

Impact of Counselling on Self-Confidence and Academic Achievement of Underachievers

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ABSTRACT

The present study was undertaken to study the Impact of Counselling on Self-Confidence and Academic Achievement of Underachievers. An experimental research was adopted for the study. The initial sample comprised of 441 high school students of 9th class from two educational zones viz. Baramulla and Singpora Kallan of District Baramulla. Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices (Non-Verbal) was administered for the measurement of intelligence. Mean of two annual examination results (7th & 8th) was considered as the criterion for academic achievement. The subjects whose scores lie 10th percentile or more below their intelligence percentile scores were considered as underachievers. The final sample was comprised of 164 underachievers. The data was collected by using Gupta's Self-Confidence Inventory. Counselling was given individually to every subject. After collection of data 't' test was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that counselling has significantly increased the self-confidence and academic achievement of underachievers.

1. Introduction

Achievement in educational matters has always been an important topic for researchers, psychologists, educational administrators and parents, as achievement of students in educational matters is an essential factor in terms of the selection in higher courses, placement and promotion in various appointments. Intelligence, a foremost cognitive variable as the correlate of achievement has been studied by **Chadha & Chandna (1990)**; **Stipek & Gralinski (1996)**; **Parker et al, (2004)**; **Deary et al, (2004)**; **Preiss & Franova (2006)**; **Kaya (2007)**; **Chamorro & Furnham (2008)**; **Sharma (2013)**; **Naderi et al, (2010)**; **Meijs (2010)**; **Chandra (2013)**; **Arya & Maurya (2016)**; **Riggon et al, (2016)** and a significant relationship of intelligence with academic achievement and learning approaches has been found. Mostly researchers assess that achievement and intelligence are undistinguishable paradigms. At the same time mere presence of superior intelligence does not confirm higher achievement. Various experimental studies have shown that even pupils of superior intelligence are underachievers, while some pupil with average intelligence achieve more than what is expected from them. **Barbara (2005)** contends that despite all the assessment tools available to today's educators and mountains of existing research, a straightforward definition of underachievement is not available. In answer to the question of who are underachievers at school, it can be assumed that underachievers include those students:

- Who do not perform according to their abilities in a particular subject.
- Who as a result of their behaviour do not show interest or perform better in their studies.
- Who do not perform well in a specific subject.
- Who do have the obligatory intellectual ability but still underachieve.
- Who are constrained by culture, gender and language from doing academically well at school.

In association with achievement, self-confidence has been found to be a significant variable which contributes to enhanced performance of a person. Self-confidence is an attitude that one hold to move forward and achieve his goals. In the words of **Basavanna (1975)**, "Self- confidence refers to an individual's perceived ability to act effectively in a situation, to overcome obstacles and to get things go all right." **Tavani & Losh (2003)** found a significant and positive relationship between self-confidence, motivation and academic achievement of the students. **Dhall & Thukral (2005)** revealed that intelligence is significantly and positively related with self-confidence and academic achievement. **Hebaish (2012)** revealed a positive and significant correlation between general self-confidence and academic achievement. **Mufson et al, (2015)** have also shown that underachievers were less self-confident.

Educationalists and other concerned bodies have made rigorous efforts to offer solutions for underachievement. In light of this, a growing body of research has revealed that the condition of underachieving students could be improved using counselling interventions.

In this case **The Center for School Counseling Outcome Research** is dedicated for improving the practice of school counselling by developing the research base that is obligatory for responsible and effective practice. No Child Left Behind (**NCLB**) school counselling has great potential to help students achieve to high standards in the academic, career, and personal/social aspects of their lives (**House & Martin 1998**). With the advent of **NCLB (2001)**, school counsellors have to work much harder to show that the work they are doing is helping school systems to meet the mandates established by this legislation. School counsellors are now accountable for representing their accountability just as administrators and teachers are. This focus on accountability and outcomes, put pressure on administrators, teachers and school counselors.

