



UNDERSTANDING & INTERPRETING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES IN SOCIAL STUDIES AMONG PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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Abstract

The content knowledge in social studies is very essential for student teachers since it forms the base to their subject and makes on aware of the world happenings. The teacher cannot succeed in teaching unless she has the historical background, understanding of the chain of events and a wider horizon of the content at hand. The aim of study is to analyze and interpret achievement scores in social studies among prospective teachers with respect to their academic performance, age and other variables.



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The descriptive survey comparative type method was used for the present study. The data was collected from 70 prospective student teachers. The questionnaire was constructed by selecting questions from CTET examinations between the years 2011 to 2016. The questions belonging to social studies section from Paper II Social Studies of the CTET exam were included in the questionnaire. The total 70 items were compiled questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated and reliability was established.

The study revealed that achievement scores of female prospective teachers were more than the male student teachers. The student teachers who had studied the subjects only till Std X were not at disadvantage. The students with subject background till HSC or degree hadn't higher test scores.

Scholastic background is important to score well in CTET social studies section. The students with Grades O/A are more likely to crack the examination. The CBSE board covers vast subject knowledge than SSC and ICSE board. These students retain their historical and political knowledge better. Rote learning is attributed to SSC boards. The content either has to be delivered better or the evaluation has to be such that it helps the students retain the subject knowledge.

Studying history is important because it allows us to understand our past, which in turn allows understanding our present. People often say that "history repeats itself," but if we study the successes and failures of the past, we may, ideally, be able to learn from our mistakes and avoid repeating them in the future.

History is seen as being made up of multiple accounts and multiple perspectives; but the importance of evidence to support that account takes history, in theory at least, out of the realm of fiction, of myth and of legend. Studying history does not just mean to know the events that took place. It's also a place to look for the choices people faced. The trade-offs they made. The characters they built. The risks they took. In some sense history is the Grand-teacher which shows you a way of life based on its own experience.

The study of social studies is very useful and valuable. Its knowledge is essential and useful to both the ruler and the ruled. In order to know what is happening in the world around us at least an elementary knowledge of political science is necessary. In the modern age an individual cannot lead an isolated life. Each country has to maintain relations with other countries of the world.

The content knowledge in social studies is very essential for student teachers since it forms the base to their subject and makes on aware of the world happenings. The teacher cannot succeed in teaching unless she has the historical background, understanding of the chain of events and a wider horizon of the content at hand.

Cener, Emin; Acun, Ismail; Demirhan, Gokhan (2015), investigated the impact of teaching social studies with the help of CT on pupils' achievement in social studies. The outcome of research revealed, pupils' attitudes towards the subject and ICT do not have an effect on their post-test achievement scores. But it was observed that students' prior knowledge on the subject and the treatment i.e. teaching social studies with ICT had a positive effect on their achievement. From these observations it can be concluded that teaching social studies with ICT do not have any statistically significant effect on pupils' attitudes toward social studies lesson. The researchers recommended that teachers and policy makers should find ways to formulate effective ICT integration applications for social studies.

Enwelim, Samuel Chiedu (2016), studied the relationship between certain teacher characteristics and students achievement in social studies. The co-relational methods were used as methodology for the research. It was observed that, teacher characteristics had relationship with students achievement. Recommendation emphasized that teachers should diversify teaching strategies that suit individual learners in the learning process and improve student's achievement in social studies.

Adeyemi, Babatunde A. (2008), investigated the effects of three teaching strategies (Cooperative learning, problem-solving and conventional method of teaching) on junior

secondary school students' achievement in Social Studies. The outcome of the study revealed that students exposed to cooperative learning strategy performed better than their counterparts in the other groups. The results of the study also indicated that the effect of teaching strategies was gender sensitive.

Hawe, Eleanor; Browne, Isabel (2010), examined the reliability of the assessment interviews used in the 2005 round of social studies monitoring, in particular the variations between teacher administrators (TAs) in their use of prompts and probes. The outcome of the study revealed the fact that consistent failure of teacher administrators to clarify and elucidate students' social studies understandings through the judicious use of probes.

Ukpong, D. E.; George, I. N., (2013), proved that academic performance of the long study time behaviour students was significantly different from that of their short study time counterparts and suggested that students should set a study time table long enough for effective academic exercises (at least two to three hours daily) for their private study and stick to it.

Iyamu, Ede O. S.; Iseguan, Andrew I. (2009), focused the study on continuous quest to explore ways of enhancing students' learning and achievement in social studies in Nigerian secondary schools. The researcher investigated assessment of the communication proficiency of social studies teachers, believing that the teachers' proficiency is a strong factor in effective teaching and learning. The outcomes of the study revealed that majority of the teachers were weak in these measures. On the basis of observations, he recommended that there is need to review teacher education programmes in Nigeria in favour of greater emphasis on communication skills.

Reflecting on literature review, the researcher is also curious to know, how far student teachers are prepared to appear for CET test. How far they are competent to score numbers in social studies and how far they are able to perform in an achievement test in social studies.

Aims of the Study

1. To study the achievement in social studies among prospective teachers.
2. To compare the achievement in social studies among prospective teachers in relation to...
 - a. Gender
 - b. Age
 - c. Educational Background

- d. Disciplinary Background
- e. School Board Background
- f. Scholastic Background
- g. Subject Background

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the achievement scores in social studies among prospective teachers.
2. To analyze the achievement scores in social studies among prospective teachers.
3. To compare the achievement in social studies among prospective teachers in relation to...
 - a. Gender
 - b. Age
 - c. Educational Background
 - d. Disciplinary Background
 - e. School Board Background
 - f. Scholastic Background
 - g. Subject Background
4. To interpret achievement scores in social students in relation to their subject background: studied history and political science till std X/HSC/ Degree.

