

Learned Helplessness among Adolescent (Male & Female) Students of Private and Government Schools

Dr. (Mrs.) Sujata Atul Sharma¹
sujataatulsharma1991@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: Student's unrest and maladjustment at school level has been major concern in school education. This may be because of increasing pressure on students to perform for getting high standards in their scholastic achievements. This leads to the feeling of uncontrollability in the environment among students. The objective of the present paper is to find out whether or not Male & Female adolescent students of Government & Private school suffer from the feeling of Learned Helplessness (LH). The total sample consists of 500 students from IX & X standards and CASQ tool was used to assess the feeling of LH among adolescent students. The result was obtained by computing the response percentage of the total sample on the total LH score obtained on the three dimensions of LH. The result of the study shows that overall Male students have shown high percentage response on LH. Also Private School students have shown high percentage response on LH. Amongst Private schools, male students have shown high percentage response on LH and amongst government school, female students have shown high percentage response on LH. Ultimately the author has concluded the paper with some implications to remediate the problems that students are facing in the educational environment.

Key Concepts: - Learned Helplessness, Internality, Stability, Globality, Sex, School

I. Introduction

Learned Helplessness (LH) in education has been a concern among Educationalists. **Learned Helplessness** is a reaction to conditions of uncontrollability over environment which has a negative consequence on the personality development of adolescents. The theory of learned helplessness was extended to human behavior. Learned helplessness in humans can begin very early in life. When people experience learned helplessness, they have a tendency to give up easily or fail more often at somewhat easier tasks. For example, Gernigon, Fleurance, and Reine (2000) conducted a study on failure in controlled and uncontrolled circumstances. They found that failure was more likely to occur in uncontrollable circumstances. Learned helplessness can also hamper education: a child who fails repeatedly in school will eventually stop trying, convinced that there is nothing he or she can do to succeed.

Attribution style is a personality characteristic that can have a significant effect on academic achievement and students with learning difficulties are more likely to display negative attributions than their peers. Attributions are the causal explanations that people assign to the events that happen to and around them. The internality, stability and globality attribution style for events have been found to be related with LH feeling and are the basic dimensions of LH. **Internality** refers to the belief that negative events that tends to attribute because of one's own flaws. **Stability** refers to the belief that negative events and their causes are permanent. **Globality** refers to whether one tends to attribute negative events to outside circumstances or other people. LH has been correlated with Sex and School in the present paper and its outcomes has been noticed.

II. Review of Literature

Adler, et al; (1982) examined sex differences in attributions & LH and they found in their hypothesis that girls are more likely to be learned helpless in math than boys. Yet female students are less likely than male students to take advanced high school and college math courses.

Leland, (2005) says that urban students are faced with many extraneous factors that other. Students in urban schools are expected to focus on acquiring skills to help them lead a more prosperous life, while at the same time they are faced with many distractions. The horrendous conditions of the school, such as leaking roof and sewage problems, are not conducive to learning. Problems outside the classroom which affects students learning tends to have a great impact in the classroom in urban schools. Unlike suburban students who attend

schools in a safe and pleasant environment, where learning is the only priority; learning is not the primary concern for urban students.

Felder & Brent, (2005); their study found that males outperformed females in Science achievement in the Private schools in Hong Kong. Although both genders started with the same Science achievement level, females in the higher secondary year levels experienced significantly lower Science achievement than males.

Dalla, et al; (2007) examined the hypothesis that females do not express LH like males do. Results Suggested that testosterone and its metabolites (estrogen & non-aromatizable androgens) derived from peripheral sources do not influence LH behavior through organizational effect during the critical period of the prenatal brain development. Thus, it is possible that expression of LH behavior is modulated by factors other than hormonal ones.

Singh, Kamlesh (2009); results states that if one girl does not follow social norms, parents increase strictness for all the girls which at times translates into no permission to go outside the village even for educational purposes, as also early marriage. In focused group discussion also women emphasized that if someone has violated social norms there would be no permission to go out for all other girls by the elders. Due to these circumstances girls feel LH.

III. Objectives of the Study

- To find out whether or not adolescent students of Government and Private School show feeling of LH.
- To find out the dominating attribution style of the students that leads to the feeling of LH.

IV. Hypotheses

- Adolescent students of Government and Private Schools will show the feeling of LH.
- There will be difference in the percentage of responses in the attribution of given sample.

V. Methodology

Survey method has been used in the present research

VI. Sample

The sample comprises of 500 male and female students of class IX & X from different government and private schools.