These professionals are responsible for making the changes that are mandated within NCLB and all need to be involved in the process of increasing student achievement, reducing achievement gap, improving the school attendance and graduation rates. **Lidhoo & Khan (1990)** found a considerable improvement in the performance scores of experimental group through counselling. **Khan & Parveen (2005)** found that individual counselling had a significant effect on post-test academic achievement scores. **Hussain (2006)** found that guidance services have significant positive effect on students study attitudes and study habits.

In light of all the studies, the investigators choose to identify the underachievers and apply a counselling process to their scholastic situations. This was intended to determine if counselling could improve their self-confidence and academic achievement. Only few studies have been conducted in India on this issue in general and specifically on the variable self-confidence and academic achievement with respect to the impact of counselling intervention in the valley of Kashmir. The purpose of the study was to determine **Impact of Counselling on Self-Confidence and Academic Achievement of Underachievers.**

2. Objectives of the study

- To identify the underachievers.
- To help underachievers to raise their self-confidence with the help of counselling.
- To help underachievers to raise their academic achievement with the help of counselling.

3. Hypotheses

- There would be a significant improvement in post-test composite scores of self-confidence of experimental group.
- There would be a significant improvement in post-test academic achievement of experimental group.

4. Delimitations

- Students from the 9th class were selected on the basis of their age group (14-15 years) as in this age children are mature enough to take decisions for themselves.
- The Government High Schools of educational zones viz; Baramulla and Singpora Kallan of district Baramulla in Kashmir were selected. This selection was made on the basis that in the Baramulla district the affluent and educated class send their children to private schools, while the poor and uneducated class send their children to government schools. Therefore, these students do not currently get counselling for their problems either inside or outside school.

5. Operational definitions of variables

Counselling: In this study counselling means, to help a student understand his potential and overcome his problems, which distract his self-confidence.

Underachievers: In this study it means, subjects, whose mean achievement scores of the previous two annual examination results (7th and 8th) lie 10th percentile or more below their intelligence percentile scores.

Self-confidence: The self-confidence in the present study shall refer to self-confidence measured by Gupta's Self Confidence Inventory which contains 56 items.

Academic Achievement: The aggregate marks gained by sample subjects in pre and post counselling examinations.

METHOD: There are 18 educational zones in district Baramulla. Out of these 18 zones, 2 zones viz. zone Baramulla and zone Singpora Kallan were selected randomly for the sample. In zone Baramulla there were 11 high schools and in zone Singpora Kallan there were 6 high schools. The investigator selected 8 high schools from zone Baramulla and 4 high schools from zone Singpora Kallan randomly.

6. Sample size

INITIAL SAMPLE

All the students studying in the 9th class within an age range of (14 to 15) from the Government high schools of educational zones Baramulla and Singpora Kallan of district Baramulla (n=441) were contacted.

A non-verbal mental measurement test Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices (1962), was administered to the subjects in order to measure intelligence. Mean of two annual examination results (7th and 8th) was considered as the criterion for academic achievement.

The intelligence and achievement percentile scores of the sample subjects are given below:

Table 1.

PERCENTILE PP	INTELLIGENCE SCORES	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT SCORE
	LOWEST SCORE =1	LOWEST SCORE =32
P90	15.92	71.32
P80	14.06	62.63
P70	12.74	58.39
P60	11.8	55.16
P50	10.94	52.43
P40	10.04	48.72
P30	9.08	45.1
P20	7.8	42.15
P10	5.94	38.65
	HIGHEST SCORE =22	HIGHEST SCORE =92

Subjects whose academic achievement scores lie $\pm 10^{\text{th}}$ percentile of their intelligence percentile scores were considered as achievers and were dropped from the study (n=272). The subjects whose scores lie 10th percentile or more below their intelligence percentile scores, were considered as underachievers (n=169).

Final sample

In the final sample 2 high schools were dropped as no underachiever was found in these schools according to the criterion model. Following the same criterion a total of 169 subjects were screened out as underachievers. Five students

were dropped from the study as they often remain absent from the school.

