

A STUDY OF ATTENTION SPAN OF TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates issues related to teacher attention span, employing a descriptive study within a survey model. The study involved 200 secondary-level teachers from both rural and urban areas in Nagpur city. Data for the research were gathered through a questionnaire designed by the researchers themselves, and a descriptive content analysis was employed for data analysis. The findings of the study indicate that teachers predominantly attribute attention span problems experienced during the course to factors within the control of the teachers themselves. However, they also associate this problem with the overall teaching environment, suggesting a broader perspective. Based on the results, teachers perceive these issues as stemming from psychological characteristics, exhibited behaviors, and low academic performance, categorizing them more as disciplinary problems. Teachers offered several recommendations for addressing attention span problems beyond their individual influence and teaching practices. They proposed making exams more challenging and adjusting disciplinary regulations to facilitate punishment. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of showing greater interest, adopting a positive approach, and employing a variety of teaching methods tailored to the students' levels.

Keywords: *attention Span, teaching-learning process, factors affecting attention, teacher.*

INTRODUCTION

Attention is a crucial aspect of daily life that significantly impacts one's quality of life. Expressions like "to pay attention," "be all ears," and "take into consideration" are commonly used in everyday communication. Failing to pay attention can lead to communication problems, minor distractions can result in accidents, and careless reading can lead to misunderstandings. Attention is a mental state of alertness and concentration. When an individual focuses their attention on a specific stimulus, they can better recognize its relevant features, and the attended feature is integrated into their consciousness. This makes it easier to select and absorb information, allowing the mind to avoid unnecessary details. Therefore, attention is recognized as a critical mechanism for initiating learning. Nevertheless, it's impossible for an individual to be aware of and pay attention to everything simultaneously. This becomes even more challenging in the school environment, particularly during conscious learning. The speed and manner of presenting stimuli vary, making it essential for teachers to be selective in

what they emphasize. Moreover, various stimuli in the classroom are either necessary or irrelevant for learning, and these distracting stimuli can easily divert students' attention spans. In spite of these challenges, teachers are expected to maintain students' attention effectively in the classroom. The key concept here is directing attention to the right focus. According to behavioral learning theory, behavior attracts attention when it is reinforced. Classical conditioning establishes stimulus control with care, while operant conditioning demands significant stimulation. According to the information processing theory, the information processing process begins with attention. Information from the external world initially enters the sensory memory, the first component of the mental processing system. However, sensory memory can only hold information briefly. For effective learning, information must be transferred to short-term memory and processed there. Attention is the mechanism that determines which information is sent to short-term memory. In observational learning, the first requirement is paying attention to the model being observed. The individual imitates the behavior they are attentive to. Numerous factors related to the observer, model, and the behavior being modeled, along with past reinforcement experiences, influence attention development. According to Gestalt theory, attention is linked to the figure and ground. The figure is what attention is concentrated on. According to this theory, when attention shifts, the figure and ground may also change. As a result, attention plays a role in various forms of learning, and it's essential for an individual to achieve a certain level of arousal for any learning to occur.

The ability to sustain focused attention on a specific task or activity for an extended period demands significant cognitive effort. During this process, students must be capable of averting distractions that capture their attention but do not contribute to the learning process, and they need to make a conscious effort to remain engaged in the task at hand. The capacity to maintain selectivity over an extended duration and concentrate on the intended stimuli relies on continuous stimulation. When the nature and intensity of these stimuli remain constant, individuals may become desensitized to them, resulting in a lack of responsiveness to the stimuli, rendering the learning environment devoid of meaning. In simpler terms, even if all other factors are favorable, learning cannot take place when students are unable to focus their attention on classroom activities or when their attention is diverted toward stimuli that do not serve the intended educational purpose. Research has shown that errors increase, product quality diminishes, and the learning process falters under such circumstances. Consequently, it is imperative to assess situations of academic underperformance in schools not only in terms of students' intellectual abilities or motivation levels but also in relation to their capacity to sustain and manage attention effectively.

