Presenting a Seminar: Factors Influencing Student's Performance in Higher Education Institutes

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Abstract:

Modern day Universities/ Degree Colleges/ Higher Education Institutes have made SC as mandatory curriculum for those pursuing UG/ PG degrees. SCR necessitates presentation for course credit. Seminar is evaluated by jury of experts. Clinical formulations of CDC Zoology (PG) students were studied in context with factors influencing student's performance in SCR presentation. Parameters like behavior, presentation, communication skills and viva-voce were monitored. Clinical psychology of 193 CDC students were studied over a period of 10 years in batches. The excellent performance in presentation of 50% students of 2014 batch was due to guide's involvement. SCR of 2 students of 2018 is referred as benchmark documents in CDC. Overall 44% shew good communication skills and 25% students shew excellent communication skills during seminar presentation. Study found semi forward correlation between poor performance in presentation and viva-voce. Overall 19 students gave poor presentation and 11 students performed poorly in question-answer session. Guides were suggested to arrange mock SCR presentation to counter EP disorder. Test period witnessed 8 students suffering from exams phobic disorder. Few students complained about forgetfulness after the presentation. Performance of all the students of 2020 batch who presented online webinar was VG on Fruition scale.

Demography analysis was not done due to insignificant strength of male students. Male to Female ratio of CDC in Zoology (PG) is below 1:10. Present study found that performance of HEI student in presentation of SCR is directly proportional to guidance, presentation, communication skill, viva-voce, hard work and confidence, interest and grasping, and time management. Whereas the same has inversely proportional functional relationship with EP, forgetfulness, temporary hearing, attention loss disorders and family woes.

A new concept of HEI - Community Engagement is introduced with an objective to make the research understandable to the remotest individual entity of community. Instead of focusing on complex available techniques of analyzing students performance in presentation of seminar, a simplified basic clinical formulation for CDC students involving psychological factors is studied without the help of statistical tools.

Key Words: ***Course Credit, Seminar, Presentation, Behavior, Performance***

Introduction:

Almost allover the world, the submission of Seminar course report (SCR)is an essential requirement for all Universities and Degree college students pursuing for UG &PG degrees. Submission of SCR is compulsory for final semester and final year students of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). A detailed report on the assigned topicis submitted by student of HEI and presented before jury, subject teachers and classmates in Power Point Presentation (PPT). Jury is constituted from internal faculties of HEI or experts from external HEIs. Task of jury is to evaluate the Seminar Course (SC) work of student on the basis of report, presentation, and viva-voce. The report is divided into subsections as: Topic, Key words, Abbreviations, Introduction, Literature Survey, Objectives, Experimentation, Discussion, Conclusion and References. For credit award each subsection of report has certain weightage. PPT may include slides showing pointwise coverage of topic, data tables, figures and diagrams. Average of scores awarded by jury members is taken as final score of student for SC.

Preparation of SC and PPT may be done in isolation by the students of Universities /Degree College / Institutes. However, presentation of SCR require facing a jury, faculties and classmates. Present paper has focused on presentation

by students. For some students presentation is a simple job, for some students presentation is a difficult task and for some students presentation is a herculean task. Why it is so ?What can be the reasons behind the observation that some students appear very happy, few appear composed whilst few students appear extremely tense.Present paper endeavors to provide a psychological reasoning about all observations. 10 batches of M.ScZoology pursuing PG degree from Chinmaya Degree College (CDC), Haridwarwere studied to reveal the problem-solution puzzle. Passing outstudent batches of M.Sc Zoology students from year 2012 to 2020 were studied for different parameters during their SCR submission. Topic to each student was given by allotted guide. Maximum of five students were allotted to a guide by the head of department. Two months from the date of allotment of topic to a student were given to each student for final submission of dissertation report. After report submission date for presentation was given to each student. A slot of 50 to 55 minutes was given to each student for presentation followed by viva-voce of 25 to 30 minutes. Maximum of 3 students were allowed for presentation in a single day. Each behavioral activity of the students was minutely observed on presentation with the help of CCTV camera.Presentations were arranged in seminar hall of college with a seating capacity of about 70 people.