Thus, in the final analysis the investigators were left with 164 subjects, who served as the sample for the study. The criterion model for the selection is in line with **Gowan (1960)**, which has been successfully used by **Mohan & Nehru (1972)**; **Mohan & Khera (1978)**; **Khan (1996)**; **Khan (2000)**; **Khan & Parveen (2005)**; **Khan & Jabeen (2013)**; **Khan & Dilruba (2017)**.

7. Classification of sample subjects

In accordance with the research design the sample subjects were divided into two parallel groups-Experimental Group and Control Group (n=82) each.

8. Pre-Test:

The investigators in consultation with the concerned Headmasters and their offices collected the previous year's i.e, 7th and 8th grade marks of students of both experimental and control group and found the mean percentage of every student for their academic record. The test of self-confidence was administered to both the experimental and control groups. No information about the grouping of the students was conveyed to the teachers. The scores gained by each student were recorded for self-confidence. The mean, S.D and 't' of self-confidence scores and academic achievement scores (pre-test) of each group (experimental and control) is given below in following tables:

Table 2. Representing the mean difference of self-confidence scores (pre-test) between the experimental and control group.

Variable	Experimental group		Control group
Self-confidence	Mean	18.90	25.67
	S.D	5.613	6.709
	t'		0.522

* = Not Significant

There is no significant difference between experimental and control groups as far as their pre-test self-confidence scores are concerned. It shows that the two groups (experimental and control) are equivalent on their self-confidence.

Table 3. Representing the mean difference of academic achievement scores (pre-test) between the experimental and control group.

Variable	Experimental group		Control group
Academic achievement	Mean	52.35	49.72
	S.D	12.539	12.195
	t'		0.508

* = Not Significant

There is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups as far as their pre-test academic achievement scores are concerned. It shows that the two groups (experimental and control) are equivalent in their Academic achievement.

VARIABLES: The important variables taken into consideration in this study are:

Independent variable:

Counselling intervention served as the independent variable in the study.

Dependent variable:

Post counselling self-confidence scores of the clients.

9. Tools used:

- Ravens Advanced Progressive Matrices (1962), for the measurement of intelligence.
- Gupta's Self Confidence Inventory which contains 56 items.

10. Counselling intervention for experimental group

The investigators started with a **Directive approach Williamson's (1939)**, and when the situation demanded a **Non-Directive approach Roger's (1989)** was used. During treatment, the counselling process focused on three elements viz;

- Existing behaviour;** the behaviour which is causing the client to underachieve.
- Change in behaviour:** A change in this underachieving behaviour through counselling.
- Terminal behaviour:** Better self-confidence and better academic achievement which ultimately lead underachievers to become achievers

TIME BUDGET

In order to improve the self-confidence and academic achievement budgeting of counselling time was done by the investigators in consultation with the clients.

No. of counselling sessions for each client	Average time for each session	Gap between the counselling session
6	45 minutes	7 days

11. Phases Of Counselling

Establishing The Relationship

In order to establish a fruitful relationship with the client, it is very important that the counsellor establishes a rapport with them. The counselling was done individually. The investigators listened to each client, gave them proper attention, expressed a caring attitude and empathized with them. It took some time but gradually each client started to discuss their genuine feelings openly and got ready to find a remedy for their problems. The investigators detected how these clients felt and reflected. At the end of the session some structuring was done for the next session. Each client was told, "We will discuss more about the problems related to your studies and your life in the next session".

Assessing The Problem

The process involved the collection and classification of information related to the client. From the review of literature, the investigators found that there were many reasons for students to be underachievers. One of the major reasons was poor self-confidence. The investigators employed the test for the same variable in order to see if the clients' have low self-confidence. The investigators found that they were not motivated or attracted towards their studies. Reasons were

many, sometimes these were domestic problems, fear of failure, lack of interest in their studies, low self-confidence. The investigators assessed that in order to overcome these problems and to make them achieve well academically, each client needed assistance. Having determined the purpose for which a counselling relationship was established, each client and the investigators then agreed to how this goal will be achieved.