As individuals age, their ability to control attention tends to improve, and their attention span typically increases. They become more aware of where to direct their focus when engaged in learning tasks. However, it's important to note that there is no definitive evidence regarding the exact duration for which attention can be sustained. Research has shown that attention cannot maintain the same level of intensity over an extended period on the same task. Instead, it tends to decrease gradually over time. The duration and intensity of focus are influenced by various factors, including the individual's age, the specific task at hand, and the timing within a learning session. In fact, the widespread observation of students encountering difficulties in maintaining concentration and attention across all educational levels supports this notion. Therefore, one of the primary responsibilities of educators during teaching is to assist students in directing their attention toward the appropriate stimuli and keeping them engaged throughout the course to maximize their learning opportunities. Attention plays a vital role in the accurate encoding and retention of information in memory. When knowledge

is acquired with heightened attention, it tends to be more resistant to decay and forgetting. Attention is also essential for identifying the core of a problem, comprehending it, and generating creative ideas. Individuals with strong creative and critical thinking abilities typically exhibit a high capacity for focusing their attention on relevant stimuli. Consequently, attention serves as the foundation for effective thinking. Students who struggle with attention often encounter difficulties in following teachers' instructions, lose interest in lessons quickly, abandon learning tasks prematurely, have trouble adhering to classroom rules, and may exhibit disruptive behavior. Therefore, attention is not only crucial for cognitive development but also for social and emotional development during childhood.

Upon reviewing the relevant literature, it becomes evident that studies examining the relationship between students' attention levels during courses, factors negatively impacting classroom attention, student distractibility, and teaching methods are predominantly conducted abroad. These studies, encompassing diverse types and levels of education, primarily aim to mitigate factors detrimental to the learning environment and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. International literature reveals that the majority of related studies are concentrated in the fields of medicine and psychology, often focusing on the diagnosis of attention deficit disorders in children and the development of attention-gathering skills. Only a limited number of studies investigate student attention during courses at the upper-secondary and tertiary education levels, primarily concentrating on how teachers capture students' attention at the commencement of a lesson. Notably, there appears to be a gap in research examining this topic within the context of schooling education, involving both students and teachers. Understanding which stimuli divert students' attention during lessons and their behavior in such situations is imperative for helping students develop the ability to initiate and sustain focused attention. Equally important is gaining insight into how teachers perceive distraction in relation to attention and how they view students who are distracted. Such knowledge is critical for devising effective strategies to combat distractions during teaching. Hence, there was a compelling need to conduct research delving into the causes of attention-related issues experienced by secondary school students during lessons. This study aimed to investigate the characteristics of students grappling with this problem, the behaviors exhibited by both teachers and students when attention is diverted, and the expectations each group has of the other. The rationale for conducting this research in secondary schools lies in the fact that this educational level marks a transition where students encounter different teachers after primary school, and they are at a critical age. This period, often referred to as early adolescence, signifies the end of childhood and is characterized by rapid physical changes due to the onset of growth hormones. Alongside these physiological transformations, adolescents undergo significant shifts in their social and emotional landscapes. The transition from primary to secondary school, combined with the adjustment to a new educational institution, can be a source of stress for students. Their expectations from parents and teachers evolve, and peer relationships take on heightened importance. Adolescents, who spend more time with their peers, seek conformity in attire, speech, and behavior to gain acceptance within their social circles. Emotions such as anger, suspicion, frustration, and jealousy are prevalent during this stage of development. Consequently, adolescents' interest in learning and academic pursuits tends to decline, manifesting as difficulties in concentration, unfamiliarity with effective study techniques, reluctance to work, daydreaming, and similar behaviors. Therefore, the efforts of secondary school teachers to guide students' attention appropriately and maintain their engagement become increasingly crucial to ensure that students derive maximum benefit from educational activities.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To study the Attention Span of teachers.

HYPOTHESIS:

There will be no significant difference between the attention span for respective teachers.

SCOPE AND DE-LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

This study is limited to Nagpur city in the state of Maharashtra only. This study evaluate the status of attention span for teachers only.

METHOD

This is a descriptive study examining the teacher's attention span. In this study Tachitoscope is a device that displays an image for a specific amount of time. It can be used to measure attention span by showing something too fast to be consciously recognized, or to test which elements of an image are memorable. Projection tachitoscope use a slide or transparency projector equipped with the mechanical shutter system typical of a camera. The slide is loaded, the shutter locked open and focusing and alignment are adjusted, then the shutter is closed. When ready for the test a shutter speed is selected and the shutter is tripped normally.

Presently computer simulated tachitoscope technique is widely used for research purposes. For the present study the computer simulated methodology has been applied by the researcher.

The subjects were shown slides having different number of dots for 1/5 seconds and were asked to reproduce the same orally. The researcher noted their number of correct responses which were further analyzed for the research purpose.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of teachers working in secondary schools in the Nagpur City. For determining the schools where the study will be carried out, a simple random sampling method was used and randomly selected for the school teachers. A total of 200 rural and urban teachers participated in the study.