Variable of the study

Achievement: The dependable variable i.e achievement is the performance of the student teachers in a questionnaire based on testing items that were randomly taken from CTET paper's questions in History and Political Science subjects.

Achievement in Social Studies: The questionnaire framed had 70 questions covering 13 dimensions in history and 4 dimensions in political science. The 13 dimensions broadly covered the 3 phases of Indian History: Ancient, Medieval and Modern. Besides it also covered World History. The dimensions in political Science covered fundamental right, legal cases, articles and provisions and functioning of the government.

Prospective Student Teachers - The prospective student teachers in this study are students of B.Ed and D.El.Ed from one teacher training college of Mumbai.

Scope of the Study

The study includes data collection from B.Ed and D.El.Ed student teachers from one college. The age group focused in the study is 20 years and above. The data included is collected from

Graduates/Post Graduates belonging to all 5 academic disciplines i.e Mathematics, Business, Science, Social studies and Humanities. The student teachers academic average grade is ranging from O/A/B/C/D. The data is collected from student teachers who have studied history and political science till Std X minimum from SSC/ICSE/IGSE/IB board affiliation.

Limitations of the study

The data is not collected from ECE student teachers. It does not cover data from the age group below 20 years. The data is collected from student teachers of only one college. The test items are taken only from CTET exam and no other competitive exam.

Delimitations of the study

History as a subject is very vast. It extends over centuries and regions. The test items are taken only from ancient, medieval and modern History of India. However, 4 test items out of 70 were also based on world history. Political science knowledge and understanding is tested only on the items based on Indian laws and governance. The constitutions and governance of other nations hasn't been tested.

Significance of the study:

The outcome of this study will help in identifying the knowledge and understanding of student teachers in subjects History and Political Science based on the MCQs asked in the past years CTET exam. The study will help to understand the importance of discipline background knowledge to score in competitive exams. This study will help to correlate the achievement of the prospective student teachers in social studies with their educational background, subject background, scholastic background, disciplinary background.

Research Design: For the present study, the researcher used the descriptive study of comparative type. The data was collected from 70 prospective student teachers. The questionnaire was constructed by selecting questions from CTET examinations between the years 2011 to 2016. The questions belonging to social studies section from Paper II Social Studies of the CTET exam were included in the questionnaire. The total 70 items were compiled questionnaire.

The student teachers responses were analyzed in terms of their achievement with respect to their background studies, age etc... The data was analyzed by preparing the excel sheets and achievement scores were converted in percentages. The calculated scores were compared to draw further inferences. The findings of the study are described as under:

Findings of the Study

- i. The female respondents have scored more in all phases of history and political science. However, even in females their knowledge and understanding in ancient history is high after which it is deteriorating. The male respondents' knowledge in history is low but their knowledge in political science is comparatively better than female respondents.
- ii. Student teachers above 23 years have answered more questions correctly from all phases of history and political science. Though the age range is very narrow from 20 to 28, the older students have scored more than the younger ones. However, the overall score is very close of both the groups
- iii. Surprisingly, the students with graduate degrees have scored higher in every phase of history and political science than the post graduates. The graduate respondents have retained their historical knowledge than the post graduates.
- iv. The students belonging to the humanity and social science background have scored less in every phase of history and political science than that of the mathematics and science students. The Students belonging to humanity and social science background have not retained their historical knowledge than that of the mathematics and science students.
- v. Students studied from CBSE and SSC board have scored higher in every phase of history and political science than that of the ICSE students. The students studied from ICSE board have retained their historical knowledge much more than that of the students studied from CBSE and SSC Board. This shows that CBSE board content is broader and the assessment taken helps the students not just to rote learn but remember for a longer time.
- vi. The students with O/A grade scored higher in the Ancient history than B/C grade where the score went down in the Medieval period, increased slightly in the Modern period, and so went down in the overall total score. This is an indication that though students may note fair well in the exams, they may retain their content knowledge. Their lower grades may be attributed to poor presentation skills, uncomfortable examination environment, strict correction etc.
- vii. The students studied history and political science till 10th scored more in all phases of history, including the ancient, modern, political science and in the total score However, the students who have studied till 12th showed the range between the students studied till 10th and showed a higher range as compared to students who has studied history and

political science till their graduation. This helps us understand the CET questions are mainly taken from the portion till STD X otherwise the students who have studied the subjects till HSC and degree were expected to score higher.

Conclusion

CTET examination tests the student teachers content knowledge in these subjects. The research shows that in this examination the girls are likely to score more than the boys. The student teachers who have studied the subjects only till Std X are not at disadvantage. The students with subject background till HSC or degree haven't higher test scores.

Scholastic background is important to score well in CTET social studies section. The students with Grades O/A are more likely to crack the examination. The CBSE board covers vast subject knowledge than SSC and ICSE board. These students retain their historical and political knowledge better. Rote learning is attributed to SSC boards. The content either has to be delivered better or the evaluation has to be such that it helps the students retain the subject knowledge.

The myth that, social studies are boring, dull, not career oriented and not as useful as other subjects, need to be broken. It is high time we take our knowledge in social studies with regard. Social studies teachers must develop a passion for the subject first then teach the content. The importance of social studies needs to widen to enable students to learn from our wise ancestors and develop critical thinking skills.

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