Goal-Setting

The investigators and each client set goals together for themselves to know how well counselling is working and when counselling should be concluded. The skills involved in goal-setting were divided into three classes. First was the investigator's inferential skill. The investigators listened to every client's vague descriptions of existing and desired conditions and read between the lines of those messages. The second skill involved differentiation between the ultimate goals, the intermediate goals, and the immediate goals. Most of the clients were thinking in terms of the ultimate goals e.g, when I grow, "I will choose such profession" when I graduate from college "I will go on in this subject" etc. Here the investigators interfered and started like if we are to accomplish the ultimate goals, we must be able to think in terms of intermediate goals, like in the next six months "I plan to complete this portion of a certain book" and immediate goals, "I will do the following things tomorrow". Intermediate and immediate goals, provide the tactics which are essential to accomplish the ultimate goals and are the real vehicle for any change in counselling. The third skill of the goal-setting process involved helping every client how to think realistically in intermediate and immediate terms.

Initiating Interventions

While initiating counselling, due cognizance has been given to empathy. As the client's thoughts and feelings about their difficulties became clarified and better understood, they began to move towards their counselling goal. In addition, as the problem was clarified it became more amenable to attack. Based on their tentative understanding of the problem, the investigators tried Directive to Non-Directive and Non-Directive to Directive counselling approaches to help each client.

Counselling Clients' In Relation To Self-Confidence

As far as the self-confidence of the experimental group was concerned, before counselling intervention the students had low self-confidence. The underachievers had the belief that they could not succeed, sometimes blaming the situation around them and sometimes their own self for their failures. They wanted to initiate the process of moving forward but their low confidence did not allow them. They always had the belief that whatever and however they perform they cannot win as they don't have the capability to achieve better. Their fear of failure became a hurdle in their path to progress. During counselling they were familiarized with their residual capacities and counseled to frame their ambitions according to their own desires and capabilities. Decisions as per their capabilities lead them near to their destiny. They redefined their goals in accordance to both their interests and abilities and found significant changes in their approach. During counselling intervention, a client was found who had a problem of stammering. Due to this, his confidence got low as he could

not read without a fumble. The teachers did not let him complete to read a word, by continuously interrupting. Even some teachers' attitude towards him by not allowing him to read aloud was a blow to his floundering confidence. During counselling he was made to understand that he has enough capabilities to dominate his surroundings and his problems. He learned that his will power can change his situation and he can become champion in his field. Academic endeavors that previously were difficult now became easier to achieve.

Counselling Clients' In Relation To Academic Achievement

Most of the students in experimental group did not achieve well academically. So, they are considered as underachievers. Major reasons behind their underachievement were found to be low self-confidence, fear to express, domestic problems, fear of failure. All contributed to their underachievement. The investigators counseled them about the time management skill which helped them to prioritize tasks so that they would be able to complete school work and assignments on time. Each client became capable to plan ahead, set aside the time they need for projects and assignments, and make better use of that time. Better management of time allowed each client to become more organized, more confident and learn more effectively. The investigators counseled them to build their immediate, intermediate and ultimate goals in life that helped them to avoid the dreaded procrastination problem, which leads to stress, frustration and poor grades. The investigators also introduced them to role model of successful people with background similar to their own like Albert Einstein, who was a poor boy and had a learning disability because he was very slow to learn to talk but still revolutionized the science of physics by giving theory of relativity. Some successful stories of local people were also narrated to them who despite of being from poor background achieved excellence in academic endeavours and were employed in better positions. It helped in improving their self-confidence level as well as their academic achievement. It was found that counselling helped the underachievers to become more confident in their lives which ultimately lead underachievers to become achievers.

Termination And Follow-Up

Counselling process was terminated by saying "We are done with our work". Each client appraised the worth of counselling sessions and how this temporary relationship had helped them. They appraised their progress i.e, what new behaviour they had learnt, identified the unfinished ones which they will continue to work on their own, whose assistance they could take, what problems they may face in implementing and maintaining new behaviours and how they could deal with these problems in future. The clients were encouraged to consider their counselling experiences in the light of probable future developments. The purpose of counselling was not only to increase clients' abilities to deal with the difficulties, but also a gentle improvement in their ability to cope with themselves and the world.

