

Goal Setting in Terms of Student Perspective (A Study of Jabalpur Convent Schools)

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Abstract—Goals have a pervasive influence on student behavior and his or her performance in life practice. We all know in order to succeed in long run every one should follow a predetermined course of action. Nothing happens by chance. One should rigorously follow each dimension of objective. Often it is misinterpreted that the goal and objective are the same but in actual practice there is a very thin line gap between goal and objective. Goal is for long term in comparable with the objective whereas the objective is for short run though they provoke the same sense. This paper tries to understand the student behavior in terms of previous goal setting theories and develop theory which is more realistic and practical as per present scenario. The study was carried on the higher secondary students of satna and Jabalpur region and the study is descriptive type.

Keywords: Goals, Motivation, objectives, student.

1. INTRODUCTION

The term goal setting defined in the book “Classroom Instruction that Works”, “is the process of establishing a direction for learning”^[1]. In order to fosters in a long run they must be aware of the overall goal. They need to make small and achievable goal, sometimes we tend to make quite higher goal which creates problem in the long run. Hence it is always advisable to make realistic shorter goals in between tracking your progress. Students that self-regulate or use self management skills correctly, tend to have increased levels of self-efficacy, motivation, and school achievement^[2]. So the best goal setting practice for the student should be on the defining

Goals according to interest level, desire, skills and his or her personal end result. Educational research indicates that high achievers report using goal setting more frequently and more consistently than low achievers^[3]. Furthermore, students are more motivated to accomplish on self defined goals and they tend to give cent percent for self-made goals than externally imposed goals and that participation in goal setting can lead to high goal commitment^[4], which in turn results in enhanced performance^[5]. Hence school should only assist students in developing goals for themselves, and that teachers should reinforce these same goals to the students^[6]. In fact, goal

setting is a process of establishing clear and usable targets, or objectives, for learning. A mastery goal is associated with a wide range of motivation-related variables that contribute to positive achievement and that are necessary mediators of self-regulated learning^[11].

2. PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of Goal setting on student. Student performance level and goal setting was analyzed for the nearly a period of 15 months. Here, in this study the researcher investigated trends in the goal-setting process and the relationship between goal setting and performance.

Hence the study tries to find the answers to these questions i.e.;

1. What is the relationship between goal setting and performance for students in their examinations?
2. What are the general trends in goal setting for school students?
3. What are the factors that are contributing or abstaining students from reaching their goals?
4. Whether the existing Goal model is practically applicable in the current scenario?

The study further tries to investigate the process which they tend to follow while setting goal.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used. For quantitative approach, questionnaires have been distributed to students for their completion at the beginning of course. Students were asked to state the grade they expected to achieve in the class. The expected grades were then matched with actual results at the end of the standard. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS. For qualitative approach, focus group discussions were

conducted in examining why students put specific grade as expected; what are the barriers for their goal setting, and whether goal setting is an effective motivational tool in their study.

The respondents consist of 364 higher secondary passed students from different schools of satna and Jabalpur region. Most of the students were in higher secondary level. Forty of them were invited to participate in the focus group in discussing what their barriers in goal setting are. Also we try to investigate feasibility of current Goal model (containing the characteristics of goal i.e. GROW model, SMART model) to the students by having a pilot study of teachers of the same schools for getting view teachers about the last research questions. A total of 58 teachers participated in the discussion.

4. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

A total of 364 sets of questionnaires have been completed by students and the return rate is 84 %. 79.1% of students agreed that goal setting helps them to achieve better result in this course. When asked what grades they expected to achieve, 18.7% of students expected to achieve an A grade. While 56% expected a B grade and 23.6% expected a C grade and only 1.6% expected a D grade.

A statistical t-test was used to check whether the students overall final results were affected by the students goal setting?. It is found that the resulting p-value of 0.021 significant at the 5% level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected (The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between expected grade between students who have or have not set a target grade; the alternative hypothesis is that there is a difference in the expected grade between students who have or have not set a target grade). When using correlation technique, it was found that there is a positive relationship between overall and expected grade (treated as a Continuous variable) ($r=0.364$, $p\text{-value} = 0.028$). The p-value of 0.021 and the sample correlation coefficient of 0.794 indicate a significant positive relationship between the expected grade and the final result. Those who expected higher grade tended to score higher grade in the overall assessment.

The results from the focus group indicates that one major reason for students putting specific grade as expected is due to their understanding of their perceived skills and ability in handling the module of course . The knowledge of their perceived skills and ability attribute mainly to three main factors. The first is their effort for the subject. Effort refers to the focus they are ready to spend in this subject. This in turn can be affected by their interest level of the subject.

