

MOTIVATION

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INTRODUCTION

The field of motivation constitutes one of the most investigated spheres of human behaviour. Starting with the early concept of "instinct", through Thorndike's epoch making "law of effect" and the host of papers generated by the works of Hull and his followers, Tollman and others on the problem of motivation in relation to learning, the scope of motivational research today has grown and expanded vastly. It has almost become synonymous with research on personality. Though more recently, the trend of research has been towards personality, clinical psychology work behaviour and socio and economic development, the roots and foundations of motivation research are essentially tied up with research on learning. The much flaunted concept of "reinforcement" bears ample testimony to this.

However, in recent years, there has been a decline in the volume and variety of motivational research in relation to learning in general, and classroom learning in particular. This is true of Indian research as well. During the period of five years covered by the present survey the number of studies identified has been only five.

THE NATURE OF STUDIES UNDER REVIEW

Out of five studies identified for the review four are doctoral studies either in Psychology or

Education. The remaining study, claimed to be an independent study, relates to the area of adult learning. None of the studies under review qualify to be a well controlled and planned investigation leading to any definite finding either conceptually significant or practically useful. The investigation of Agarwal, A (1988), Mittal, J.P. (1992), Das R.P. (1988) and Natarajan, S. (1988) are doctoral dissertations while the only investigation reported as an independent study has been carried out by Verma, B.P. and Bhat, R.K. (1992). In terms of location, most of them have been carried out in Uttar Pradesh, and one each from Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. This is an indication that research on motivation in relation to learning has not attracted the attention of investigators from other parts of the country. Perhaps, considering the quality of the studies reviewed here, one need not have a regret in this regard.

THE PROBLEMS INVESTIGATED

The problems under investigation in the studies vary widely. The samples selected include teachers, deprived and non-deprived children, creative and non-creative students, adult learners of National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) centres, and one study relates to student leaders. A picture of the loose and unorganised state of affairs, lack of focus and clarity in motivational research relating to learning is

reflected in these studies. The objectives and hypotheses in these studies are rather vague and general, and can mean anything or nothing. Some examples of such hypotheses are as follows:

1. "High and low creative children will differ significantly with regard to psychological needs"
2. "There is a relationship between need for power and risk-taking on the one hand, need for affiliation and risk-taking on the other"
3. "Motivational techniques can result in significant all round development among adult learners"

The examples cited above indicate lack of rigour and exactitude, precision of thinking and critical review of earlier research work carried out by other investigators not to mention the deplorable style of writing. Probably one does not need any better evidence for the need for a more rigorous training in research methodology as an absolute necessity if doctoral research in general and particularly in the area of motivation is to amount to something.

Selection of Samples

Terms like Normative sampling, Cross-sectional approach, Stratified-proportionate-random sampling, etc., have been freely used. There seems to be a confusion between "random" sampling and selecting a sample "at random". A very original and interesting description is "random-representative-quota sampling". No attempt has been made to point out the relationship between the "sample size" and their universes. In the opinion of the present reviewer the sampling procedures employed in almost all the studies leave much to ones imagination as to what exactly transpired.

Designs of the Study

No investigation has reported that a particular

accepted design like "randomised block design", "factorial design", etc. has been employed. Such technical terms are very conspicuous by their absence. No thought appears to have been given to this. Most of the designs appear to be "accidental", and perhaps fatally, so. One study states that the "survey and cross-sectional" designs have been used again meaning random collection of data. Interestingly enough, one study claims to be a "quasi-experimental" study, while there is no sign of any experimental set up evident. None of the studies, is longitudinal in design. Similarly, intervention designs on "pre-post" test designs are absent. By and large, the procedure appears to have been, to administer a few psychometric scales or instruments to a group of subjects chosen at ones own convenience or inconvenience and to subject these to different kinds of random and directionless statistical analysis.

Tools of Data Collection

Mostly data has been collected by administering a wide array of psychological tests, questionnaires, scales or instruments or whatever one may call them. While it is gratifying on the one hand to see that indigenous instruments have been employed, at the same time there is a lingering doubt as to whether an examination of their psychometric properties has been done. Most of the instruments used in these investigations appear to have been locally developed. One does not get a clear assessment of how well standardised these instruments were. Information on these points is inadequate. One certainly finds that the general tendency has been one of using a large number of tools and instruments, hoping to find some "finding". This is not surprising because, as already pointed out, almost all the studies lack in conceptual clarity, the hypotheses being almost 'common sensical' or 'non-sensical' and naive. In fact, mention is made in one study about "self-prepared motivational technique scale". One is at a loss to understand what is the

difference between a scale and a technique. The term technique is used to describe an instrument of measurement, but at the same time it is also used to indicate a set of practices on behavioural patterns.