12. Post Test

After the counselling process was completed, self-confidence test was conducted to the experimental and the control group, to determine the impact of counselling on self-

confidence. The test used to assess self-confidence was the same test that was employed at the pre-test stage. The investigators collected the 10th class exam results of the students for both experimental and control group from the Headmasters concerned for academic achievement in order to measure the student's improvement in post-test academic achievement scores. The mean of post-test scores of self-confidence of both experimental and control groups are **(26.18)** and **(25.80)** respectively and of academic achievement are **(54.72)** and **(50.55)** respectively.

13. Analysis

The investigators had to analyze the impact of counselling on self-confidence and academic achievement of underachievers (experimental group). For this purpose the data was treated to Fisher's 't' test.

Table 4. Representing the significant mean difference between (pre and post-test) self-confidence scores of experimental group.

Variable	Experimental Group	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t'-value
Self Confidence	Pre Test	82	18.90	5.613	12.712**
	Post Test	82	26.18	5.699	

****Significant at 0.01 level**



Table 5. Representing the significance of mean difference between (pre and post-test) self-confidence scores of control group.

Variable	Controlling Group	n	Mean	Std. Dev	t'-value
Self Confidence	Pre Test	82	25.67	6.709	0.795*
	Post Test	82	25.80	6.470	

***= Not Significant**

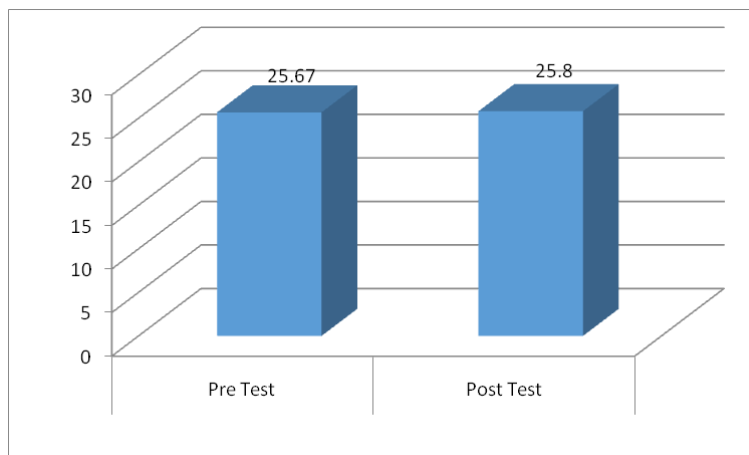


Table 6. Representing the significant mean difference between (pre and post-test) academic achievement scores of experimental group.

Variable	Experimental Group	n	Mean	Std. Dev	t'-value
Academic Achievement	Pre-test	82	52.35	12.539	9.82**
	Post-test	82	54.72	12.706	