VII. Variables

The dependent variable is LH and its dimensions (Internal, Stable & Global).

The independent variables are Sex (Male & Female) and School (Private & Government School).

VIII. Tools

To assess Learned Helplessness “CASQ (Children’s Attribution Style Questionnaire)” by Sahoo (1987) was used.

IX. Procedure

The data was collected from the male and female students studying in government run school & private run school. The students were approached personally. The objective of the study was explained to them and was asked to fill the scales after the instructions made clear to them. After completion, the scales were taken back from them. Obtained data was tabulated for statistical analysis.

9.1 Statistical Technique

The percentage of response was computed.

9.2 Analysis Interpretation

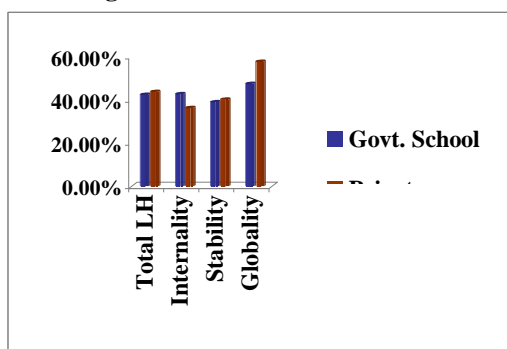
The analyzed data has been presented in the Table-1

Table- 1 Percentage of Students showing LH with respect to Sex and Type of Schools

Female Overall		42.75%	40.30%	37.50%	50.45%
Male Overall		43.25%	38.65%	39.40%	51.70%
Private School	Total	43.68%	36.30%	40.05%	57.70%
	Female	42.70%	38.20%	37.90%	51.90%
	Male	44.70%	34.40%	42.20%	57.50%
Govt. School	Total	42.30%	42.65%	38.85%	47.45%
	Female	42.80%	42.40%	37.10%	49.00%
	Male	41.80%	42.90%	36.60%	45.90%
		Total LH	Internality	Stability	Globality

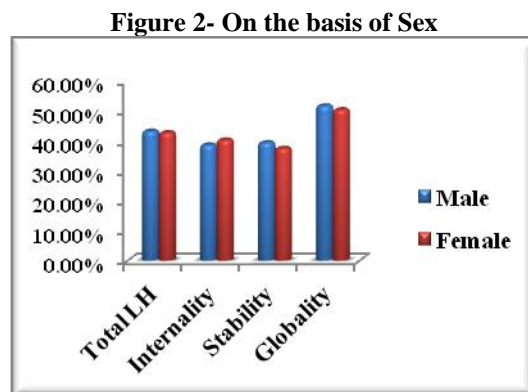
Bar graph representation of % values in the above mentioned table:-

Figure 1- On the basis of School



From the Table-1 it is evident that the Private and Government school students do not differ in the feeling of LH as percentage of responses on Total LH are almost similar in both Private and Government school (43.68% & 42.3% response respectively). It is also observed that the high percentage of Government school students show Internality explanatory style in the responses in comparison to the Private school students (42.65% & 36.3% of responses respectively). Whereas Private school students have shown high percent of responses on Stability & Globality explanatory style in comparison to the Government school students. It means that Private school

students believe that bad events are unchangeable and consistent across different contexts and also students do not have control over the bad situations.



It is observed from the table and graph that Male and Female adolescent students do not differ significantly in their responses on feeling of LH & its components.

But the trend in case of Male students shows that they have shown high response on the Total LH factor. Moreover Female students have shown high response on the explanatory style related to Internality. It means that Female students attribute their cause of bad events to the Internality factor in comparison to the Male students. On the contrary Male students attribute the cause of bad events to the Stability and Globality explanatory style more.

It is also observed from the Table that in Govt. school, Female students have shown high percentage of response on the Total LH and its component Stability & Globality attribution style whereas Male students have shown high percentage of response on the Internality attribution style. But in Private school the scenario is just reverse where Male students have shown high percentage of response on the Total LH and on its components Stability & Globality attribution style whereas Female students have shown high percentage of response on the Internality explanatory style. If we compare on the basis of sex and school collectively then it is observed that Male students of Private school have shown a high percentage of response on LH component as compare to the Male students of Government school. But Female students of Private and Govt. schools did not show any significant difference on the percentage of response on LH and its dimensions. From the table it is evident that amongst the three dimensions of LH, Globality attribution style is found out to be the dominating one which is playing main role in generating the feeling of LH among adolescent students.