There is a lurking feeling that many of these tools were selected for the investigation just because they were available and somebody wanted them to be used.

Data Analysis

All the studies under review have employed statistical and quantitative analysis. Besides the usual measures of means, standard deviations, Pearson's coefficient of correlations and ANOVA have been very freely used. In some studies multiple correlations and regression analysis have also been employed. Of course, 't' tests and correlation coefficients have been the most popular. The abstract of the investigation carried out by Verma, B.P. and Bhat, R.K. (1992) does not indicate the type of statistical analysis employed.

Certainly the above mentioned are the basic analytical tools normally employed in any empirical investigation in the behavioural sciences. One may not need to comment on these. The fact that most of the studies have been conceptually vague and methodologically, lax, and the hypotheses stated were very general, probably does not call for more sophisticated analysis. By and large the statistical analysis have been routine and mechanical. In any study, the rigour and sophistication of statistical analysis definitely depends on the quality of the overall design and plan of the study, both of which counting the studies under report have been poor. In a way, one may describe the analyses carried out as commonplace, elementary, routine, mechanical and aimless.

Findings

The investigators have certainly drawn a number of inferences and conclusions which are of a

very general and descriptive nature rather than being specific. There has been very little of critical analysis and much less of a critical and diagnostic approach. Some illustrative findings are presented here:

1. "Female teachers, teachers younger in age and teachers possessing experience of teaching, teachers working in urban schools, private unaided schools, and girls schools/coeducational schools displayed higher levels of motivation to work" (sic) (Mittal, J.P. 1992).
2. "The deprived group in the present study belonged to low SES were deprived emotionally, economically, physically and were rejected." (sic) (Das, R.P. 1988). These two findings certainly do not need any research to discover.
3. "The sex difference exist in motivation" (sic) (Agarwal, A. 1988).

The above are illustrations of the vague, confusing and omnibus nature of the findings reported. In any research, one expects the investigator to state whether the hypotheses postulated have been accepted and if so at what level of significance, or whether they have been rejected. Further, one would also expect a theoretical or logical attempt to explain the findings and not leave it to the imagination of the unfortunate reader.

On the whole, the state of the art in the area of research in motivation in relation to education during the period under review appears to leave nothing to be proud of and to be very much desired. Apart from the fact that there have been very few investigations, the quality seems to be rather poor, conceptually, methodologically and even analytically. If the present reviewer were to be asked whether any of the five studies has been "outstanding" the answer is a firm 'No.'

Education is one of the major concerns of any society perhaps, second in importance only to poverty. The former has an instrumental

relationship with the latter. As already mentioned, all the studies reported here were undertaken by individual investigators mostly doctoral students. Well conceived and focused investigation with definite objectives undertaken by institutions or teams of researchers are totally absent. Secondly, most of the researches have focused on the learner rather than the learning process. In particular, classroom learning situation has been hardly investigated. Crucial areas like motivational factors in learning difficulties, the use of "learning groups" as motivational factors, problems of the migrant rural students into the urban areas, have not been studied. One also misses case studies of high achievers from deprived groups. Similarly there have been no studies on organisational factors. These are some of the areas where well organised, motivational research can suggest positive action oriented alternatives. By and large the researches have been descriptive. There has not been a single process oriented study. In the end, one is left with a feeling of utter disappointment, if not despondency and hopelessness. Motivational process in the classroom learning situation certainly merits more attention. The overall impression one gets is that the research in the area is unorganised, aimless with occasional random attempts at clumsy investigation. Intervention researches and action research programmes, at least to the present reviewer appear to be the need of the day, to meet the problem of educating the poor of our society who have been so far denied the opportunity. On the other hand there appears to be no need for the type of drab

descriptive, and poor quality researches that have been reported. It is unfortunate that most of our doctoral students are prepared the way they appear to be, if the studies under review are assumed to be "representative" and not "random". One gets desperate and even cynical feeling that no research is better than such 'research'.

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