Data Collection Tools

In order to collect the data for the research Attention Span questionnaire is administered to the teachers and the data is collected for respective objective of this study.

DATA ANALYSIS

Inferior statistical techniques were use for the data analysis for this study.

Table no. 1.1

Level of Frequency distribution of Attention Span of Rural and Urban teachers

Level	N & %	Rural Teachers			Urban Teachers		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
High	N	15	15	30	21	22	43
	%	12.931%	17.857%	15.00%	21.00%	22.00%	21.50%
Moderate	N	81	56	137	71	69	140
	%	69.827%	66.667%	68.50%	71.00%	69.00%	70.00%
Low	N	20	13	33	8	9	17
	%	17.241%	15.476%	16.50%	8.00%	9.00%	8.50%
Total	N	116	84	200	100	100	200
	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

From the Above table shown that, level of frequency distribution of Attention Span for Rural and Urban teacher, 12.931% rural male Teachers, 17.857% rural Female teachers & 15.00% total rural teachers belongs to high level of Attention Span. On the other hand 21.00% urban male teachers, 22.00% urban female teachers and 21.50% total urban teachers belongs to high level of Attention Span.

The moderate level of Attention Span of rural teachers indicated that, the 69.827% male rural teachers, 66.667% female rural teachers and 68.50% all rural teachers belongs to moderate level of Attention Span. On the other hand 71.00% urban male teachers, 69.00 % urban female teachers and 70.00% urban all teachers belongs to moderate level of Attention Span.

The low level of Attention Span of rural teachers indicated that, the 17.241% male rural teachers, 15.476% female rural teachers and 16.50% all rural teachers belongs to moderate level of Attention Span. On the other hand 8.00% urban male teachers, 9.00% urban female teachers and 8.50% urban all teachers having low level of Attention Span.

The majority of rural teachers (85.00%) having Moderate and Low level of Attention Span where as urban teachers (91.50%) having High and Moderate level of Attention Span.

Most of the urban teachers belong to Moderate level of Attention Span compared to rural teacher level of Attention Span. On the other hand most of the rural teachers belong to low level of Attention Span compared to urban teacher's level of Attention Span.

Table no. 1.2
Attention Span of Rural and Urban teachers

Teachers	N	M	SD	Df	SE.d m	't' Value
Rural Teachers	200	20.050	5.955	398	.596	2.691**
Urban Teacher	200	21.655	5.972			
Rural Male Teachers	116	19.655	5.638	214	.786	2.204**
Urban Male Teacher	100	21.860	5.872			
Rural Female Teachers	84	20.595	6.360	182	.923	0.925
Urban Female Teacher	100	21.450	6.094			

* 0.01 Level of Significance ** 0.05 Level of Significance

From the above table shown that, the significant mean difference between the Attention Span for the rural and urban Teachers. The rural & Urban Teachers mean score of Attention Span is 20.050, 21.655 & SD is 5.955, 5.972 respectively. The rural male & Urban male Teachers mean score of Attention Span is 19.655, 21.860 & SD is 5.638, 5.872 respectively. The rural female & Urban female Teachers mean score of Attention Span is 20.595, 21.450 & SD is 6.360, 6.094 respectively. Compare the mean score of Attention Span for rural and urban Teacher, rural and urban male teachers & rural and urban female teachers calculated the SE.dm is 0.596, .786, .923 and calculated 't' value is 2.691, 2.204 and 0.925 On 398, 214, 182 df table value is 1.96 on 0.05 level of significance and 2.58 for 0.01 level of significance. It is concluded that the mean score of urban teacher, urban male teachers is effective compared to rural all teachers and male Teachers. On the other hand rural and urban female teacher's attention span mean score is not significantly difference on respective probable level. It means that, Urban Teachers and urban male teachers Attention Span is better as compared to rural Teacher Attention Span. Urban male teachers attention span is better compare to rural male teachers and rural and urban female teachers attention span is not significantly difference.

Area of teachers working has significant effect on Teacher Attention Span status. The urban Teacher Attention Span is better as compared to rural Teacher. The Urban Male Teacher Attention Span is better as compared to rural Male Teachers and rural and urban female teacher's attention span status is mostly similar.

CONCLUSION

Area of teachers working has significant effect on Teacher's Attention Span status. The urban Teacher's Attention Span is better as compared to rural Teacher. The Urban Male Teacher's Attention Span is better as compared to rural Male Teachers and rural and urban female teacher's attention span status is mostly similar.

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