****Significant at 0.01 level**

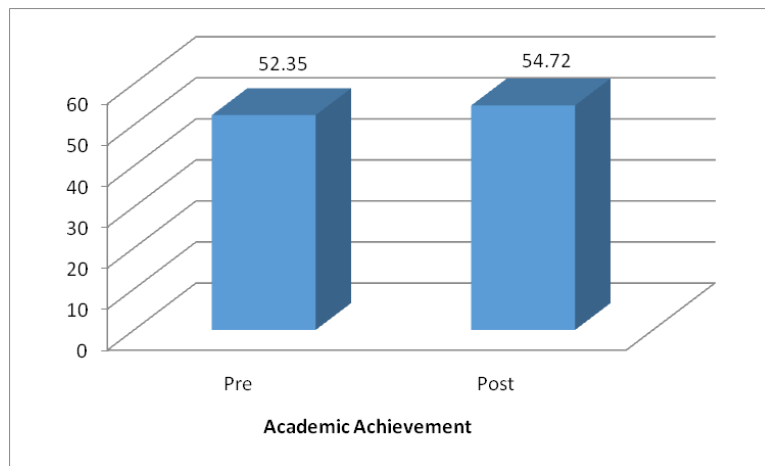
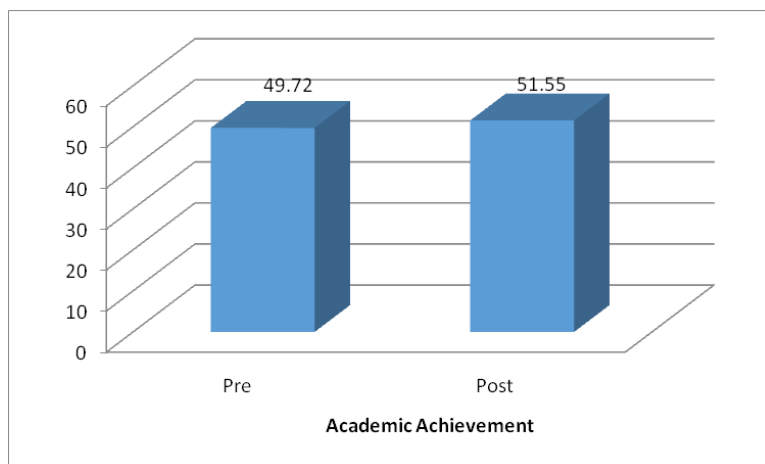


Table 7. Representing the significance of mean difference between (pre and post-test) academic achievement scores of control group

Variable	Control Group	n	Mean	Std. Dev	t'-value
Academic Achievement	Pre-test	82	49.72	12.195	0.225
	Post-test	82	50.55	12.287	

* = Not Significant



14. Discussion and interpretation

The perusal of table 4 shows that the mean score of pre-test is **18.90** which is very low as compared to mean score of post-test which is **26.18** for the self-confidence of experimental group. This shows that the mean favours the post-test of self-confidence. The calculated t'-value is **12.712** which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The mean score favouring the post-test of self-confidence indicates that counselling has an impact on self-confidence. Before counselling intervention the students had low self-confidence. They had a belief that they could not succeed. The investigators made them understand that they have enough capabilities to dominate their surroundings and their problems. They became confident in their capacity for success and started to expect good outcomes. They became completely confident walking into the room full of new people and conversing easily. They became visible as they no longer hide themselves in new social situations. They started to take initiatives and share their thoughts and ideas easily with others. In solving problems, they started to rely on their judgments' and skills knowing they are capable as anyone else. Hence, post counselling underachievers worked hard with optimistic mind and their underachieving behaviour got changed and improved. This is evident from the post-test scores of self-

confidence. This way the Hypothesis No. 1 which states **"There would be a significant improvement in post-test composite scores of self-confidence of experimental group."** stands confirmed.

The perusal of table 5 shows the mean score of pre-test is **25.67** which is slightly lower than the mean score of post-test which is **25.80** for the self-confidence of control group. The t'-value is calculated as **0.795** which is not significant even at 0.05 level of significance. No improvement was seen in control group as far as their post-test self-confidence scores are concerned. It was obvious because the independent variable (counselling intervention) which could make difference was not provided to this group.

The results are in line with **Shinjin et al, (2001); Gandhi (2010); Janagan (2010); Affum-osei et al, (2014);** The investigation by **Shinjin et al (2001)** revealed that group counselling could improve the self-confidence of the students effectively and that the group counselling was effective for developing targets. **Gandhi (2010)** revealed that how important it is that self-confidence as an asset should be nurtured and fostered in the young child to ensure a mentally healthy adult in the future. **Janagan (2010)** indicated that self-confidence really

can be learned and built on. Whether you're working on your own self-confidence or building the confidence of people around you. **Affum-osei .et al (2014)** found a significant positive relationship between counselling, achievement motivation and self-confidence to academic achievement.