Performance in context withparameters: behavior, presentation, communication skill and viva-voce of the M.Sc Zoology students were studied on the date of presentation. Clinical Psychology of students was studied with the objective function (OF) of performance of students in SCR presentation. Clinical formulation included study of vectors: behavior, presentation, communication level and performance in viva-voce. Record of students was also maintained who didn't appear for presentation. Involvement of faculties in SCR was also monitored. Feedback Response Forms (FRF)were circulated amongst students to know whether faculties are associated in SCR or not. Any slackness observed in FRFs was rectified by HOD and genuine guidance was provided to the needy students.

Online webinars were conducted for all the 10 students of 2020 batch using Zoom and Google platforms. Performance of all the students was above expectations. Overall performance of 10 students was above Good category and can be marked as Very Good (VG) on fruition scale which varies from Poor to Excellent. There were slight interruptionsdue to connectivity issues. All the 10 students presented from home and were enthusiastic to perform in the presence of family members. Few students victoriously reported, for themWebinar was like an CDC annual function.While delivering the webinar students felt they were more secure at home in high Corona time.Study found no case of attention loss or hearing loss disorders were reported in case of online webinars.

ObservationTable: **Performanceofstudentsonpresentationdayof SCR**

S. No.	Batch	Strength	Behavior			Presentation				Communication				Viva-voce				Did Not Appear
			N	NV	J	P	S	G	E	P	S	G	E	P	S	G	E	
1	2012	20	14	1	4	-	2	12	5	1	3	8	6	-	2	8	9	1
2	2013	15	10	2	2	2	2	8	2	2	2	6	4	1	-	8	5	1
3	2014	18	12	5	1	1	3	5	9	1	3	5	9	-	2	9	7	-
4	2015	16	12	-	3	-	2	9	4	-	-	9	6	1	2	3	9	1
5	2016	25	15	5	5	4	5	9	7	4	5	12	5	1	9	11	4	-
6	2017	22	16	2	4	6	7	7	1	6	7	7	1	4	8	8	1	1
7	2018	25	18	2	3	4	4	7	8	3	5	8	7	3	5	8	7	2
8	2019	21	15	3	3	2	5	8	4	2	5	9	3	1	6	8	4	2
9	2020	21	16	2	3	-	2	16	3	-	2	17	2	-	3	9	9	-
10	2021	10	9	-	1	-	-	9	1	-	-	4	6	-	-	3	7	-

*Notions: N-Normal, NV- Nervous, J-Joyous, P- Poor, S- Satisfactory, G- Good, E- Excellent

ClinicalFormulations:

Clinical formulation parametersviz: student behavior, presentation vectors, communication skill and viva-voce are studied in present paper which are measured in four point Fruition scale varying from poor to excellent.Performance of students in SCR presentationwas adjudged and tabulated (see observation table). One of the benefit ofselected study model is its easiness to understand by remotest individual entity of society through HEI –Community Engagement approach.

1. Student Behavior (SB): As a part of study the SB was monitored on CCTV camera. Each and every moment of presenters were closely recorded byCCTV camera. Psychological parameters like their face reading, walking, talking, drinking, going to urinals, referring SCR, wiping of sweat from face, taking long breathes, seriousness, standing in group or preferring loneliness were noticed for categorizing presenter's behavior as Normal, Nervous or Joyous.Performance of normal and joyous looking students is generally appreciable.

2.**P**resentation Vectors: Presentation of SCR by students was divided into four categories (see table). Poor meant worst presentation and excellent meant top presentations. During presentation thepsycho-mental ability of student to explain the allotted topic, demonstration of PPT, confidence shown during lecture delivery, knowledgeof the concept, time management, voice clarity etcwere noticed by jury.

