culture impacts the learning, value installation and personality development of an individual which shapes their future life (Moran, 2005).

The present research made an endeavor to indicate the role played by positive school cultures in developing helping attitude. It has been proven that positive behavioral traits develop due to positive grooming of personality since school Culture shapes the personality of an individual (Giver & Pierson, 2004). In Vedic culture schools the main focus of education is personality growth, character development and inculcating positive psychosocial traits supplemented with professional skill enhancement. The distinctions in school culture are in charge of contrasts in psychosocial properties (Cohen, 2007).

Helping is an end result of empathy; people can connect with others due to the presence of empathy. The feeling of empathy gives rise to the feeling of helping others when an individual witness the other people in distress and troubles (Lyubomirsky, 2008). In Vedic culture schools, the student learns to live in harmony with others, learns sharing and helping others (Dubey, 2015) since the students live with each other in Gurukuls since students are taught the values of oneness as expressed in "Vasudev Kutumbkam" and "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina". These values are not only confined in mantras and Ved-Paath but are enforced in curriculum. The practices of such positive values trigger traits like helping, happiness and life-satisfaction (Acharya, 2013).

.Vedic school culture plays an important role in developing psychological, social and emotional development of an individual (Sharma, 2014). The researches carried out in few past years also show that positive emotions and positive behavioral traits like empathy, hope, helping attitude, optimism, pro-social behavior positively affects the well-being of an individual (Baron & Byrne, 1999) which are developed by yoga, Ved-Paath and Havan. An individual experiences the positive emotions due to the act of receiving help. Helping also inspires people to be more helpful and kind-hearted towards others. Therefore, the act of helping continues to influence unending chains of people, it motivates people to become helpful (Algoe et al, 2009).

The act of helping, which is an integral attribute of Vedic culture based education, benefits the giver as well as the receiver. Helping attitude increases satisfaction in one's life, gives sense of meaning, increases the feeling of competence, reduces stress and uplifts low-mood by taking off troubled minds from the prevailing problems (Midlarsky, 1991). The helping attitude helps in creating a happier community (Fowler & Christakis, 2010).

Human beings are social animals, they take birth, grow, live and gradually die but during this process they went through various emotions, build relationships and form communities which differentiate their life from animals and gives greater meaning to their existence. Leo Tolstoy has rightly said that "The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity". Therefore, helping is a powerful pathway to achieve happiness by developing an emotional bond with others and to achieve personal growth (Brown et al, 2003). It is also positively linked with psychological well-being (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007). It helps in distracting people from the atrocities of their life and feel thankful for what they have (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Yoga and Ved-Paath recitation also develops helping attitude (Turner & Turner, 2010). According to the findings of various researches, helping behavior has shown positive results in diminishing stress, anxiety and depression among people (Devi & Nagendra, 2003). It has a strong association with improved mental health by reducing negative traits and making the individual more hopeful. The act of helping others make the person feel better about one improves the level of self-esteem and reduces the anti-social traits or behavior problems that results in contentment (Piliavin & Siegl, 2007) as it helps in giving a sense of purpose to life and to attain satisfaction.

Conclusion

The main purpose of the present study was to assess the difference in the level of helping attitude between the students of two different school culture i.e. Vedic & Non-Vedic School Culture, in order to find out the association between culture and helping attitude. The findings of the current study suggest that the level of helping attitude is medium in students of Non-Vedic Schools. The most important findings that can be drawn from this study were that a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the components of helping attitude and school culture (Vedic & Non-Vedic school culture).

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