



Factors Influencing High And Low Academic Performance In 1st Mbbs - Student's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Medical students academic performance is affected by many factors, academic performance will depend not only on their intellectual performance but many other factors can influence. This study aims to get various factors influencing their academic performance in their own words. **Materials & method:** The study was designed to conduct focus group discussion which facilitates the generation of open and unrestricted responses from the participants. FGD was conducted with 11 participants who got more than 75% and 14 participants who got less than 50% in 1ST year university MBBS exams. All the participants are encouraged to speak up freely on their strategies and activities during their learning and exam preparation. **Results:** All the responses from participants were analyzed qualitatively and summarized under the following themes For high performers 1) learning strategies (2) Motivation (3) resource management For low performers 1) lack of interest (2) unable to understand (3) memory **Discussion:** Attending lectures regularly, revision and deep learning in the presence of teacher, planning and time management are significant responses from high performers, where as lack of interest, difficulty in following the subject and lack of memory are the responses from low performers which go in accordance with many other studies. The above responses from the participants should be discussed with other students for the uplift /overcome the difficulties in their academic performance.

KEYWORDS

Academic performance, Focus Group Discussion, I MBBS students, learning strategies

INTRODUCTION:

Students academic performance is affected by numerous factors including interest in subjects, motivation, planning, daily study hours, friends and examination results (McManus IC 2003, Kilminster S 2007). The rapid growth of private colleges has posed challenges in maintaining uniformity (Supe A 2006) and quality of education (Kumar S 2004). Many researchers conducted detailed studies about the factors contributing student performance at different study levels and these studies identify and analyze the number of factors that affect the academic performance of the student at school, college and at university level. Their finding identify students' effort, previous schooling, parent's educational background, family income, self motivation of students, age of student, learning preferences and entry qualification of students as important factors that have effect on student's academic performance in different setting. The utility of these studies lies in the need to undertake corrective measures that improve the academic performance of students. It is generally assumed that the students who showed better or higher performance in the starting subjects of their studies also performed better in future academic years at undergraduate level (Frischenschlager O 2005, Egbewale BE 2009, Mills C 2009, Khan HU 2003) Association of student attendance with performance has been reported worldwide (Riggs JW 1994). Stress in medical students is not uncommon and is process oriented, stress inducing factors in medical students can be academic, physical, emotional or social (Somnath T. Salgar 2014). Although minimal amount of stress is desirable and is necessary to spark in a healthy competitive spirit, the undue stress will have undesirable impact on academics (Linn BS 1985).

As there are many factors influencing their academic performance, it was decided to conduct a qualitative research to find the factors associated with the good and poor academic performance of I MBBS students. Understanding the fac-

tors and addressing them to the medical students would help them to improve their performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This study requires open and unrestricted responses from participants. In the context of medical education Focus Group Discussion can be used to encourage student's voices (Lam T 2001). So, Focus Group Discussion was conducted among 25 students of I MBBS students in two groups separately. Group -1 are the 11 students who secured more than 75% in their I MBBS University examinations are considered as high performance students and Group -2 are the 14 students who secured less than 50% in their I MBBS University examinations are considered as low performance students. Participants from both the groups are encouraged to speak up freely on their strategies and activities during their learning and exam preparation process. Interpretation of response patterns are framed into general themes during data analysis. The study was approved by Institutional ethical committee, NRIAS.

RESULTS:

From the 11 high performance students three main themes were derived by qualitative data analysis ; (1) Learning strategies, (2) motivation, and (3) resource management. These themes were framed with 7 responses given by them, which were shown in Table 1. And the number of students given a particular response was depicted in Graph 1. (Table:1 and Graph:1 about here)

From the 14 low performance students also three main themes were derived by qualitative data analysis which are totally different from high performers ; (1) Lack of interest, (2) unable to understand, and (3) memory. These themes were framed with 6 responses given by them, which were shown in Table 2. And the number of students given a particular response was depicted in Graph 2. . (Table:2 and Graph:2

about here)

DISCUSSION:

The above results suggest that the high performers learn from a variety of situations such as attending all theory and practical classes, learning in small groups, deep learning with the help of a teacher, motivation from teacher and their own exam results, and proper planning. It is observed that the main approach is their learning strategy by attending all classes, revision and small group discussions, motivation from their teacher, their own internal exam results and time management also played a major role in their good performance. Our findings with high performers in the present study go in agreement with other studies (Flournoy DJ 1984, Hamza M Abdulghani 2014). The results in low performers reveal that failure in them is due to Low Attendance – theory and practical's, new friends, difficulty in following the subject, no personnel guidance and Unable to remember even after repeated reading. It is observed the low performers are having no personal guidance, very less attendance and lack of understanding, all these factors are interconnected. Our findings in low performers in the present study go in accordance with other studies (Dhaliwal U 2003).

CONCLUSION:

Student counseling and informal mentorship is need of the hour, our study identified several important factors influencing both high and low academic performers. These factors emphasize the early identification of the difficulties to overcome low academic performance in the low performers and good factors to be followed to achieve high academic performance. So, the factors which were identified should be discussed with the students and teachers for the better outcome.

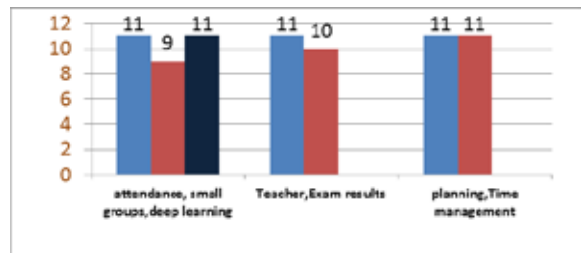
Table:1 Themes and Responses given by high performance students

Themes	Responses	Students (11)
1. Learning strategies	Attendance – theory and practical's	11
	Learning in small groups	9
	Deep learning and revision with the help of teacher	11
2. Motivation	by teacher before exams	11
	exam results	10
3. Resource management	Planning	11
	Time management	11

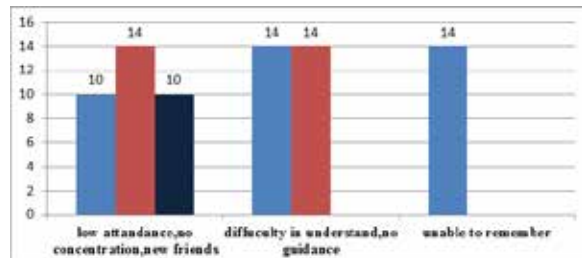
Table:2 Themes and Responses given by Low performance students

Themes	Responses	Students (14)
1. Lack of interest	Low Attendance – theory and practical's	10
	Unable to concentrate in classes	14
	New friends	10
2.unable to understand	difficulty in following the subject	14
	no personnel guidance	14
3. memory	Unable to remember even after repeated reading	14

Graph: 1 specific responses by high performance students -11



Graph: 2 specific responses by low performance students -14



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