3.**C**ommunication Skill: The ease with which the students explained their topic before audience in a language understandable to all was monitored. It was also being observed by jury whether student could attract interest of audience during the session or not!Emphasis was on how the presenter speaks. Voice modulation, word selection and word throw, clarity, and gesture were noticed.

4.**V**iva- Voce: Extent of knowledge on the allotted topic was monitored by asking relevant questions to presenter by jury and audience. Viva-voce was conducted in cordial atmosphere. Everyone present in the seminar hall took precautions to make the presenter feel relaxed. HOD took the responsibility that SCR presentation proceeds in ambience. Nervousness of student during viva-voce have negative impact on performance.

FactorsInfluencingSCRPresentation:

1.**G**uidance: Role of guide is of paramount importance for SCR. In the beginning the students take SCR an allusion. It is the responsibility of student's guide to enlighten a pathway to student for success in SCR work. It is expected from a guide to review work of student periodically and provide necessary guidance if required. Amicable teacher-student relationship can improve student's performance significantly.Presentation of 9 out of 18 students in 2014 (see table) was excellent because two of the college faculties have wonderful teacher-student relationship.However, the two faculties left CDC in the year 2019 because of better placement elsewhere. In CDC, each student was assigned a guide for consultation. One or more students were allotted to a guide for SCR. There were standing instructions to each guide to render every possible help to student regarding SCR like explaining the topic, providing references, helping in report writing, focus areas during presentation, preparing for viva-voce etc. However for surveillance FRF were circulated for backup corrections.

2.**L**iterature Survey (LS): For SCR, the LS plays an important role to cover the vast information available on the allotted topic. Library, print and e-media and of course internet are the major sources to be referred for gaining knowledge or making data base for a specific topic.LS may require field /site visits forpreparing data base.

3. **S**CR Writing: Although most of the students tested submitted SCRs write-up nicely. However, few presenter applied latest techniques in preparing SCRs like showing colored diagrams, using Excel sheets, using laptops, making files in .docx or pdf format for reprints, etc. A better report gaineveryone's attention and submitter gets appreciation from guide and jury members. Getting some advantage from jury members is obvious in such cases.Such a report is shown to others as a reference model.The SCR of 2 students of 2019 batch is still referred as benchmark SCR.

4. **H**ard Work And Confidence: Well said that hard work is the key of success. If sincere efforts are put for presentation and rehearsals are done frequently then probability of successful presentation increases. Confidence is another ingredient required to ensure success. Fact is universally accepted and needs no further elaborations.

Schematic diagram of factors influencing SCR presentation



5. **I**nterest And Grasping Of Concept: Once a topic is allotted to a student then checkwhether your interest domain circumscribe the allotted topic. Boredom can be set aside by selecting or accepting topic of interest. However, exceptions exit where topic becomes interesting through sincere hard work and accepting any topic as challenge.Otherwise change the topic, if possible. After that SC guide should be consulted to streamline the course of action. Go on making efforts to grasp the knowledge about topic. Chances of successful presentation depend upon vast conceptual knowledge of subject.

6. **C**ommunication Skill: Presentation delivered in the language of command is far better than lesser known language. Generally researchers opine that deliverance is much effective in mother tongue. Provided University/ Degree College/ HEI allows study of chosen subjects in mother tongue then advantage of the prevailing option should be preferred. In

CDC, English or Hindi-English mix is allowed with the restrictions of using scientific terminology in English language only.Observation table depicts overall 44% students had good communication skills and 25% students had excellent communication skills. Only 10% students needed improved communication skills as they presented SCR poorly. Extrovert students have better communication skills than introvert students.

7. **V**iva-Voce: Extent of subjective knowledge is further examined by asking relevant questions on topic by jury and audience. Question is asked one by one. However, for evaluation only replies to juriy's queries is considered.Marks or grading is not done on audience queries in CDC.Replies are given only for audience satisfaction. Questions are asked on public address system and similarly reply is given. Conversation is audible to all attendees. Interesting part of the case study is that there is no correlation between poor presentation and poor viva-voce. It is not necessary that those students who presented poorly will perform poorly in viva-voce. Overall 19 CDC students gave poor presentation whereas only 11 students performed poorly in question-answer session.Similarly, as compared to 23% students who underwent excellent presentation; there were 32% students gave excellent performance in viva-voce. Hesitation and shyness may be attributed for variance. Some students feel uncomfortable in public whilst they feel comfortable in solitary.