The participants revealed that the more effort they put in the subject, the better skills and ability they would have in handling the assignment and examination.

The second factor is their familiarity of the subjects. Familiarity involves exposure to similar subjects in previous years. Since most students came from senior secondary level,

they have little or no knowledge in the subject of commerce. The third factor is their related skills in the subject. This refers to the skills in handling case study and essay questions as required in most Commerce subjects. Such writing skills, as according to the participants, were in turn mainly affected by their English competency. In fact, it is not uncommon for senior secondary students to have average to below average English competency and that the assessment mode they encountered was multiple choice or scientific calculation instead of writing essays. Thus, the commerce subjects, who utilize essay writing as assessment mode, would present a high level of difficulty to some students, particularly those from a science background.

The findings are similar to those of previous studies in which they found that students who enter particular learning situations differ in aptitudes and prior experiences would affect students perception of their learning capability^{[9][10]}. For example, students high in reading ability ought to perform better on tasks requiring reading, which should earn them teacher praise and good grades.

As a result, these outcomes may lead students to develop greater interest in reading, which may further improve their ability^[9]. Researchers also found that students who previously have performed well in a subject area ought to believe that they are capable of learning a new task in that area, whereas students who have experienced difficulties may doubt their capabilities^[4]. When asked why they do not set goals for their study, participants provide a number of reasons. First is their perception on goal setting. The perception that goal settings have little effects on their academic performance in this subject. Lack of goal setting experience also explains why they do set goals. Lack of knowledge and skills in the process of goal setting also comes into play.

Lack of strong interest in the subject is another crucial factor why students do not set goal. Majority of students agreed that goal setting serve as good motivational tool in their study. It is because goals as set provide direction in their study. Moreover, they voiced out that mere goal setting is not suffice in enabling them in achieving set goal. Others factors such as study techniques and skills are also crucial in enhancing their academic success. They also advocated that teachers can provide motivation in their study by arousing their learning interest, demonstrating ideas with examples, and using native language in explaining abstract concepts. The findings are similar with what has been found in previous studies^{[7][8]}.

While analyzing the fourth research Questions based on the teachers' response it was found that most of the parameters of the goal are more or less same but the gap still exist in terms of view point and applicability in current scenario. It is argued that both the Model are good, still we witness some scope for improvement i.e. constraints are there to select and execute towards goal achieving, still some of the aspects like defining the Goal in terms of knowledge level . For example, any goal which is true or real from external parameters may not suit one

to accept that as goal as per his understanding. To give an example for it, one student who is under performer in his class and stands among last in terms of academic performance and still opting for only Entrance exam for nations most promising engineering college. Here although goal is true, real, specific, time bond, but it is beyond understanding and not at all understandable. In the given criteria of selection of the goal, we see those are based on all external parameters where internal parameter of the person who has to set the goal, is not considered. Similarly, if one wants to have the same goal again and again, both the model may approve that but see with the example whether it suits that i.e. one person appeared for higher secondary class and already passed it, he may not opt for the same goal again. In similar lines, most of the teachers were in the opinion that the selection of goal for their student must be progressive or dignified to their education levels. There should be certain criteria by which if goal selection does not glorify the student then student must not select such goal. This way, even goal selection process remains in the super domain of education system's basis aim 'to evolve the mankind continually'.

In this way, we find that as per most of the teachers and parents, there should be addition of few more characteristic to SMART criteria, in context with Students. Goal must be 'Specific', 'Real or True', 'understandable or measurable', 'Assignable or executable', 'Time-bond', 'unique or novel', 'Dignified'. If we select keywords appropriately and rearrange the order then this newer model can be constrained with 'Specific', 'True', 'Understandable', 'Dignified', 'Executable', 'Novel', 'Time-bond'. And this can be abbreviated to S.T.U.D.E.N.T or STUDENT word. Further this can be considered a newer Model, STUDENT- Model to set the Goal by the students. This abbreviation as STUDENT Model, provide ease to remember all the criteria and characteristics for the Goal setting by the students.

5. CONCLUSION

Given the indicated relationship between goal setting and achievement, future research to further clarify development in both areas, as well as the interrelationship, should be considered. For example, a similar study with a control group would provide increased clarity and strengthen our understanding of the relationship between goal setting and achievement. Although causation certainly cannot be claimed with the statistical analyses conducted in this study, the

consistent growth in goal, action plan, and reflection scores may serve as a rationale for future consideration of the factors involved in increasing skill proficiency (practice, educational level, maturity, etc.). Lacking the key meta cognitive skills that are stimulated by the many students struggled to make the connection between reflection and self-assessment exercises.

Note:

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