The perusal of table 6 shows that the mean score of academic achievement of experimental group in pre-test is **52.35** which is lower than the mean score in post-test which is **54.72**. It indicates that the mean favours the post-test. The calculated 't'-value is **9.82** which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Before counselling intervention it was not common for the clients' to be interested in their academics. During counselling they were helped to show concern, interest and develop the motivation towards the academics. As the self-confidence of underachievers (experimental group) was improved by the counselling intervention. They engage themselves in their studies with a new mood and a new attitude towards learning. The academic achievement of underachievers has improved which is definitely the result of counselling intervention. The underachievers learnt to get maximum from the available time for their studies. They have overpowered their prevailing conditions of low self-confidence and developed the will to succeed. This shows that counselling has a great impact on academic achievement of underachievers and with this the Hypothesis No. 2 which states, "**There would be a significant improvement in post-test academic achievement of experimental group.**" stands confirmed.

The perusal of table 7 shows that the mean score of pre-test is **49.72** which is slightly lower than the mean score of post-test which is **50.55** for the academic achievement of control group. The calculated 't'-value is **0.225** which is not significant. Meaning thereby is that, no improvement has taken place as far as post-test academic achievement scores of control group are concerned, as no counselling intervention has been provided to the control group.

The results are in line with: **Gaur (1970)** who observed that counselling brought gradual improvement in pupil's school subject achievement and his behavior-cum-attitude towards studies; **Subremania (1979)** has found that academic achievement of underachievers in the experimental group was significantly greater than that of non-counseled underachievers and normal achievers; **Sunanda (1982)** emphasized that treatment groups that received Counselling registered significant gain in their academic achievement and study habit records; **Lidhoo & Khan (1996)** have found that bright underachievers improved their academic achievement due to counselling intervention; **Richard et al, (2002)** argued that by fully implementing a comprehensive school counselling program, school counselors can shape those aspects of the school context which create the condition that encourage the development of self-regulated learning; **Crespi (2009)** found that group counselling is one of the useful intervention models that can positively impact children; **Eyo, et al (2010)** found that secondary school student attitude towards guidance and counselling services were positive; **Renuka et al, (2013)** showed that the counselling services in colleges had been effective in easing out the students' personal difficulties. The

constructive support which was received from individual counselling seemed to have a positive influence on the academic performance and the number of sessions correlated positively with the academic performance.

15. Conclusion

- In the achievement related areas, self-confidence is the most important factor which contribute to the academic achievement of underachievers.
- It has been also found that organized and continuous sessions of individual counselling will help the underachievers in attaining better academic performance.
- The study also revealed that counselling made a significant improvement in the self-confidence of underachievers (experimental group).
- Counselling has helped to improve the academic achievement of underachievers.

16. Inferential Suggestions

On the basis of the field experience some inferential suggestions have been framed which are as follows;

- Every school should establish a counselling center in which a school counsellor should be appointed who helps the students in academic, vocational or personal problems.
- It is recommended that schools should have elaborate and organized mechanism to ensure guidance and counselling services relevant, timely and useful to maximize its effectiveness in enhancing students' self-confidence and scholastic achievements.
- It is obligatory to locate, analyze, comprehend and ponder on the factors within the school situation that are favorable to the commencement of the causes of underachievement.
- Counteractive measures like counselling whether individual counselling or group counselling as part of the student personnel services are essential if the rate of underachievement is to be condensed and students are to achieve well academically.
- The purpose of education is to offer opportunities for each student to reach his/her potential in the areas of educational, vocational, social and emotional development. The Head of the school must ensure that guidance and counselling is an integral part of education and that it is centered directly on this purpose.
- School counsellors in collaborative efforts can implement both systematic and programmatic changes in schools and communities to prevent students from dropping out of schools.
- It is suggested that there should be adequate provision of counselling services for parents of underachievers of and on. This is important because parents contribute meaningfully and positively to the development of their children.
- Every person wants to be successful. The counsellor must use techniques to help each and every underachiever to achieve better.

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