8. **E**xaminationPhobia(EP): Some students have EP or Examophobia. Such students afraid from appearing in any type of exams. Lack of confidence, incomplete preparation, negligence, insincerityetc may be the various psychological factors responsible for EP. Students obsessed with EP mostly try to make excuses for there poor attendance in exams and always to abscond. EP students can go to the extent of not appearing in exams. During the test period 8 students didn't appear on presentation day. It is suggested that the seminar guidesshould be vigilant about students absence from SCR work and arrange mock presentations for students suffering from exams phobicdisorder.

9. **F**orgetfulness: Short loss of memory or forgetfulness is a type of memory disorder called amnesia. After the presentation some students often complain about forgetfulness. According to them, they prepared for presentation whole night but couldn't deliver properly due to loss of memory. If noticed at any stage of teaching about students memory disorder then they should be taught to have sound sleep, socialize themselves, take healthy balanced diet and should stay mentally active to improve forgetfulness.

10. **A**udience Response (AR): The success of SCR presentation also depends upon AR. Audience may be supportive or confutative. Whereas supportive audience escalates moral confidence while confutative audience de-escalates moral confidence of SCR presenter. The reason for poor presentation in the year 2014 (see table) was presence confutative audience in seminar hall which were intentionally disrupting the proceedings in the seminar hall by firing one question after other to the presenter. Their motive was to derail the presenter from track. Such an eventuality should be dealt sternly by concerned guides or persuade troublesome by discourse.

11. **T**ime Management (TM): In the fast running everyday life TM has great significance. Time is precious natural resource. Time should be saved for extra efforts or to takeover new targets. Adhering totime schedule is important for students. Time over-run may displease jury. On the contrary abrupt finishing of webinar (early completion) may also dismay jury. Thus, lead and lag time both have negative impact on presentation evaluation.

12. **T**emporary Hearing or Attention Loss: Some students suffer from temporary hearing or attention loss disorders. Loud noise, ageing or genetic may be the causes of temporary hearing loss.Such students find it difficult to focus on present ongoing activity and exhibit symptoms of edginess and distractedness. Attention loss disorder or inattention disorder is known as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These disorders have negative impact on students performance. The performance in presentation has inverse functional relationship with hearing or attention loss disorders.

13. **F**amily Woes (FW): Woes invite tensions especially when it comes from within family. Students having family problems remain in tension due to mental stress. FWs have adverse effect on academic performance of degree college students. Such students are generally seen sad and taking lesser interest in academic activities. They mostly prefer isolation. Performance in SCR presentation of a student gripped with FW declines.Proper stress management is required for bringing the student out from distress. Higher are the family woes poorer will be the performance of student in seminar presentation.

Conclusion:

Clinical formulations involving psychological parameters such as guidance,presentation, communication skill and viva-voce were studied and measured on Fruition scale.Variouspsychological vectors were studied in order to findfunctional relationship withperformance of HEI students in SCR presentation. It was established that guidance, presentation,

communication skill, viva-voce, hard work and confidence, interest and grasping, time managementare directly proportional to OF. Whereas OF has inverse relationship with EP, forgetfulness, hearingand attention loss disorders and family woes. Whilst presentation has semi forward relationship with viva-voce.The factors like literature survey, SCRwriting and audience response also influence the overall performancein SC evaluation.To some extent presentation and viva-voce have semi forward relationship.As the selected modelof study didn't use statistical tools for analysis, making the outcomes understandable to the remotest individual entity of societythrough HEI - Community Engagementprototype is also possible. Benefits of the research can thus be shared with remotest end users.

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