X. Conclusion

From the results it is evident that Private school students feel more LH than government school students this is because Private school students are provided with excessive facilities; also they get admission in the school directly on the basis of power of money. Due to this they start giving explanations to the bad events and blame contexts.

This study reveals that Male students show high percentage of response on the Total LH and on Stability & Globality attribution style. The reason behind this result may be because Male students are given first preference in every aspect and are provided with every facility. Due to this they become dependent and no longer feel the need to try and so they just quit and feel helpless.

Female students of Government school have been found out to show high percentage of response on Total LH and on Stability & Globality explanatory style in comparison to the Male students of Government school. This is because when they face bad events then its context affects other aspects of their life due to which they develop an assumption that bad events will remain constant and attain the feeling of LH.

In Private schools the scenario is just vice versa of Government schools. Here Male students of Private school feel more LH and show high percentage of response on the Stability & Globality attribution scale. This is

because Male students in private school become careless; they give explanation to the negative events and start blaming others due to this they stop doing efforts and feel LH.

Male students of Private school show more LH than the Male students of Government school. This is because Male students of Government school are more responsible and careful because their whole family is depended on them. Due to this they prepare themselves from the starting, therefore at the time of bad events they fell less LH.

On the contrary Female students of Government school show high percentage of response on Internality explanatory scale than the Female students of Private school. This is due to their condition in the society because in government schools, female are hardly given the permission to get educated, due to this when they face failure they think that they themselves are the causes of bad events. But Female students of Private school think more Globality type. They do not blame themselves for negative events but that event affects different dimensions of their life and they start blaming outside circumstances or people for their failure. This study correlates with the study of Aamna Saleem Khan (2011) whose Results found that girls of government schools were superior to the girls of private schools in their locus of control.

The findings of the study reveal that Globality is the factor which is highly contributing in the development of LH feeling among adolescent students. This is because they think that the causes of bad events are consistent across different contexts. The result correlates with the result of Alloy, Peterson, Abramson and Seligman (1984) which states that people who exhibit a style of attributing negative outcomes to global factors will show helplessness deficits in new situations that are either similar or dissimilar to the original situation in which they were helpless.

XI. Educational Implications

The findings of the present study have educational implications in following terms:-

- The result of the present study lay down that it is necessary to adequately understand the component of Learned Helplessness to remediate it.
- These findings are suggested to be very useful in School management. As the teachers can analyze the type of attribution style among each and every student and their proper counseling can be done. Efforts can also be made to change the attribution style towards the bad & negative events.
- We must help the child to discover the root beliefs and the distorted perceptions they create which cause the child's self-defeating deficits.
- We must give the child the tools to change and refute their distorted beliefs and thereby reduce their deficits.

References

- [1]. Adler, Terry F., Parsons, J.E., Meece, Judith L., & Kaczala, Caroline M. (1982). Sex Differences in Attributions and Learned Helplessness. *Department of Psychology*. The University of Michigan, 8(4), pg. 421.
- [2]. Alloy. L.B.; Peterson, C.; Abramson, L.Y.; Seligman, M.E.P. (1984). Attributional Style and the Generality of Learned Helplessness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 46(3), 681-687.
- [3]. Dalla, C., Edgecomb, C., Whetstone, A.S., & Shors, T.J. (2007). Females do not express learned helplessness like males do. *Department of Psychology and Center for Collaborative Neuroscience*, 33(7), 1559-1569.
- [4]. Felder, Richard M., & Brent, Rebecca. (2005). Understanding Student Differences. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 94(1), 57-72.
- [5]. Gernigon, C., Fleurance, P., & Reine, B. (2000). Effects of uncontrollability and failure on the development of learned helplessness in perceptual-motor tasks. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 71, 44-54.
- [6]. Khan, Aamna Saleem (2011). Effects of School Systems on Locus of Control. *Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow*: 11, 1930-2940.

- [7]. Leland. (2005). Urban Education. *University of Michigan*. Retrieved from http://sitemaker.umich.edu/rosman.356/student_achievement_
- [8]. Sahoo, F.M. (1987). *Children's Attribution Style Questionnaire (CASQ)*. Psychology Department, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, India.
- [9]. Singh, Kamlesh. (2009). Socio-cultural Barriers in the Personal Growth of Rural Adolescent Girls. *Indian Journal of Social Science Researches*, 6(2), 152-163.